

NIT's IAC-2024 Conclave aims to bridge industry-academia gap

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Jamshedpur is set to host the second Industry-Academia Conclave (IAC-2024) from November 15 to 17, an event aimed at advancing collaboration between academia and industry under the visionary theme "Viksit Bharat - Viksit Jharkhand: 2047." Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Governor, will inaugurate the three-day event, expected to set a significant milestone in India's path toward industrial self-reliance and sustainable

development. In this edition, NIT Jamshedpur joins hands with academic partners such as IIT (ISM) Dhanbad, IIT Patna, and NITs across Mizoram, Raipur, Agartala, Manipur, and Nagaland. The conclave has also attracted major industrial players like Tata Steel, NTPC, ONGC, Power Grid Corporation, and Coal India, among others. Notably, banks including SBI, Canara Bank, and HDFC, along with publishers like Elsevier and Springer-Nature, are backing the event. Focusing on bridging gaps



between academic research and industrial needs, IAC-2024 will foster discussions on topics like renewable energy integration, robotics, IoT, digital twins in manufacturing, and sustainable mining practices. Notably, there will be discussions on converting waste into resources through IoT, promoting Jharkhand's artisan heritage, and creating support frameworks for MSMEs through industry-academia partnerships. The event will host competitions and workshops to inspire future innovators. Over 300 students will participate in a model-making contest, with a prize pool of Rs 1 lakh. Additionally, a month-long hackathon in electronics, drawing around 1,600 participants, will culminate in the announcement of three winners on November 17. Through IAC-2024, NIT Jamshedpur and its partners aim to pave the way for a future where academia and industry work hand-in-hand to tackle India's most pressing challenges. The insights, partnerships, and projects initiated at this conclave are anticipated to contribute significantly to India's industrial and academic landscape, setting a foundation for sustainable development by 2047.

NIT Jamshedpur, Dr. Goutam Sutradhar said that this conclave symbolizes a commitment to "Viksit Bharat - Viksit Jharkhand," reflecting the aspirations of a nation moving confidently toward its centennial anniversary as a leader in innovation and development. By focusing on practical collaborations, entrepreneurship, and cutting-edge research, IAC-2024 stands as a transformative event, reinforcing the role of industry-academia partnerships in shaping a prosperous future.

SAIL Ranchi Units celebrate Quality Day



PNS : RANCHI

In commemoration of the World Quality Day, RDCIS, CET & SSO units of SAIL Ranchi celebrated Quality Day. At RDCIS, The quality flag was hoisted by S. K. Kar, ED (RDCIS), joined by S. Vashishta, CGM (Safety). At CET, SK Verma, ED(CET) hoisted the Quality flag joined by T. Ghosh, CGM (CET). Addressing the team CET,

Verma shared his vision, experience and emphasized on the basic mantra of quality and said that we should include quality in our daily routine and make it our habit. He expressed happiness while appreciating the achievements of the team on successful placement of Work Orders for various mega projects of different plants in recent times. Kar also administered the

Quality Pledge to all employees of RDCIS and SSO. In his address Kar highlighted the fact that quality encompasses all facets of an organization and its responsibility therefore lay with each individual. He referred to the example of the Japanese industry that could seize on the opportunity to improve upon quality. He also referred to the use of bio char, hydrogen based DRI and associated steelmaking in the context of low carbon steel. RS Prasad and Priyanka Parameswaran administered the Quality Pledge at CET to all the employees in Hindi and English respectively. Certificates were awarded to the winners of the Quality Quiz and Quality Speech Competitions which were earlier organized for employees of RDCIS and SSO. The topic of the Speech Competition was "Quality: from compliance to performance". The programme was coordinated by Rajeev Baskiyar, GM (PC). At CET, the program was organized by Abhaya Kumar, GM (CET) under the guidance of Ghosh with the help of Team-CET and Administration Department.

DPS Bokaro Wins East Zone Inter-DPS Basketball Championship

PNS : BOKARO

The basketball team from Delhi Public School (DPS) Bokaro clinched the East Zone title at the Inter-DPS Basketball Tournament (Boys Open) 2024, held at DPS Ruby Park, Kolkata, with a commanding 30-7 victory over DPS Megacity, Kolkata. Competing against 15 teams from the East Zone, DPS Bokaro displayed remarkable skill, sportsmanship, and enthusiasm, qualifying for the Nationals with this impressive win. In the group stage, DPS Bokaro defeated DPS Asansol, DPS Siliguri, and DPS Fulbari to enter the quarter-finals, where they beat DPS Gaya 27-21. Advancing to the semi-finals, they overcame the host team, DPS Ruby Park, with a score of 47-15, and in the final showdown, they dominated DPS Megacity, Kolkata, with a resounding 30-7 victory to secure the zonal title. Upon their return to Bokaro on Thursday, the victorious team received a warm welcome at the school. Principal Dr. A.S. Gangwar praised the champions, commending their hard work, dedication, and teamwork. He extended his best wishes for their upcoming national competition.



Samvaad to showcase tribal culture from November 15

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Samvaad 2024, the acclaimed tribal conclave, will return to Gopal Maidan, Jamshedpur, from November 15-19, bringing together nearly 2,500 participants from 168 tribes across India. Kicking off with a tribute to Birsa Munda, the "Dharti Aaba" of tribal heritage, the five-day event will include a symbolic drumming ceremony by 351 nagadas, representing 32 tribes. Sourav Roy, CEO, Tata Steel Foundation said that now in its 11th year, Samvaad will feature numerous first-time participants, inspired by long-term attendees. Highlights include 40 new tribal home cooks, 19 artisans' stalls showcasing unique crafts, and 99 healers preparing a visionary roadmap for the next decade. Cultural performances from Neig, Hajong, Kokani, and Paraja tribes will add to the



vibrant mix. Gopal Maidan will host 45 stalls, where 117 artisans from 28 tribes will display traditional artworks and crafts. Additionally, 31 stalls run by tribal healers will demonstrate indigenous healing practices, while 8 food stalls will feature authentic tribal cuisine, including medicinal plant-infused dishes in the "Aatithya Zone." A unique aspect this year is the option to order tribal dishes via the

Zomato app, bringing Samvaad's flavors to a broader audience. Samvaad 2024 will also debut 30 original literary, artistic, film, and musical works, and feature the release of the Rhythms of the Earth cohort's second album, created with Ladakh-based band Da Shugs. With stalls, cuisine, and dynamic performances, Samvaad continues to celebrate and amplify India's rich tribal heritage.

CII session highlights future of family-owned enterprises

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Jharkhand hosted an insightful session focused on empowering family businesses, addressing the theme "Strategies for Resilience, Growth, and Sustainable Success." Bringing together prominent business leaders, the event explored how family enterprises can remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global market while preserving their legacy and core values. The session highlighted the importance of adaptability, innovation, and strategic collaboration. Ranjot Singh, Chairman of CII Jharkhand State Council and Managing Director of Emdet Jamshedpur Pvt Ltd, emphasized family businesses' crucial role in India's economy, contributing 60-70% of the GDP. Acknowledging the unique challenges that arise as new generations join, Singh stressed the importance of building a strong foundation for long-term success. He praised the CII Family Business Network's commitment to guiding family businesses in creating sustainable models that drive

inclusive growth and global development. Killol Kamani, Past Chairman of CII Jharkhand and Managing Director of Sparx Technologies Pvt Ltd, addressed both emotional and operational challenges within family enterprises. Kamani noted the delicate balance required to navigate generational expectations and maintain family harmony. He encouraged family businesses to embrace professionalism by integrating modern skill sets and evolving business practices, thereby empowering the next generation to introduce fresh perspectives and technologies. Krishna Kharia, Convenor of the CII Jharkhand Family Business Panel and Director of Multitech Components Pvt Ltd, shared insights on the enduring impact of family businesses, noting that they account for approximately 79% of India's GDP. Kharia highlighted a sobering statistic: only 30% of family businesses transition successfully to the second generation, with even fewer reaching the third. He attributed this trend to familial conflicts and a lack of adaptability,



emphasizing that core family values help shape a strong identity and positively influence decision-making, productivity, and family dynamics. Koushik Modi, Co-Chair of Yi Jamshedpur Chapter and Managing Director of Modi Homez Pvt Ltd, highlighted India's leadership role in Asia's family business landscape, noting the resilience, community values, and commitment that define these enterprises. Modi expressed confidence in the session's potential to inspire sustainable growth and innovation, positioning

family businesses as significant contributors to India's evolving economy. With around 47 participants, including CEOs and Managing Directors, the session underscored the importance of data-driven decision-making, new technologies, and professionalism in securing the future of family-owned enterprises. The event's discussions emphasized the potential of family businesses to drive India's growth trajectory while balancing tradition with transformation, setting the stage for intergenerational success and resilience.

Children's Day celebration at SBPS

PNS : RANCHI

Sarala Birla Public School, Ranchi celebrated Children's Day - the spirit of joy and childhood with zeal and merriment. The day began with a special assembly followed by a series of fun-filled events. The students enjoyed an animated movie screening with great excitement. Thereafter, they headed outdoors for a range of fun games which encouraged teamwork, joy and agility. The tiny tots also had fun prancing on the tumble tosser and grooving to the foot tapping melodies. The celebration concluded with a motivational speech by the Principal on the special occasion. Principal Paramjit Kaur, wished the children on this occasion. She encouraged the children to keep learning and growing which will make them a responsible individual. She also encouraged them to keep the child in them alive.



BSL officials attend Interactive Session on Service Contract Management



PNS : BOKARO

An interactive session on Service Contract Management was organized for Bokaro Steel Limited (BSL) officials in the main

auditorium of the Learning and Development Department. The session saw participation from BSL's Director-in-Charge Birendra Kumar Tiwari, Executive Director (Finance & Accounts) Suresh Rangani, Executive Director (HR & Operations) Rajan Prasad, and other senior officials. The event began with DIC Tiwari leading a voter pledge, encouraging everyone to participate in the upcoming state elections on November 20. Bokaro District Disaster Management Officer Shakti Kumar also emphasized the importance of voter participation and urged officials to inspire others to vote. Presentations were given by Chief General Manager (Projects) Naresh Kumar Behera, Deputy General Manager (Executive Director-Operations Secretariat) Anand Raj, and Senior Manager (CRM-3) R.K. Mahato, covering essential aspects of service contract management. Tiwari emphasized the evolving strategies needed to enhance contract management in today's environment, while Prasad highlighted areas for improvement in productivity and cost efficiency. The session allowed officials to discuss contract management challenges and share improvement ideas, concluding with a vote of thanks by Neeta Bat (GM)

Children's Day at DAV Public School Sector-4

PNS : BOKARO

On November 14, DAV Public School, Sector-4, celebrated Children's Day with great zeal, honoring the birth anniversary of India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love for children inspired this day dedicated to them. With the theme "Children are a legacy and gift from God," the school organized a series of engaging activities, aiming to make the day memorable for the students. The celebration began with a tribute to Pandit Nehru, with teachers garlanding his statue and adorning the school hall with a festive ambience. Principal Sarbendu Shekhar Kar expressed his affection for the students, emphasizing that children are the backbone of a nation's future, embodying its hopes and potential. He stressed that investing in children's education, health, and well-being today shapes a nation's strength, prosperity, and stability tomorrow.



Jamshedpur girl sets milestone by changing 'Nishan Sahib' at Gurdwara

PARVINDER BHATIA : JAMSHEDPUR

In a historic first for Jamshedpur, 12-year-old Harnish Kaur Saini from Gurdwara Gaurisankar Road, Jugsalai, became the first girl in the city to perform the revered ritual of changing the Nishan Sahib, the Sikh flag, at her local gurdwara. Harnish, the daughter of Gurjinder Singh, took on the significant responsibility in a ceremony marked by reverence, pride, and community support. The Nishan Sahib, a triangular flag, holds profound importance in Sikhism, symbolizing the presence of a gurdwara and the guiding principles of the Sikh faith. The flagpole is typically placed at all Sikh religious sites as a beacon of equality, humility, and devotion. "Nishan" is derived from Persian, translating to "flag"

or "standard," while "Sahib," an Arabic term meaning "lord" or "master," is used as an honorific, indicating respect. The ritual of replacing the Nishan Sahib is a meticulous and spiritual practice, often undertaken by devoted members of the Sikh community. Traditionally performed by male members, Harnish's participation marks a step forward for gender inclusivity within Sikh practices in Jamshedpur. Observers at the ceremony noted how this milestone reflects the Sikh ethos of equality and service, aligning with the teachings of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Harnish was guided through the ritual, beginning with removing the previous flag, respectfully cleaning the pole, and adorning it with a fresh, saffron-colored Nishan Sahib. She executed the ritual with poise and dedication,

embodying the values instilled by her faith and her family. Her father, Gurjinder Singh, expressed immense pride in his daughter's achievement, stating, "Harnish has set an example for all, reminding us that faith and devotion transcend gender. This is a proud moment not only for our family but for the entire Sikh community in Jamshedpur." The ceremony attracted a large gathering of community members, who showed their support and encouragement. Many attendees expressed how Harnish's actions symbolize progress and inclusivity within the religious framework, and several elders shared their admiration for her courage and dedication at such a young age. Harnish's historic achievement has been a source of inspiration for other young girls in the Sikh



community, encouraging them to actively participate in religious practices. As the first girl in Jamshedpur to perform the Nishan Sahib ritual, she has paved the way for future generations, reinforcing the Sikh values of equality, service, and reverence," said an official of Central Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

Rotary Club celebrates Children's Day

PNS : BOKARO

The Rotary Club of Bokaro Steel City marked Children's Day with vibrant celebrations at two locations: the Rotary Play Group (RPG) in Bokaro and Asha Ki Kiran in Ulgoada. At RPG, a lively fancy dress competition unfolded, with children dressed as sea creatures, fruits, and symbols of health and hygiene, showcasing their creativity and talent to an enthusiastic audience. Principal Rtn. Mansi Sahana organized the event, ensuring a smooth and memorable experience. Prizes were awarded by Rtn. Alka Gupta, Rtn. Seema Giri, and Rtn. Shamita Mukherjee, adding excitement to the day. Simultaneously, festivities at Asha Ki Kiran were led by Past President Rtn. Ashok Taneja, where children enjoyed treats and snacks in a warm, celebratory atmosphere. Rotary President Rtn. Mahesh Kumar Gupta expressed his gratitude to all members, acknowledging their dedication in making this Children's Day unforgettable.



Coast guard evacuates critically ill from Lakshadweep

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

Congress, BJP pay tributes to Nehru on birth anniversary



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

DRDO successfully concludes flight test of Pinaka Weapons System



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

MoD holds meeting on electronic warfare

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

PM inaugurates Bodo festival

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Panagariya argues for local bodies to self finance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rural and urban local bodies should look at raising their own resources as it will mobilise citizens in terms of their expectations and their demands from the local bodies, said Arvind Panagariya, chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, on Thursday. Speaking at a one-day conclave of the Finance Commissions themed Devolution to Development organised by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Panagariya also said that a convergence is being witnessed in the demands of the urban and rural local bodies. Among the topics in focus at the conclave were deliberations on addressing systemic challenges, ensuring timely constitution of the state finance commissions, implementation of recommendations and strengthening institutional mechanisms to ensure a smooth flow of funds to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), and fostering financial autonomy and self-reliance among the panchayats. The issue of panchayat finances, including devolution of funds, functions and functionalities, along with strategies to enhance local revenue sources were among the key issues. Panagariya said that local bodies should look at raising their own resources as well. "From the view point of service provision it is important to raise



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

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

Rajnath to visit Laos for ASEAN ministers' meet



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Naval seminar concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

How India is reshaping its relationship its tribal populations

RANI SINGH RAJPUT ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Bulldozer justice quashed

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

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



The Supreme Court has mandated real-time updates on a digital portal for all demolition notices and orders to prevent arbitrary actions and foster transparency. Additionally, the entire demolition process must be videographed, with a list of officials involved to ensure accountability and adherence to procedure. Officials violating these directives risk contempt proceedings and prosecution, underscoring the Court's commitment to upholding the rule of law. The judgement holds far-reaching implications for governance, rule of law and individual rights in India. By restricting demolitions carried out as a form of punishment, the Supreme Court reinforces the fundamental legal principle that the executive cannot act as judge and enforcer. The decision underscores the judiciary's role in protecting individuals' rights against arbitrary state action, affirming that everyone is entitled to due process before facing punitive measures. The decision is laudable because it is tough on arbitrary demolitions, which often infringe on the right to shelter, impacting families and communities and safeguards citizens' fundamental rights, emphasising that actions targeting individuals suspected of crimes must follow legal due process. The judgement must come as a relief to many families who dread the demolition as one of them might have been on the wrong side of the law. However, the judgement falls short of putting onus on the political masters of the bureaucrats on whose behest such actions are often taken. Nevertheless, it would rein in the erring officers who go out of way to please their political masters. It is a bold move that could reshape administrative conduct.

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PICTALK



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

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



BHOPINDER SINGH

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

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

There are two dedicated Pakistani Army Divisions deployed to secure Chinese personnel and assets of the various Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) imperatives in Pakistan, yet the same gets targeted with seeming impunity and deadly consequences. Even royals from various Arab sheikhdoms who used to descend into the Pakistani hinterland for the annual Houbara hunting season have desisted from the same, given the acute security concerns prevailing. Whereas India has rightfully slammed Pakistan for being the "world's terrorism factory" for its nefarious record in fanning religious extremism and armed insurgency on Indian soil, since independence. Stating that there is a grave security concern in Pakistan is not a political statement but a statement of fact. The fact that it was featured prominently in the Grey List of the global anti-terror watchdog agency, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) till very recently, is also a fact. Amidst this undeniable security landscape in Pakistan, Pakistani authorities pooh-pooh concerns of the Indian Cricket Board, i.e., BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India), to avoid sending the Indian Cricket Team to play in Pakistan owing to security concerns, is not political one-upmanship but the expected concern of any board towards the safety and welfare of its team. That several India-facing terror groups are thriving on Pakistani soil is a very old story that needs no reiteration, and that itself makes the threat to the Indian team especially severe. The official breakdown and



downgrading of diplomatic ties between Delhi and Islamabad since 2019, do not help mend popular mood or perceptions about India or Indians in Pakistan (or vice versa), either. While it is certainly true that sporting ties between the two restive nations were always given to political 'point-scoring' and even positive leverage in the form of 'cricket diplomacy' (to thaw bilateral freeze) — this time the security situation in Pakistan has deteriorated to such levels, that to suggest that it is the usual 'point-scoring' diplomacy is to live under a rock. The reality of the situation is even beyond the intellectual debate of allowing or disallowing sports between two 'enemy' countries. Sometime back, India did choose to conflate sports with other bilateral engagements owing to Pakistan's established role in sponsoring terrorism in India, but even if one were to delink the two, the security situation in Pakistan itself warrants a cautionary note from the Indian side.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLIMATE CRISIS

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

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

A G Rajmohan | Anantpur

VISTARA MERGED WITH AIR INDIA

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

Inflation on the rise



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

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

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

S K Khosla | Chandigarh

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

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

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

PROMISES AND POLITICS

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

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

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

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Pathway to a knowledge rich, future-ready nation

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

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

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



Bharat's ambition to reclaim its heritage as a knowledge superpower.

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

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

al challenges.

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

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



UMANG BAJAJ

FIRST COLUMN

UNVEILING THE SHAKTIS

Shakti forms are central to authentic spiritual practice. Nature's energies are accessible but require dedication



ASHWINI GURUJI

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



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

The speciality of the Moon is that it looks calm and peaceful but it is more volatile than even the Sun. When you look at the moon under the guidance of a *Guru*, you will be able to see all the mantras in its form because you cannot see the sun, which channelises that *Shakti*. There are certain *shaktis* which you cannot see and so there are certain other *shaktis* through which you can see and feel their effect, it becomes an experience for you. And till you have that experience, yoga is a waste for you, nothing can happen and nothing is possible. Experience is the basis of yoga. All the things that we see in the sky and on the earth, there are so many flowers of so many different kinds and colours, if you simply look at them without blinking your eyes under *Guru Sanidhya*, all the defects and imbalances in the body disappear. But there is a small problem... *niyam*. There should be no break in the practice, and the break will come if you do not have the capacity for that *Shakti* or if you don't have a *Guru*. Nature, everything that we see around us, has all the *swaroops* of *shaktis* hidden in it and all these *shaktis* are very easily accessible. If one makes him/herself stir on these *shaktis* and accesses them properly, then they start following that person. The nine days leading to Diwali are especially powerful because of the congregation of specific *shaktis* during these days. Our ancestors prescribed observing the *vrata* of *brahmacharya* during these days to make the body strong enough to accept these *Shaktis*.

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

AI revolutionises the beauty and wellness industry

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



DINESH SOOD



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

This trend reflects diverse customer preferences, lifestyles, body types and genetic factors. Recent news about Maybelline's AI-powered "makeup" filters for Microsoft teams has reignited discussions on AI's role in the beauty sector. It is crucial to explore how AI is transforming the industry and to stay updated on the latest developments. The global beauty industry market utilising AI was valued at \$216.12 million in 2020 and is projected to reach \$1.26 billion by 2027. An industry report indicates that the annual growth rate (CAGR) of AI in the beauty sector from 2021 to 2027 is expected to be 33.2 per cent. Several laboratories have developed AI-driven skin consultation tools that integrate augmented reality and artificial intelligence to analyse skin ageing. These tools can identify signs of ageing and assess skin strength, providing tailored skincare recommendations to prevent further deterioration. Their algorithms are based on 10,000 images and 15 years of dermatological expertise. Users can take a selfie and provide their age and skin type to receive an estimate of their skin condition along with a personalised analysis. They will then receive customised skincare prescriptions. AI assists in analysing skin conditions, recommending personalised skincare and wellness routines and even predicting trends, ultimately enhancing product development and customer satisfaction. Acne is a common concern worldwide, affecting 80 per cent of teenagers and 40 per cent of adults.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

future of the beauty and wellness industry will depend on an omnichannel experience that seamlessly integrates online and offline interactions, utilising a range of digital tools to enhance the consumer experience. Virtual try-ons and consultations have become standard in beauty retail; however, replicating the human connection remains a challenge. Online influencers and "show me how" content are gaining popularity as consumers learn to master services that they previously sought from professionals.

Additionally, live streaming on platforms like Facebook Live and Instagram significantly engages younger consumers. In India, the beauty and wellness industry is growing rapidly, expanding twice as fast as that of the United States and Europe. Greater consumer awareness and aspiration have led to increased spending on beauty and wellness products and services.

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

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

Cybersecurity: Safeguarding a digital future amid rising cyber threats

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

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



VINAY PATHAK

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

concerted efforts.

The recent cyber-attack on Iran marks a chilling advance in digital warfare, illustrating that no nation is immune to the risks of a hyperconnected world. As countries, corporations, and citizens expand their online presence, the scope for potentially devastating cyber-attacks rises dramatically. This incident serves as a reminder of the need for nations to address cyberspace's complex, escalating risks. India, for example, is undergoing a digital revolution with over 936 million internet users as of December 2023. These "Digital Nagriks" fuel a dynamic digital economy, supporting critical sectors such as healthcare, education, finance and agricul-

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

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



paigns, adding complex layers to cyber defenses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, KEONJHAR NOTICE INVITING TENDER & Procurement Bid ID No. 08 SEMID (KJR/2024-2025) Dt. 08.11.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to general public at large that Mr. Chand Singh Mohd. Akhbar who is/are purchasing Part of Residential plot no. 80 & 81 area measuring 50 sq. yds. Khassa no. 18/2 and 20 situated at Anar Vihar Khoda Colony Village Khoda Pargana, Tehsil & Distt. Ghazabad UP from Mr. Ramchandra S/O Heralia who was the owner of property by virtue of Regd. GPA dated 14.10.2019 (Doc. No. 3208) executed by Mrs. Anju Rani W/o Rakesh Kumar Inland to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from Shubhan Housing Development Finance Company Limited.

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the general public that the Bank of Baroda, Bank of Baroda, S.S.I. Noida Branch, Sector-18, Noida, (U.P.) intends to accept the undermentioned property standing in the name of M/s Ajanta Gortex Processors Pvt Ltd., as a security for non-credit facility requested by it.

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Mr. Chahat Singh S/o Mr. Bhim Singh owner of a Residential Single Storey House area measuring 494 sq. yds. i.e. 404.67 sq. mtrs. out of Khassa no. 746 situated at Village Tasyana Pargana & Tehsil Dadr District Gautam Budh Nagar. Through Registered Gift Deed Dated 29.03.2024 executed by Mr. Bhim Singh S/o Mr. Ramdayal in favour of Mr. Chahat Singh S/o Mr. Bhim Singh vide Reg. no. 16530, at S.D. DADR U.P. The above-mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with F&B Bank 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/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkarooma 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.

PUBLIC NOTICE Whereas, M/s. Tulip Infratech Pvt. Ltd. (the Developer) is in the process of development of a Group Housing Colony over an additional area measuring 7.64375 acres (Licence No.34 of 2024 dated 07.03.2024) in Group Housing Colony area measuring 25.44 acres (Licence no. 78 of 2010 dated 15.10.2010) theyres total site area 33.08375 Acres in Sector 69&70, Gurugram. And whereas, several individuals have made bookings/ entered into flat/buy agreement for allotment of flat/property in the said colony (hereinafter referred as allottees). And, whereas, the building plans earlier approved for the said colony are now proposed to be revised. And whereas, the office of Director General, Town and Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has required seeking of objection against the revision of said building plans.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR APPOINTMENT TENDER NOTICE NO. CPM-MLG-HQ-GC-2024-01; Date: 10-11-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No.: CPM-MLG-HQ-GC-2024-01. Name of work : Request for Proposal (RFP) for appointment of General Consultant for N.F. Railway, Gati Shakti Unit. Approx. Value: ₹14,88,08,535.16/-.

PROVISION OF BOGIE MODIFICATION FOR ANTI-FALLING TRACTION MOTORS DRAM (W), Lumding

Tender Notice No.: DLS/MLDT/NFR/01A/2024-2025, Dated: 08-11-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Name of Work : Provision of Bogie Modification for anti-falling of Traction Motors in 30 Locomotives, WAG-9HC at Diesel Shed, Malda Town. Estimated Value: ₹25,52,970/-.

COURT NOTICE IN THE COURT OF Sh. Hari Kishan Judicial Magistrate - Ist Class, Gurugram MOHINDER SINGH BHARDWAJ Vs. NB FIRE PROTECTION CNR No. HRGR03-108401-2019 Next Date:- 16-12-2024

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO: NB FIRE PROTECTION PROP ANIL KUMAR D-80 GANESH NAGAR PANDAV NAGAR NEW DELHI In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on 16-12-2024 at 10.00 a.m.

FOR DETAILS LOGON TO https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs_districtnotice&district Gurugram Judicial Magistrate - Ist Class Gurugram Dated, this day 14-11-2024

LOST & FOUND I, Suraj Mourya (Owner) S/o Muneshwar Mourya, R/o A-215, Shastri nagar, Delhi-110052 hereby declare that I have lost the property chain documents of Shanti Devi, (2011 Owner) A-180 Upper Second Floor Shastri Nagar Delhi-110052. Anyone who finds the documents please contact at 9312335902

INDAG RUBBER LIMITED Regd. Office: Khemka House, 11 Community Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110017 Phone: 011-26963172 - 73, Email: info@indagrubber.com, Website: www.indagrubber.com

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD. (Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001) Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.psscpl.in (Contact number 9646117606)

Tender Notice for Outsourcing of Verka Milk Booths Name of Verka Dairy Milk booths available for Outsourcing for a period of 3 years:

JITF INFRALOGISTICS LIMITED CIN No. : L60231CT2008PLC106434 Registered Office: A-11 (7), Udyog Society, Sector-3, Tatibandh, Dharsawa, Raipur- 492099, Chhattisgarh, India. Website: www.jindalinfralogistics.com

ASHNOOR TEXTILE MILLS LIMITED Registered Office : Behrampur Road, Khandsa Village, Gurugram, Haryana- 122001, India, Tel: +91 (0124) - 4809756 CIN: L17226HR1984PLC033384 | E mail: atml delhi@yahoo.com Website : www.ashnoortex.com

Statement of Standalone Financial Results for the Quarter and Half Year ended 30 Sept 2024 (Rs. in lakhs)

Table with 5 columns: Particulars, 3 months ended (30-09-2024, 30-06-2024), Half Year ended (30-09-2024, 30-06-2024), Standalone Previous Year Ended (31-03-2024, Audited)

Place : Gurugram, Haryana Date : 13-11-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE General public is hereby informed that Mrs. Sushil Gupta and Mrs. Uma are the owner of the Residential Plot of area measuring 25-25-50 Sq. Yards, out of Khassa No. 227 Min. Situated in the Village Sadaypur Pargana & Tehsil Dadr Distt. Gauram Barh Nagr, U.P. by virtue of Sale Deed dated 26.09.2017, Regd. at Doc. No. 6405, and Sale Deed dated 13.09.2018, Regd. at Doc. No. 6275. The above-said property is to be transferred & mortgaged with my client i.e. M/s. Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd. and the Original Sale Deed dated 22.11.2019 Regd. vide Doc. No. 4279, Sale Deed dated 15.05.2013 Regd. vide Doc. No. 5115 and Sale Deed dated 12.05.2014, Regd. vide Doc. No. 4523 pertaining to the above-said property have been lost and compant L.A.R. No.2024000091501 dated 14.11.2024, was registered with U.P. Police.

By Order of the Board For Indag Rubber Limited Sd/- Company Secretary

By Order of the Board For Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd. Sd/- Company Secretary

By Order of the Board For Verka Milk Booths Sd/- General Manager (Purchase)

By Order of the Board For Jitf Infralogistics Limited Sd/- Company Secretary

By Order of the Board For Ashnoor Textile Mills Limited Sd/- Suneel Gupta Managing Director

LOST & FOUND L.R. No. 2281219/2024 Date : 08/11/2024 I, Leela Mittal, S/D/W/O Kishan Lal Katri, A-4, 217 Kalkaji Extension New Delhi-110019 sams.nz@gmail.com. I hereby Missing/Lost Possession Letter issued by M/s DFL Building and Services Pvt Ltd. and M/s. Maktoom Developers Pvt. Ltd., dated approximately year 2011 for property no. SP-203, Richmond Park, DLF Phase 4, Gurugram from our residence.

RAMPUR FERTILIZERS LIMITED Registered Office: Judges Bareilly Road, Rampur 244 901 (U.P) E-mail: rkumar@rampurfert.com, CIN: L15136UP1988PLC010084 EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER / HALF YEAR ENDED ON 30 SEPT., 2024.

Table with 5 columns: S. No., Particulars, Standalone Results (Quarter Ended, Year Ended), Consolidated Results (Quarter ended, Year ended)

By Order of the Board Sd/- Anshuman Khaitan (Managing Director)

HINDUSTAN AUTO FINANCE LIMITED CIN:L65910DL1980PLC010617 E-mail: hindaf1980@gmail.com, Website: www.hindaf.in Regd. Off: Cabin No. DA-8, 02nd Floor, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, New Delhi-110092

Extract of unaudited financial results for the quarter and half year ended 30th September 2024 (₹ in Rs. Lakhs)

Table with 5 columns: SL. No., Particulars, Quarter ended 30.09.2024, Year ended 31.03.2024, Quarter ended 30.09.2023

For M/s Hindustan Auto Finance Limited Sd/- Subhash Sapra Managing Director DIN:00241940

COSCO (INDIA) LIMITED CIN : L25199DL1980PLC010173 Regd. Office : 2/8, Roop Nagar, Delhi-110 007 Website : www.cosco.in Email : mail@cosco.in Tel. : 91-11-23843000 Fax : 91-11-23846000

EXTRACT OF STANDALONE UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND HALF YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2024 (₹ in lakhs)

Table with 5 columns: S/ No., Particulars, Quarter Ended (30.09.2024, 30.06.2024, 30.09.2023), Half Year Ended (30.09.2024, 30.09.2023), Year Ended (31.03.2024, Audited)

By Order of the Board for Cosco (India) Limited Devinder Kumar Jain Managing Director and CEO Date : 14.11.2024



THE MYSTICAL WORLD OF THEYYAM

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

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

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

Theyyam, which translates to "god's form," is a fusion of dance, drama, music and ritual and has been a central part of Kerala's spiritual and cultural life for centuries. The book captures the essence of this tradition, from the rituals performed by humble labourers to the spiritual elevation of these individuals who take on divine personas. Gopalakrishnan's perspective as an insider, with his extensive experience and deep connection to the tradition, provides a rare and valuable lens into *Theyyam*'s intricate and multifaceted nature.

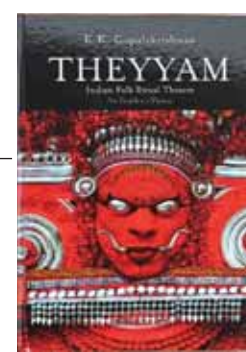
As Gopalakrishnan eloquently puts it, "At a time when the entire world, ignoring contextual relevance, is lavishly vocal on political correctness, here is an ancient art form called *Theyyam* that places the subaltern community in God's shoes." It is this transformative aspect of the art form that makes *Theyyam* such a powerful symbol of social rebellion and spiritual empowerment.

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

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

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

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



ABOUT THE BOOK

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

captures this paradox and the way it highlights the intersection of religion, art and social critique.

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

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

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

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

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

November Reads!

By Aleph Book Company



Middle Class India: Driving Change in the 21st Century

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

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

How the Cobra Got His Spectacles

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

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

From Curious Girl to Royal Heroine

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: Royal-ish : Lily's Adventures in Bagradoo
by Amrita Gandhi
PUBLICATION: HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS
Pages: 168
Price: ₹299.00

Some hilarious scenes give you a reason to continue reading.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)
Young striker Deepika slammed five goals as defending champions India thrashed minnows Thailand 13-0 to virtually assure a semifinal berth at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Thursday. It was a completely one-sided match as the Indians found the net at will, with Thailand failing to take a single shot at the opposition goal. Deepika (3rd, 19th, 43rd, 45th, 45th minutes) found the net five times, while Preeti Dubey (9th, 40th), Lalremsiami (12, 56th) and Manisha Chauhan (55th, 58th) scored a brace each. Beauty Dung (30th) and Navneet Kaur (53rd) were the other goal getters for India who registered their third consecutive win in the round-robin league stage. India had earlier defeated Malaysia 4-0 before eking

out a close 3-2 win over South Korea. The Indians will next play Olympic silver medallists China on Saturday. India are now in the second spot in the standings with nine points, the same as China who, however, are on the top on the basis of a better goal difference. China have a goal difference of +21 as against +18 of India. The top four teams out of six at the end of round-robin league stage will qualify for the semifinals. It was complete domination from India from start to finish as they continuously toyed with the Thai defence, which looked clueless against the home team's relentless attacks. The Indians also improved on the penalty corner front, converting five out of 12 PCs they secured in the match. It took India just three minutes to take the lead through a fine field goal by Deepika. She beautifully controlled a defence spitting



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

properly. In the ninth minute, Preeti doubled India's lead, tapping in Sangita Kumari's pass from close range. Three minutes later, Lalremsiami scored from a rebound after skipper Salima Tete's initial try was saved by Thai goalkeeper Siraya Yimkrajang. India continued to mount raids and secured their first penalty corner in the 17th minute but the Thai custodian made a triple save. In the 19th minute, Deepika scored her second goal of the day, again with a fine shot from the top of the circle. The Indians then wasted three penalty corners before scoring from the next set piece just at the stroke of half-time through Beauty, who found the net from a goal-mouth melee as the hosts went into the breather with a comfortable 5-0 lead. An unmarked Preeti beat the onrushing Thai goalie neatly and found the net in

the 40th minute for her second goal of the match. Minutes later, Deepika converted a penalty corner with a flick to the top right corner of Thai goal. Within a span of two minutes, Deepika scored two more goals -- one from field play and the next from penalty corner -- to hand India a comprehensive 9-0 lead at the end of the third quarter. After resumption, Navneet scored with a reverse hit after receiving a pass from Sushila Delvi. Five minutes from the final hooter, Manisha converted India's 10th penalty corner before Lalremsiami deflected in Udit's slap shot from another set piece in the next minute. Manisha registered her name again in the scoresheet two minutes from full time from field play. In other matches of the day, Malaysia beat Korea 2-1 while China continued their unbeaten run by defeating Japan by the same margin.

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

PTI ■ CENTURION
Tilak Varma did not want to become a source of chagrin for his skipper Suryakumar Yadav after requesting him for the number three slot in the batting order in the third T20I against South Africa. And he didn't. Varma had batted at number four in Durban and Gqeberha, scoring 33 and 20. Surya, who himself batted at number three, after giving it a thought, obliged his young teammate. "In Gqeberha, he (Tilak) came to my room and said, 'Give me the opportunity to bat at No. 3. Let me express myself,'" said Surya. Now it was for Varma to make the most of the opportunity and responded with a match-winning century. After reaching his 51-ball-century, second fifty coming in just 19 balls, Varma pointed towards the dug-out and blew a flying kiss to acknowledge his captain. "It was for 'SKY', our skipper because he gave me a chance to



bat at number three," Varma told reporters after India's 11-run win on Wednesday night. "I love batting at number three, but in last two matches, I played at number four. Last night he came to my room and said that 'You will bat No. 3' and he said it's a good opportunity. Go and express yourself. I told him, 'You have given me an opportunity, I will show you on the ground,'" said the second youngest Indian centurion in T20 Internationals. His innings of 107 off 56 balls had seven sixes apart from eight fours including a straight and a flicked six off

international tours of Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka due to finger injury but said he always knew that he would score when his time comes. "During the last IPL game, I had a finger dislocation and was ruled out for two months. Then during nets post recovery, I sustained another fracture. So I missed two back-to-back series -- Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. "I was feeling bad that I missed out on two series and good opportunities. But I had to remain patient, focus on the process and keep working hard. I knew my time would come and when right time comes, I will score runs." The team management chose to persist with Varma when the chips were down and the youngster is reaping rewards for that. "I was waiting for this opportunity and unfortunately in the last match it didn't happen but captain and management also supported a lot, and the results I am getting now is because of their complete backing."

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

AP ■ DAMBULLA (SRI LANKA)
Kusal Mendis and Avishka Fernando smashed centuries against a new-look New Zealand as Sri Lanka cruised to a 45-run win under the DLS method in a rain-hit first ODI. Mendis smashed a career-best 143 off 128 balls and Fernando made 100 off 115 in Sri Lanka's imposing total of 324-5 in 49.2

overs before rain came and reduced New Zealand's target to 221 off 27 overs. Will Young and Tim Robinson, one of the three New Zealand debutants, combined in an 88-run opening stand but Sri Lanka derailed the Black Caps' chase through its spinners and restricted the reply to a total of 175-9. Slow bowlers Maheesh Theekshana (2-32), captain Charith Asalanka (2-15), and Jeffrey Vandersay (1-40), in

place of injured Wanindu Hasaranga, all left their mark before left-arm fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka grabbed 3-39 to give Sri Lanka a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Earlier, Mendis and Fernando combined in a 206-run second-wicket stand after debutant Nathan Smith took a well judged running catch at third man to dismiss Pathum Nissanka (12) in Jacob Duffy's second over after Asalanka

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

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

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG
Rinku Singh's batting slot and circumspect approach must be a cause of concern for the India team going into the deciding fourth T20I against South Africa as the side aims for another bilateral series victory here Friday. Centuries by Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma on either side of an inept batting performance has kept India's nose ahead in the series and team would want a more collective batting effort to clinch it 3-1. The Wanderers 'Bull Ring' has always been a happy hunting ground for India, where they won the 2007 T20 World Cup final against Pakistan. Even during the previous T20I series a year back, skipper Suryakumar Yadav's last international hundred till date came at this very stadium and that too in a winning cause. The Indian captain, who enjoys a staggering victory percentage of 81.25, having come up trumps in 13 out of the 16 matches, would like to do one better compared to the last series in the Rainbow Nation which had ended in a 1-1 draw with one game being washed out. Curious case of Rinku Singh Rinku, one of the finest exponents of T20 cricket has suddenly gone off the boil in the past few months, reasons of which aren't exactly clear and it wouldn't be lost on the skipper and interim head coach VVS Laxman. On the face of it, it seems that



his batting position and use as a floater at number six and seven isn't helping the Aligarh man's cause. The next T20 World Cup in India is still some distance away in 2026 and Surya, as a skipper, has enough time to dissect and put things back on track for the man, who is too precious to be lost due to lack of clarity. In the current series, Rinku came in at number six in two games and number seven in another and has managed just 28 runs. The scores 11, 9 and 8 shouldn't be taken in isolation looking at where he is coming in to bat but when the number of balls (34) he has taken to the

as an opener and Tilak Varma has staked claim as a No. 3, it might be difficult for Rinku to be promoted ahead of Hardik Pandya. It is an issue that team think-tank would do better to solve at earliest. Team Combination India have used 12 out of their 15 players in the first three games and it would be interesting to see if one among the two uncapped pacers Yash Dayal or Vysakh Vijaykumar gets a debut cap in case the pitch warrants an extra specialist speedster. For Samson, he would like to forget that he is turning into Marco Jansen's 'bunny' after back-to-back failures. In the final game, it wouldn't be a bad option for skipper Surya to check on Ramandeep Singh's steady medium pace as he can be an asset with multiple skills, including ability to field at all positions save keeping. Squads: India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Hardik Pandya. Axar Patel, Ramandeep Singh. Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal. South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Ottnel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen. Heinrich Klaasen, Patrick Kruger. Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Mithali Pongwana, Nqaba Peter, Ryan Rickelton. Andile Simelane. Lutho Sipamla, Tristan Stubbs.

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