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'INTEGRAL HUMANISM'

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AT LEAST 50 PEOPLE: WITNESSES

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SAMSUNG WORKERS PROTEST  
CONTINUES TO 4TH WEEK

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# Marital rape not a crime, Centre tells Supreme Court

**Government says punitive measures in place**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Thursday filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court opposing petitions that have called for the criminalisation of marital rape in India.

The affidavit filed by the Union Home Ministry said that in a marriage, there is a continuing expectation to have reasonable sexual access from one's spouse. It clarified that such expectations do not entitle a husband to coerce his wife to have sex against her will.

However, it may be excessive and disproportionate to punish a man under anti-rape laws for such an act, the Centre said. The affidavit further highlighted that the parliament has already provided different remedies to protect a married woman's consent within marriage.

In the counter-affidavit filed through advocate AK Sharma, the Union Home Ministry backed the existing Indian rape law that carves out an exception for sexual relations between a husband and wife. The Central Government



asserted that the issue is more of a social than a legal one, which has a direct bearing on society in general. While so, even if 'marital rape' is to be criminalised, it is not up to the Supreme Court to do so, the Centre argued.

"The (issue) cannot be decided without proper consultation with all the stakeholders or taking the views of all the States into consideration ... the act colloquially referred to as 'marital rape' ought to be illegal and criminalised. The Central Government asserts that a woman's consent is not

obliterated by marriage, and its violation should result in penal consequences. However, the consequences of such violations within marriage differ from those outside it," the affidavit stated.

It added that a breach of consent should be punished differently, depending on whether such an act occurs within or outside a marriage. These remedies include laws punishing cruelty to married women (as it was under Section 498A under the Indian Penal Code then), laws punishing acts against the

modesty of women, and remedies under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

The Bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud with Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra is currently seized of the matter. Marital rape is excluded from the ambit of "rape" by way of Exception 2 to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). A similar provision is also present in the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) which replaced the IPC on July 1 this year. In 2022, the

Delhi High Court delivered a split verdict on whether marital rape should be a criminal offence. The matter then reached the Supreme Court in September that year. "The sexual aspect is but one of many facets of the relationship between husband and wife, on which the bedrock of their marriage rests ... Given the nature of the marital institution in our socio-legal milieu, if the legislature is of the view that, for preservation of the marital institution, the impugned Exception should be retained, it is submitted that it would not be appropriate for this Hon'ble Court to strike down the Exception," the latest affidavit added.

The counter-affidavit was filed in response to a batch of petitions that have called for the criminalisation of marital rape. The Centre criticised the petitioners' approach of treating the institution of marriage as a private institution, terming this view unidimensional. The case of a married woman and her own husband cannot be treated in the exact same manner as other cases, it said.

# Make-in-Odisha 2025 conclave in Delhi



**Aims for investments worth Rs 5 lakh cr in 5 yrs**

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

As part of 'Utkarsh Odisha', the State's premier business summit, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi met ambassadors of 34 different nations and members of several industry associations in New Delhi on Thursday.

Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Consul-Generals and trade commissioners from across the globe attended the event.

Majhi presented Odisha's dynamic industrial landscape and emerging investment opportunities to the global audience. He aimed to foster partnerships and attract invest-

ments worth over Rs 5 lakh crore in five years by showcasing the potential and opportunities available in Odisha.

The CM held one-on-one meetings with delegations of industry bodies and associations. The meeting revolved around Odisha's industrial potential, supportive policies, ease of doing business and an investor-friendly environment.

Accompanied by the CM were Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja and many senior officials of the State Government.

The CM also personally invited global stakeholders to attend the Utkarsh Odisha: Make in Odisha Conclave-2025.

Business leaders and investors from various sectors were invited to explore how Odisha

can serve as a key destination for investments.

"I'm very grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of India, for inviting us to this interactive session that is coming up in the state of Odisha," said Ambassador-designate of Bahrain Abdul Rahman Mohammed Al Gaoud.

Malaysia's High Commissioner to India Muzaffar Shah Mustafa said, "I'm looking forward to all the opportunities and potential collaboration with the State of Odisha. It is a very good effort by the Odisha Government to attract collaborations with international partners." "For Malaysia, we can look for the development of IT, IT services, education, tourism and other sectors. But we are open to more ideas and would like to hear it from the Chief Minister," he added.

# 'Kalabati' rice is answer to malnutrition

Contains proven health benefits

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

'Kalabati' rice, highlighted by a study by the Sambalpur University, has emerged as a nutritional powerhouse against malnutrition in Odisha. PhD scholar Payal Sharma's research reveals its potential to enhance infant health. Her formulation, Nutri Nest, featuring the black Kalabati rice and other nutrients, shows promising results on mouse pups. A patent is awaited for its wider market availability.

Payal Sharma, a PhD scholar of the Food Science Technology and Nutrition department of Sambalpur University, through her one-year-long research work, has discovered that the rice variety, which is on the verge of extinction, can



work wonders in combating malnutrition in babies due to its high nutritional values.

As part of her research, Sharma prepared a mixture of Kalabati rice powder, peanut, raggi, soybeans, jiggery and milk powder with the black rice being the major component in the powder mix named 'Nutri Nest'. Later, she divided 21 mouse pups into three groups.

While the first group was

given traditional baby food, the second one was provided baby food available in the market, and the last group was fed Nutri Nest for 14 days in the lab.

The mouse pups group that consumed the rice power came up with good health as compared to others. After its application on mouse pups became a success, Sharma is now waiting for a patent.

"After observation, we

found the mice which were supplied with Nutri Nest were more healthy and weighed more than the other groups. We are yet to undertake a human trial," Sharma said.

"We have parboiled the Kalabati paddy so that it can be easily digested. We have added soybean, peanuts, raggi, jiggery and some amount of milk substitute," said Dr Aparajita Priyadarshini, guide of Sharma.

# 696 leopards now residing in Odisha forests

Population increases amid ongoing threats

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

The latest leopard census conducted by the Odisha Forest Department has revealed a rise in the State's leopard population with 696 leopards now residing in its forests.

This marks an increase from the 568 leopards reported in the 2022 census conducted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). However, the current figure is still below the 760 leopards recorded in 2018.

The recent State-led census was more comprehensive than previous surveys, deploying camera traps across 47 Forest Divisions compared to the NTCA's limited scope in key areas like Similipal and



Satkosia. According to the office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), the Forest Department identified 284 to 296 unique leopards, significantly more than the fewer than 100 identified in the NTCA's last survey.

The census revealed that the highest concentration of leop-

ards, about 200, was located in the Mayurbhanj-Keonjhar landscape, which includes the Similipal Tiger Reserve. Other key areas include the Satkosia-Boudh-Athmallik landscape, home to 150-160 leopards, and the Hirakud-Rairakhol-Sambalpur region, which holds 70-80 leopards. Smaller populations were recorded in

the Khariar-Sunabeda landscape (40-50 leopards) and the Dhenkanal landscape (20 leopards). Despite the encouraging increase in numbers, conservationists warn that poaching continues to pose a significant threat to the survival of leopards in Odisha. Leopards are frequently targeted for their skins, bones and other body parts, which are highly sought-after in illegal wildlife markets.

"While Odisha has implemented anti-poaching measures, the high demand for leopard parts in the black market makes the fight against poaching an uphill battle," said Gourang Charan Rout, a forest rights and wildlife conservation activist. He emphasised the need for collaboration between law enforcement and forest officials and local communities to protect leopards and maintain the ecological balance.

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4th October 2024 | 10:30 a.m. | Athletic Stadium, KISS Campus 4, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

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US Consul General  
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**Dr. Ary S. Graça F°**  
President,  
Federation Internationale  
de Volleyball (FIVB), Switzerland

**Event Highlights** >>> >>> >>>

**5000**

Kids showcasing their volleyball skills across 60 mini-courts in thrilling 4-a-side matches.

**40,000**

Students creating an electric atmosphere with flag displays, cheers, and tribal dance performances.

**3**

Guinness World Record Attempts in volleyball.

- ◆ KIIT and KISS will announce a scholarship program, **Dr. Ary Graça-Dr. Samanta Scholarship**, for volleyball athletes. KIIT/KISS will provide sponsorship to one or two athletes pursuing bachelor's or master's degree.
- ◆ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony will be held between KIIT/KISS and the FIVB Volleyball Foundation. This MoU will cover all forthcoming projects and partnership initiatives.

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# 'Irregularities' in RI, Amin recruitment Aspirants stage protest before Minister's house

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Hundreds of aspirants on Thursday staged a protest outside the residence of Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj alleging large-scale irregularities in the recruitment of district cadre posts of Revenue Inspectors (RIs), ICDS supervisors, ARIs, Amins and SFSs conducted by the Odisha Subordinate Staff Selection Commission (OSSSC). The aspirants demanded



that the examinations be conducted in offline mode. "Several cases of irregularities in the conduct of the examination have surfaced. Earlier yesterday, one person was also arrested in Boudh. There is no transparency in the ex-

amination," alleged an aspirant. Echoing the same, another said, "The examination is being conducted at various cybercafés. Everything is fixed as to who will get the job." The prelims written exami-

nation for the recruitment began on September 20 and will continue till October 20. The OSSSC is conducting the recruitment drive to fill up a total of 2,895 vacant posts. A massive rally by aspirants in Cuttack also demanded cancellation of the examinations conducted by the OSSSC due to alleged irregularities. Notably, tension had also erupted at Nayapalli in Bhubaneswar recently when aspirants created a ruckus over the conduct of the examination at a cyber café.

# OUAT students hold demo against street vendors

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
A large number of students of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) held a demonstration here on Thursday alleging rowdy behaviour by street vendors outside the college gates. The irate students demanded an immediate ban of the street vendors from the college boundary. The agitators, led by student union leaders, alleged that the



street vendors are engaged in pick-pocketing and drug peddling. The agitators also demanded for stronger safety measures due to frequent instances of eve-teasing and sexual harassment of women

students outside the university gates. Despite repeated complaints, students say little progress has been made in addressing their demands. The students alleged that outsiders often make sexist comments and insensitive re-

marks. With street vendors everywhere, the university boundary has become a safe haven for the anti-socials. Dozens of men often assemble outside the campus, resulting in awkward situations for girl students in the campus, it was learnt. When asked to mend their ways, the street vendors, many of them being locals, allegedly threaten the students with dire consequences, the students alleged. The agitation was called off after the university authorities intervened and assured to take necessary steps in this connection.

## BBSR Chapter of Energy Swaraj Foundation

**Launched by Centurion University**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Centurion University has announced the launch of a Bhubaneswar Chapter of the Energy Swaraj Foundation. The event was graced by Chetan Singh Solanki, Professor at IIT Bombay and founder of the Energy Swaraj Foundation, and Prof Supriya Pattanayak, Vice-Chancellor of Centurion University. The launch marks a significant milestone in the promotion of sustainable energy practices with a focus on solar energy as a solution to combat climate change. The Bhubaneswar Chapter aims to advance energy self-reliance through the adoption of renewable resources, aligning with the broader mission of the Energy Swaraj

Foundation to decentralise energy solutions and achieve climate goals. Prof Solanki said, "Climate change is an urgent problem that requires decentralised, practical energy solutions. Solar energy is one of the most effective ways to combat this crisis." The chapter's initiatives will include organising workshops, seminars, and training sessions to educate the public on the advantages of renewable energy and how solar power can be incorporated into daily life. In addition, the chapter will implement solar energy projects in rural communities across Odisha. Chapter president Dr Bijaya Bijeta Nayak remarked, "The launch of this chapter, we believe, would have a lasting impact by educating, empowering and offering practical energy solutions to people across Odisha."

## Nat'l Blood Donation Day Walkathon held from AG Square to Red Cross Bhawan

**Camps organised; donors feted**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Under the guidance of honorary secretary, Indian Red Cross Society Odisha State Branch, Bibhuti Bhusan Pattanaik, the National Voluntary Blood Donation Day was organised here on Wednesday. To mark the Day, the honorary secretary flagged off a Walkathon from AG Square to Red Cross Bhawan in which more than 200 volunteers from different schools and colleges joined. The volunteers gave slogans related to blood donation while holding placards. A blood donation camp was organised in which more than 20 volunteers donated blood at Red Cross Regional Blood Centre. Another camp has also



been organised at Utkal University of Culture from which 49 units of blood collected. On the occasion, a technical session was taken by doctors to create awareness on blood donation among the volunteers. An award giving ceremony was also organised to felicitate the blood donors who have set an example in the field of blood donation. Medical Officer RCRBC Dr Debi Prasad Rath proposed the welcome speech. Commandant of Police and joint secre-

tary, Red Cross regional branch Police Commissionerate Cuttack and Bhubaneswar Lalitendu Mohanty joined as a guest and motivated the volunteers to involve more volunteers in blood drives to save lives. Medical Officer Sum Hospital Dr Girija Nandini Kanungo and Medical Officer Bachi Cancer Hospital Dr Santosh Mishra joined as guests and took a technical session on blood donation and motivated the volunteers.

Youth Red Cross officer Dr Ramesh Chandra Behera coordinated the programme. Junior Red Cross Officer Laxman Swain coordinated the award giving ceremony. Medical Officer RCRBC Dr Pradeep Kumar Moharana proposed the vote of thanks. YRC counsellors Dr Naresh Chandra Sahoo, Dr Samsita Pattanaik, Mohan Charan Bisi, JRC counsellors like Naba Kishore Dipa, Niranjana Sahoo, Banamali Meher and volunteers like Maitreyi Mishra from KIIT University, Deepak Kumar Nisanka from BJB Autonomous College, Raja Gouda from Rajdhani College and Kajal Kanhar Maharshi Women's Degree College were felicitated as Blood Heros. Gopinath Pattnaik was also awarded for giving blood for more than 150 times in life.

## 'THRIVE' to boost tribal health, youth power

**Launched by KIIT, KISS & Jhpiego**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and Jhpiego, a Johns Hopkins affiliate, on Thursday expanded their partnership with a new initiative called Tribal Health Research Innovation & Vocational Empowerment (THRIVE). A new tripartite MoU was signed in this regard between KIIT, KISS and Jhpiego in the presence of KIIT and KISS founder Dr Achyuta Samanta. The new partnership will create two ground-breaking centres as part of the new initiative, serving as hubs for indigenous-led research, cultural preservation, and youth empowerment, aiming to address critical health and social challenges within indigenous communities. The centres will be known as the Centre for Tribal Health and Research (CTHR) and the Centre for Youth Innovation and Inclusiveness (CYII). The KIIT VC hoped that this partnership would eventually lead to the establishment of the John Hopkins Chair while the KISS VC would accelerate the pace of youth and women empowerment in the marginalised communities.

## In Cuttack DJ music allowed but with noise down

**HC issues directive**  
**PNS ■ CUTTACK**  
The Orissa High Court on Thursday allowed DJ music during the upcoming Durga Puja in Cuttack, but the court directed that the noise levels should be within 65 decibels. Hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) about the problems in the city, the court passed the order. Earlier, the court had ordered the city Deputy Com-

missioner of Police, Cuttack, to file an affidavit mentioning the steps taken by it to prevent noise pollution in the city during the coming Durga Puja festivities. Meanwhile, the High Court expressed dissatisfaction over the poor conditions of the roads in Cuttack and ordered to finish the road works within seven days. Some days back, the court had ordered not to construct gates on roads in the city during the Dussehra festival in a bid to avoid congestion.

## Students join INTACH Heritage Quiz

**Over 1,500 from 25 schools display their talent**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
As the world moves to an increasingly concrete and cosmopolitan state, it is important to hold on to our roots. To expose young minds to the heritage that surrounds them, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Odisha State Chapter, conducted a State Level Round of the INTACH Heritage Quiz-2024 at the MBS



Public School, Bhubaneswar. IMTACH State convener AB Tripathy gave a message to the students, teachers and parents who had accompanied the participants from different parts of the State. Former Engineer-in-Chief Binod Chandra Padhi spoke on the

heritage. More than 1,500 students from 25 schools spread all over the State participated in the district rounds. The first prize winning team of Janmejaya Jena and Omkar Patra from MBS Public School, Bhubaneswar displayed an outstanding performance which reflected not only their dedication to learning but also their ability to navigate complex information with finesse. The winning team will gear up to participate in the national level to be held in New Delhi in December this year.

culture and heritage of the State. The intellectually-charged competition was conducted by Bhubaneswar Chapter convener Anil Dhir. The students displayed an impressive depth of knowledge with a keen understanding of India's and Odisha's rich

## In city 3.5L cash snatched from woman in broad daylight

**Street crimes like snatching of bags containing cash, chains and mobile phones by bike-borne miscreants are on the rise in the State capital city, spreading a sense of insecurity and fear among the residents, particularly women.**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
In a glaring example, two miscreants who came by a motorbike looted cash of Rs 3.25 lakh in broad daylight in the Chandrasekharpur police station area in the city on Thurs-

day. As per reports, one Pratima Behera and her brother were returning home after withdrawing the cash from the State Bank of India's Chandrasekharpur Phase-I branch. As they were nearing home, the miscreants came from behind, snatched the cash bag from Pratima and sped away from the spot. On the basis of a complaint lodged by the victim, police reached the spot, collected CCTV footage and began a probe.

# Despite many schemes People engaged in manual scavenging neglected as ever

The data provided by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in its annual report 2023 shows that caste wise 70 percent of the people engaged in cleaning urban sewers and septic tanks belongs to scheduled caste while tribal, and general category constitute 8 percent each and OBC, 14 percent. 36,060 sewer and septic tank sanitary workers were profiled in the year 2023-24 from 35 States and UTs for implementation of the National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE). The scheme aims to eradicate manual sewer cleaning and rehabilitation of the workers engaged in the hazardous occupation for generations. It is reported that 377 persons died between 2019 and 2023 due to the hazardous nature of cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in the country. The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act 2013 banned manual scavenging. While celebrating Amrutkala, it is unfortunate that the caste-based occupation has been continuing in the country and remains unabated in spite of constitutional laws and



**MANAS JENA**

dedicated Ministry, schemes and programmes to end such inhuman practice. Scavenging is not just a hazardous form of occupation but also socially treated as most demeaning and people engaged in such work often face discrimination in every aspect of social life. Odisha has started a scheme called GARIMA with similar purpose in 2020. Sanitary workers are not like other workers of any occupation but they are also one of the most vulnerable communities among

SCs. Scavenging or sanitary work is still prevalent as a customarily caste based occupation in India. As per 2011 Census, the population of Hadi community in Odisha was 2.5 lakh. They are also called by different names such as Mehenter, Behera, sweeper and scavengers. With increasing urbanization, most of them have migrated to urban locations to get engaged in sanitary work and largely concentrated in cities. In the recent past, the Government has identified about 60,000 manual scavengers from 18 States including Odisha. Though legally manual scavenging is banned by law, it is still in practice in many places. Both men and women of the community are being engaged in the occupation and the urban bodies are the principal employer. In a caste ridden society of India, sanitary workers are looked down upon in the caste hierarchy and they are the most socially discriminated community in every aspect of social life.

cluding human excreta. They all start work early in the morning only to keep all public places, hospitals, schools, stations, bus stops, roads, and cities clean to maintain sanitation for a healthy and clean life. In spite of modernization, this particular community people are routinely engaged in large numbers with this most hated occupation which has no social respect in society. Some of them also addi-

tionally do drum beating, leather work, shoe making and bamboo work. But in spite of all their dedicated service to mankind what they have been getting? What is their socio-economic status? Few seem to bother about it. They have very insignificant representation in education, government jobs and education in comparison to other SC groups. Almost all of them live in slums for generations without homestead land and even struggle every day to access basic amenities such as safe

drinking water, electricity, toilets and a house for the family. Their houses in slums routinely face eviction drives as unauthorized habitations without a rehabilitation plan. They have been always pushed to the outskirts of the cities and displaced again and again either in the name of expansion or beautification of cities without a permanent solution to their land and housing rights. It is being observed that their lit-

getting wage as semi-skilled or skilled workers. Even many of them get less than minimum wage for eight hours of hard work. The principal employer has no role to ensure minimum wage of these vulnerable helpless workers. The kind of work they have been doing is most hazardous as they are more prone to TB, skin diseases and water borne diseases due to long exposure to dust, wastes and unhygienic places. It is the duty of the employer to provide all kinds of protective equipment, masks, gloves, boots, helmets, rest and holidays and sickness leave but such provisions are still a far cry for them. It has been frequently reported that a few of them die in roadside manholes, soak pits and waste pits while cleaning. Unfortunately such deaths largely remain unrecorded by urban bodies. The trade unions, civil society organisations and other social bodies have made very little visible intervention to change their social condition. The PMS Act 2013 and schemes such as NAMASTE and GARIMA are all attempts aiming at correcting the historical injustice and indignity and establishing the right to live with dignity as a fundamental right. There is a provision in the Act for allocation of residential plots and assistance for construction of houses. Besides, committees under the district Collectors with representatives of community including women should be formed to look after their welfare but it has not been implemented with seriousness. The National Commission for Safai Karmacharis exists since 1993, and the National Safai Karmachari Finance and Development Corporation since 1997 with a share capital of Rs 700 crore to look into the specific issues of scavenger communities. There are schemes for skill development, self employment with loan at lower rate of interest and subsidy. The SC and ST Finance Cooperative Corporation is the nodal agency in the State for implementation of such schemes. The various public sector and private companies are also contributing out of their CSR funds for the rehabilitation of the scavengers. But still these people live under subhuman conditions with no improvement in their lives. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

## SOCIAL CANVAS

# In Astarang 81-yr-old invalid widow denied pension

Social worker draws attention of Puri DM

KAMAL LOCHAN DIXIT ■ ASTARANG

Vidulata Raut (81), an unemployed widow of Alsahi panchayat under Astarang block, has not received old age allowance for last three years. Social worker Amie Ranjan Barik has drawn attention to this by complaining with the Puri district Collector.



walk for almost three years, said Amie who first brought the old woman's plight to the attention of the local admin-

istration through his X account and email. As there was no success, he himself went to Puri and filed a complaint in the district Collector's Complaint Room.

"If a person does not have a bank account then there is a rule to go to him and pay the allowance. Here why a disabled person is neglected in getting her due is the biggest question," said Amie.

According to the medical report, the woman has been lying at home since January 2021 due to leg fracture and

surgery is not possible in her old age. "It is regrettable that the local panchayat representative or the block executive officer did not bring this to the attention of the Social Security Department," lamented Amie.

When asked, Officer-in-charge of Social Security Department in the block, Nandana Nivedita said that if a beneficiary does not take the allowance for 3 months, it is automatically cut off as per the government rules.

# On Gandhi Jayanti 108-ft Tricolour hoisted in Patnagarh



PNS ■ BALANGIR

A 108-foot monumental Tricolour was unfurled at the Ramai High School in Patnagarh on the Gandhi Jayanti day. The Flag Foundation of India (FFOI) unfurled it in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo.

display of the Indian National flag with pride and honour and to raise awareness about its significance. The flag was dedicated to the nation by FFOI president Naveen Jindal.

The Patnagarh ceremony was also attended by senior Indian Army officers. "This event will forever be etched in the history of India," said Jindal CSR Group Head Prashant Hota.

# In Jagatsinghpur Minor rape victim gets rehab; NHRC closes case

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on September 30 closed a case after considering the report submitted by the District Magistrate and SP of Jagatsinghpur related to sexual abuse of a minor class-VI student by the father of her tutor.

Since the first phase of the compensation has been paid to the victim and recommendation has been made to provide the second phase of the compensation to the victim, no further intervention of the Commission is required in the

instant case, the Commission stated.

The NHRC passed the order acting on a petition filed by lawyer and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy.

Tripathy alleged that one minor girl was allegedly raped by her tuition teacher's father, on 23.10.2023, in a village under Kujanga police limits, of Jagatsinghpur district.

The petitioner narrated the shocking incident as thus. Nearly 15 to 20 students, including girls went to a woman teacher's house at Balitutha for daily tuition. In the absence of the teacher, her father taught the students.

However, taking advantage of his daughter's absence, prime accused Subash Muduli allegedly raped the minor girl, a Class VI student, at regular intervals.

Muduli disclosed the complicity of his colleague Rabintra Das, 50, in the crime. The horrible situation poses extreme violation of human rights, petitioner Tripathy stated and sought intervention of the Commission for ensuring justice to the minor victim.

The Commission vide its proceedings dated 26.06.2024 directed the Superintendent of Police and the District Magistrate, Jagatsinghpur to submit fresh report over the payment

of compensation to the victim in the case.

Pursuant to the directions of the Commission, report dated 13.08.2024 of the Collector and District Magistrate, Jagatsinghpur informed that payment of Rs. 1 lakh (25% of the recommended amount of Rs 4 lakh as first phase) has been paid to the victim and second phase is pending at Government level. Report dated 09.08.2024 of the Superintendent of Police, Jagatsinghpur, stated that GER was submitted for the victim's monetary compensation with recommendation of Rs 4 lakh. All action of the case has been completed.

# In Jagatsinghpur Man gets 10-yr jail term for raping minor girl

PNS ■ JAGATSIINGHPUR

Jagatsinghpur Fast Track Court Judge Ajaya Kumar Mohanty on Tuesday sentenced a person to 10 years' imprisonment for raping a minor girl of the district.

The court also slapped a fine of Rs 30,000 on the convict identified as Ramakanta Majhi of Malahunka village in the Kujanga area of the district. In default, he has to undergo another six months' rigorous imprisonment.

The accused had kidnapped a 15-year-old girl on May 28, 2019 and kept a sexual relationship with her. He had taken

the victim to Khordha and later to Bengaluru and Rajasthan.

Based on the complaint of the victim's family, the Kujang police had registered a kidnapping case and later arrested Ramakanta from Jaipur in Rajasthan along with the girl.

After examining deposition of 10 witnesses and evidence provided by the prosecution, the court pronounced the judgement. The court also directed the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to pay Rs 7 lakh as compensation to the girl, informed prosecution advocate Dola Govinda Dash.

# Parla MLA encourages RAA, inspects hostel



PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

Paralakhemundi BJD MLA Rupesh Panigrahi participated as the chief guest in the Rastriya Abishkar Abhijan (RAA) event held at the Tagore Memorial High School at Upalada of Gosani block in Gajapati district.

Notably, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has launched the RAA to encourage children to learn science and mathematics. As an engineer, Panigrahi motivated the students not to be scared of science but understand each subject with interest so that they can become engineers, doctors and scientists in their careers.

He gave away awards to the quiz and other events' winners. Other guests in the function included Gajapati ZP President G Tirupati Rao, Gosani Block Chairman N Bir Raju, ZP Member S Balaraju, senior leader S Gajapati Rao and the Gosani Block BEO.

He made a surprise visit to the 100-bed hostel of the high school and found mismanagement in service and infrastructure. He advised Headmistress P Bharati to improve the hostel environment so that the students feel comfortable and assured her to help her wherever needed. Rupesh, an education entrepreneur, is a first-time MLA and the only BJD MLA in Gajapati district and the son of Hi-Tech Medical College Chairman Tirupati Panigrahi.

# Munda tribals do Dassain dance to greet Dussehra

The dance form now on verge of extinction

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

The 'Dassain Dance' is a unique kind of group dance of tribal community that is performed by mostly Munda tribal community during the Dussehra in Keonjhar district. However, the tribal dance form is on the verge of extinction these days. With tribals doing the dance, it indicates to the rural people that Dussehra is round the corner.

Sources said that tribal people practicing 'mantra and tatnra' usually take part in the dance. "During the dance, the tribal performers receive rice, spices, money etc that are donated by the villagers. The tribals worship their deity of power on the day of Dussehra with the donation. Later they organise a feast among them," said Karunakar Barik, a writer.

In this dance, the tribal people dress up colourfully and visit village to village with



dancing and beating instruments, a month before the Dussehra. The tribal male persons get them painted in different colours and dress up in costumes of male, female, eunuch, animal and bird. They use instruments called 'Bhuan Baja' made of bamboo, leather and pitcher in the dance. They dance with the beat of sound produced from the brass or silver bowl and plate.

They sing by uttering the line 'Bhung se se Bhung, se Bere se' during the dance. One of them is dressed in a funny manner to make the villagers laugh.

The tribals dance for a month till the Dussehra. On the day of Dussehra they offer puja to please the 'deity of Tantra' and hope for successful training on tantra.

Dr B Behera, a writer of tribal culture, said, "It is a very old form of dance of Munda community. But due to the advent of modernisation it is gradually limited to a few villages now. Earlier many groups visited different villages in the district and performed dances. It not only gave them amusement, but also helped them bond with the fellow villagers."

# K'mal boy who cracked NEET seeks govt support for study

His family is unable to bear cost

PNS ■ PHULBANI

Sankarshan Mandal from Tumudibandha village in Kandhamal district cracked the NEET exam despite financial hardships. Son of daily labourers Manik and Devaki Mandal, Sankarshan's dreams are now threatened by lack of funds for his medical education.

The family seeks assistance from the Odisha Government to overcome this challenge. Sankarshan was born into an underprivileged family. Growing up with limited educational opportunities, Sankarshan attended Chakapada Adarsha Vidyalaya for his schooling. He prepared diligently for NEET with limited resources, relying heavily on the internet to crack the all-India exam on his second attempt.

But his hopes are shattered as his parents' meagre earnings are barely sufficient for daily



sustenance, making funding for his medical education seem impossible. Sankarshan's parents swell with pride at their son's accomplishment, yet they are burdened with worry about how to finance his future education and career.

"We are worried about his studies. If the Government provides some financial aid, it will be helpful," said Sankarshan's mother, Devaki Mandal.

"It is a blessing of God that he is good at studies. If the Government provides some

kind of help through a scheme to us, it will be helpful," said a disheartened Manik Mandal, Sankarshan's father.

Sankarshan's neighbours and well-wishers, like Hemanta Mondal, hope that the administration or private institutions will step in to support the talented young man.

"We're hoping that either the Government or private organisations will step in to support Sankarshan, ensuring that his golden future doesn't get cut short due to lack of money," said Hemanta.

# IIM S'pur's 5-day IDE Bootcamp ends

160 participants from diverse regions join

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

The IIM Sambalpur concluded the first phase of the second edition of the Innovation, Design, and Entrepreneurship (IDE) Bootcamp in its campus. The initiative, envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) in partnership with Wadhvani Foundation. The event attracted over 160 participants from diverse regions, including Odisha, West Bengal, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Chhattisgarh.



preneurship with an objective to enhance and foster the innovation, design, and entrepreneurial capabilities of students across India.

The event also featured an exhibition highlighting innovators and start-ups, with over 50 start-ups showcasing their unique products. The exhibition had been inaugurated by CMD of MCLUday A Kaole, Associate Partner at IBM Anindya Ghosh and a prominent business leader and entrepreneur Dr Annurag Batra. The exhibition presented various offerings across various sectors, including health, hospitality, artificial intelligence, smart home systems, and women's care, among others which was participated by

Start-ups from across the nation.

National and international experts specializing in product design, ergonomics, design thinking, and pitching skills conducted intensive training sessions for the participants. Furthermore, start-up founders and business leaders delivered motivational addresses, sharing their practical experiences and insights. More than 15 faculty members provided mentorship to the students throughout the event.

Shamsher Singh Hura, CEO of JAS Group and Nishita Balisingsh, Co-Founder and CEO of Nexus Power graced the event, apart from representatives from the AICTE and Wadhvani Foundation Master Trainers.

# 'Sriballav was a politician class apart'

Rich tributes paid to late Min, MP on his birth anniversary

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

Rich tributes were paid to former Minister, Parliamentarian, trade union leader and educationist Sriballav Panigrahi on his 84th Birth Anniversary Commemoration organised at his hometown in Sambalpur on September 29.

State Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari was the chief guest at the commemoration. Sriballav's old associate and friend, former Minister and Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjana Patnaik was the guest of honor. Talcher MLA Braja Kishore Pradhan and former Minister Prakash Chandra Debta were guest speakers.

Prominent citizens from all walks of life joined together to remember the contribu-



tions of Sriballav.

Minister Pujari in his address as the chief guest said after assuming the role of Odisha's Revenue Minister, the topmost name that came to his mind was Sriballav Panigrahi's.

Pujari said that in his life he has had the opportunity to connect with various politicians of different ideologies and across the political spectrum. He said he constantly evaluated various leaders and if honesty, integrity, clarity of

thought, knowledge, morality and uncompromising nature on one's own principles were taken into account, Sriballavbabu's was right on top of his list. He would keep Sriballav Panigrahi ahead of all other leaders because of these qualities, said Pujari. He assured all help to the Sriballav and Sunanda Panigrahi Foundation.

Guest of honour Patnaik recalled his association with Sriballav for over 60 years. He regaled the crowd with many

interesting anecdotes about his relationship with Sriballav.

He said Sriballav, even when he was not in power, had an unique ability to find ways and means to get public works done. Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) and the Railway Division in Sambalpur happened only because of his dogged efforts. After Naba Krusha Chowdhary, major land reforms were excuted under his watch. Extolling him as a man of character, Patnaik said Sriballav was an

ideal politician and today's generation should be inspired by him. Guest Speaker and 4-time Talcher MLA Pradhan said that Sriballavbabu was his political godfather. He said he came into politics only because Sriballavbabu was confident about his abilities.

Former Minister Debta said that Sriballavbabu was responsible for his getting nominated as Congress Candidate in 1974. Not tolerating any kind of injustice, Sriballavbabu was a committed and strong personality, he added.

Among others who spoke included general secretary of Orissa Collieries Mazdoor Sangh Soubhagya Pradhan, former general secretary, Heavy Water Workers Union, Talcher Akshay Biswal and retired Judge Manoranjan Mohanty. The function was presided over by chairperson of Sriballav and Sunanda Panigrahi Foundation and former MLA Dr Raseswari Panigrahi.

# India rejects USCIRF report as political bias

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday took strong exception to a US Commission on International Religious Freedom report claiming worsening religious freedom in the country and said it is a biased organization with a political agenda. Giving this stern reaction here, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said "Our views on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) are well known. It is a biased organisation with a political agenda. It continues to misrepresent facts and peddles a motivated narrative about India. We reject this malicious report, which only serves to discredit USCIRF further. We would urge USCIRF to



desist from such agenda driven efforts. The USCIRF would also be well advised to utilise its time more productively on addressing human rights issues in the United States." "Newagency PTI reported from Washington a US federal government commission has flagged the alleged worsening of religious freedom in India and called for it to be designated as a "Country of Particular Concern". Authored by senior policy analyst Sema Hasan, the section on India describes the

use of misinformation and disinformation -- including hate speech by government officials -- to incite violent attacks against religious minorities and their places of worship, the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) said in a statement. In its annual report, the USCIRF also recommended that the US Department of State designate India as a "Country of Particular Concern" for engaging in systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom. The state department has so far refrained from accepting the recommendations. "This report highlights how, throughout 2024, individuals have been killed, beaten, and lynched by vigilante groups, religious leaders have been arbitrarily arrested, and homes and places of worship have been demolished. These events constitute particularly severe violations of religious freedom," the USCIRF said. Beginning with the previous Manmohan Singh-led government, India has consistently denied visas to USCIRF members to visit the country, citing "interference" in its internal affairs, it added. India and several Indian-American groups have in the past accused the USCIRF of biased, unscientific and agenda-driven reporting to malign the country. "It (the report) further describes changes to and enforcement of India's legal framework to target and disenfranchise religious minorities, including the Citizenship Amendment Act, a uniform civil code, and several state-level anti-conversion and cow slaughter laws," the USCIRF said.

# J and K Assembly polls show 69.69 per cent turnout: EC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Voter turnout of 69.69 per cent has been recorded in third phase of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, with women outnumbering men in casting votes, the Election Commission said on Thursday. Overall, 63.88 per cent turnout has been recorded at polling stations, as against 58.58 per cent in the Lok Sabha polls, the poll panel noted. In phase-three of the polls on October one, when 40 seats went for voting in the Union Territory, the turnout of male voters was recorded at 69.37 per cent as compared to 70.02 per cent of women, the Election Commission (EC) said. Nearly 44 per cent of voters from the third gender

category came to cast their votes in this phase. Referring to the overall turnout, the Election Commission said it stood at 63.88 per cent with male participation recorded at 64.68 per cent. The overall women turnout was recorded at 63.04 per cent and that of the third gender at 38.24 per cent. The final votes polled will be available post-counting with counting of postal ballots. Postal ballots include postal ballots given to service voters, absentee voters (those above 85 years of age, persons with disabilities, those part of essential services) and voters on election duty, the EC noted. Daily account of such postal ballots received, as per established guidelines, are given to all candidates, it said.

# Modi greets people on Navaratri festival

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday greeted people at the start of the auspicious Navaratri festival. "It is my wish that this sacred festival devoted to worshipping shakti is auspicious for everyone," he said in a social media post. The festival is marked by festivities in many parts of the country, while the devout involve themselves in religious practices, including fasting, during the period.

# Indian researchers develop road safety sensor prototype

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

A prototype of a road safety sensor that can be implanted at high-risk turning points where accidents are frequent, has been developed by Indian researchers from a new polymer nanocomposite with pressure sensing and energy harvesting properties. The prototype may be implanted in the movable ramp and secured to the road just 100 meters before acute and fatal turning points. Thus, any vehicle approaching from the opposite side will see the signal on a screen and be alerted, according to a statement from the Department of Science and Technology which has funded the project under INSPIRE

-faculty fellowship programme. This prototype works on the principle of piezoelectric effect so it can generate energy that can be stored and used further to power electronic gadgets as well. Developed by the scientists from the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), Bengaluru, the novel polymer nanocomposite, from which the prototype has been crafted, has been made of transition metal dichalcogenide, Scientists, Ankur Verma, Dr. Arjun Hari Madhu, Dr. Subash Cherumannil Karumuthil synthesised vanadium disulfide (VS2) with a very high surface charge which has the capacity of improving the piezoelectric characteristics of polymers. Polymer nanocomposite films



were prepared by integrating these nanoparticles at various concentrations into a well-known piezoelectric polymer, poly (vinylidene difluoride) (PVDF). Further they investigated how the surface charge of nanoparticles will affect the piezoelectric properties of polymer nanocomposite. In addition, a laboratory-scale demonstration of a road safety sensor and smart door

generating and pressure sensing applications. This work was recently published in the Journal of Material Chemistry A and an Indian patent application filed. This study is part of an ongoing project "Materials for self-powered energy generating and pressure sensing devices". Scientists are constantly trying to develop new materials for self-powered energy generating and pressure sensing devices and using them for several applications. Flexible, portable, long-lasting, and wearable sensors and energy harvesting devices can play an essential part in today's artificial intelligence era. Polymers and nanoparticles serve critical roles in today's flexible electronic systems, added the statement.

# Modi to address Kautilya economic conclave in Delhi

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the Kautilya Economic Conclave here on Friday, his office has said. The third edition of the conclave will be held from October four to six, the PMO said. The conclave will focus on themes such as financing green transition, geo-economic fragmentation and implications for growth, and principles for policy action to preserve resilience. Both Indian and international scholars are slated to discuss some of the most important issues confronting the Indian economy and economies of the Global South, the PMO said.



# India joins IMDRF as affiliate member, enhancing global collaboration

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

India has become an affiliate member of the International Medical Device Regulators Forum (IMDRF), a development that will open doors to invaluable opportunities for reliance and collaboration with regulatory authorities worldwide while strengthening the "Brand India" in the global market. The Union Health Ministry said on Thursday, the IMDRF, which was established in 2011, is a group of global medical device regulators whose aim is to speed up the adoption of international medical device regulatory harmonisation and convergence. Its members include national regulatory authorities of the US, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the UK, Brazil, Russia, China, South Korea, Singapore and the World Health Organisation (WHO). "To achieve global alignment in its medical device regulatory system, enhance the competitiveness of the domestic industry and boost transnational prominence, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the Union Health Ministry, applied for Affiliate Membership in the International Medical Device Regulators Forum (IMDRF) in 2024," the Ministry said in a statement. "After review of India's application for affiliate membership and meeting

discussions by the IMDRF Management Committee (MC) with the senior officers of CDSCO during the 26th Session of IMDRF held in September 2024 at Seattle, Washington, USA, the CDSCO has received approval from IMDRF as an affiliate member of the forum," it said. Becoming an affiliate member of the IMDRF will open doors to invaluable opportunities for reliance and collaboration with regulatory authorities worldwide, it said. The membership helps to harmonise regulatory requirements across the globe, which reduces complexities for manufacturers and helps safeguard public health by promoting collaboration, harmonising regulations and promoting convergence. As an affiliate member, India will participate in IMDRF open sessions for information exchange on technical topics with other regulators, to discuss the latest medical device regulatory strategies and trends, provide feedback on its experience and perspectives and use IMDRF documents in part or in whole as the basis for its regulatory framework for medical devices, said the statement. This membership will also enable Indian medical device manufacturers to meet the regulatory requirements of IMDRF member countries, thereby strengthening the "Brand India" in the global market, it said.

# Air Marshal SP Dharkar appointed Vice Chief of Air Staff

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Air Marshal S P Dharkar, an accomplished fighter pilot with 3,600 hours of flying experience, on Thursday assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Air Staff. He succeeds Air Chief Marshal A P Singh who became the Chief of Air Staff on September 30. Air Marshal Dharkar has flown various types of fighter jets and trainer aircraft and commanded a MiG-27 squadron. He is an experienced qualified flying instructor, fighter strike leader and instrument rating instructor. Commissioned in the fighter stream in 1985, he is an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC),



National Defence Academy (NDA), Defence Services Staff College and the US Air War College. He has commanded a frontline fighter unit and served as the first Director General of the Defence Space Agency. Air Marshal Dharkar was serving as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Air Command prior to taking over as Vice Chief of Air Staff. He has also served

# Congress demands urgent relief for Bihar flood victims

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over the flood situation in Bihar, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday demanded that the Centre and state government should expedite the relief and rescue operations. According to the disaster management department, the number of people affected by flood has reached 14.62 lakh. "The flood situation in Bihar is becoming terrible. Nearly 15 lakh people in 17 districts are affected by the floods and the news of many deaths in the last few days is extremely painful," Kharge said in a social media post in Hindi. The Congress president said the bridges have collapsed



and the homes of citizens have been destroyed due to the disaster, especially in north Bihar. "We demand from the Centre and state government that the relief and rescue operations should be expedited so that the victims can get immediate help," Kharge said. "We thank the Indian Air Force, NDRF and SDRF teams wholeheartedly for the

help they are providing in these difficult circumstances. But we still need all possible help from the state government agencies," he added. Kharge also urged the Centre to provide adequate compensation to every flood victim and help the state government. The Congress president said the farmers, whose crops have been destroyed should also get compensation. The Congress workers are expected to be ready to serve the victims, he added. According to the state disaster management department, packets of food and other relief materials are being air-dropped by the IAF helicopters in the 17 flood-affected districts.

# Climate change fuels gender-based violence in Bangladesh

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Thirty-two-year-old Srestha, a mother of three from southern Bangladesh, has long relied on agriculture, cultivating rice and vegetables. However, the increasing frequency of floods due to climate change has dramatically impacted her family's livelihood. With no income, Srestha's husband, Shabbir, became increasingly stressed and frustrated. As months passed without financial relief, Shabbir's mood worsened. He began to lash out at Srestha, blaming her for their situation. What started as verbal arguments escalated into physical violence. Srestha found herself trapped in a cycle of fear and helplessness, often trying to placate Shabbir to avoid further conflict. However, Srestha's precarious situation is not an isolated case. She represents many women facing climate change-induced gender-



based violence which is set to aggravate in near future as impacts of global warming intensifies, as per a new analysis published in the PLOS Climate. A first of its kind analysis based on the data from 156 countries including India between 1993 and 2019 has shown that climate shocks—such as floods, storms, and landslides—are linked to higher rates of intimate partner violence in the two years following such events, particularly in patriarchal societies where violence against women is normalised. The study led by UCL researchers in collaboration with Exeter also shows that violence rates were found to be low in countries having a higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

# Reducing smoking could boost life expectancy: Study

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

If smoking were cut down to just five per cent of current levels by 2050, men could expect an increase in life expectancy by about one year, while women might see an increase of 0.2 years, a recent study published in The Lancet Public Health has said. Achieving the five per cent smoking target could prevent 876 million years of life lost due to premature death, highlighting the profound impact of reducing tobacco use. The study suggests that banning the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products could prevent an estimated 1.2 million lung cancer deaths across 185 countries by 2095. Notably, about two-thirds of these preventable deaths would occur in low- and middle-income countries, where younger populations may be more vulnerable to the effects of tobacco. The researchers analysed the potential benefits of a



tobacco-free generation policy, which aims to restrict tobacco sales to those born after a specific year. This approach, however, has not yet been fully implemented in any country. For instance, noted the study, New Zealand had enacted a law to prohibit the sale of tobacco to individuals born on or after January 1, 2009, but this legislation was repealed earlier this year. Stein Emil Vollset, a senior author of the study from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the

University of Washington, emphasised the critical need to sustain and enhance efforts to reduce smoking rates worldwide. He noted that the potential for avoiding millions of premature deaths underscores the importance of comprehensive tobacco control policies. The study's estimates regarding preventable deaths were derived from analysing the implications of banning tobacco sales on lung cancer mortality among people born between 2006 and 2010. "We must not lose momentum in efforts to reduce, and ultimately eliminate smoking around the world. Our findings highlight that millions of premature deaths could be avoided by bringing an end to smoking," said Vollset. Commenting on the study's observation, a representative from Mothers Against Vaping, a united front of concerned mothers combating the escalating vaping crisis asserted that there is a need to highlight health hazards of New-Age Gateway devices like e-cigarettes, vapes, and heat-not-burn devices for India to meet its tobacco control goals for the youth. In fact, the authors of the Lancet study have advocated for not only maintaining existing tobacco control measures but also implementing new strategies to address the ongoing risks associated with smoking which are major reasons for many preventable diseases including cancers.

# BJP proposes renaming Sealdah station after Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There are credible reports that a section of Bengal BJP has started lobbying for rechristening Sealdah Railway Station as Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Railway Station at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Railway Station.



sands of young people assembled and dragged his cart by hand." Ghosh said. However according to Bhattacharya, "When lakhs of beaten and uprooted refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan thronged Sealdah Station post Partition it was Dr Mukherjee who stood by them and their cause I will request the honourable Railway Minister to consider renaming Sealdah Station after Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee." Historically speaking: British architect Walter Glanville in 1869 designed the Sealdah Main Railway Station as it stands today pursuing a Victorian-Gothic form. Sealdah which has 20 platforms today had only four in 1862 standing out amidst muddy, marshy and potholed

runs the Upper and Lower Circular Roads more lately called the Acharya Prafulla Chandra (APC) Road and Acharya Jagadish Chandra (AJC) Road. The Maratha Ditch was dug up to prevent Maratha invasions in those days. So historically today's Sealdah Station stands by the Maratha Ditch so to say. The Maratha Ditch could not however prevent Bengal Nawab Siraj ud Daulah from invading Kolkata in 1756 when he crossed the mighty canal and attacked the British garrison "causing a great loss to the white men's families by bundling about 64 of them including women inside an underground chamber leading to 43 deaths." Others however, put the figure to 146 captured and 123 dead. Sealdah stood witness to the brief but cruel battle between the Nawab and the British who avenged the cruelty post Battle of Plassey by allowing Siraj to be cut into pieces and ferried about the Murshidabad town on a bullock cart. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that his ministry was contemplating a Rs 60,000-crore investment schemes in Bengal and was awaiting the cooperation of the State Government.

# Indian Army aims to crack terrorists' encrypted communication networks

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JANMU

The outgoing General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps, Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai on Thursday said that the Indian Army is working hard to crack the highly encrypted communication network of the terrorists to dismantle their ecosystem in the region. Briefing media persons in Srinagar Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai said, "We are aware that terrorists operating in the valley are using ultra communication networks, which have layers of encryption. While presently it is affording them the secrecy that they want I assure you that work is happening in this direction and soon we will be able to crack that encryption and I am hoping that will further dent their ecosystem and networks." The senior Army officer also claimed that the active number of terrorists in the region has also come down to 80 and no fresh recruitment has taken place in recent months in the valley. "There are around 80 active terrorists in Kashmir. The figure has gone down. Their number will be further down by mid-next year," he said. He estimated that between 25 and 30 foreign terrorists remain



active, and the army is determined to neutralize them soon. "We foiled infiltration attempts by terrorists from across the border. This summer there were fewer attempts of infiltration," he said. He further stated that successful infiltration attempts were not mostly made in Kashmir but at other places. Referring to the frequent attacks in Pir Pranjal range, Rajiv Ghai said that there were chances that the terrorists may attempt to take shelter in Kashmir. "Terrorists keep moving as they cannot survive in one place," he said. Sharing his assessment of the prevailing security scenario Lt Gen Ghai said Kashmir has

troop cut was possible at this juncture, the GOC said: "We are in a consolidation phase and no dilution of counter insurgency and counter terrorism grid is recommended. Both the grids need to be maintained. I definitely won't advocate any dilution to these grids at this stage," the GOC said. Earlier, in his opening remarks, the GOC said that during the past year-and-a-half, numerous attempts counter infiltration steps were taken while simultaneously prosecuting a very robust and successful counter-terrorist campaign within Kashmir. "While doing this, we have been very conscious of our responsibility and nation-building. So we have maintained our connection with the people of Kashmir," the army officer said. He said that the region is seeing a new beginning as numerous significant events are taking place besides development. "This is because of the efforts put in by (Chinar corps) 15 Corps, police, CAPF, police and numerous other security agencies," the GOC said. While he praised the improving security situation over the last two years, Lt. Gen. Ghai cautioned that maintaining peace remains the primary challenge, and vigilance must be maintained, particularly in counter-terrorism efforts at the LoC and within the valley.

# Vijayan retracts claims on gold smuggling allegations



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Chief Minister Vijayan on Thursday made a quick volte-face from his earlier stance that Malappuram district topped the table in gold smuggling and hawala cash flow. Addressing the media after the cabinet meeting on Thursday, the chief minister said that he never blamed Malappuram district or the Muslim community for gold smuggling and hawala cash flow to the State. But this is in stark contrast to his stance during the 21st September press meet when he had said that out of the 147 kg smuggled gold seized in the State during the last three years, Malappuram accounted for 124.47 kg of yellow metal and Rs 87.22 crore of hawala cash out of Rs 122.5 crore seized during the period. It is widely believed that the chief minister retracted his statement on smuggled gold and hawala cash under pressure from leaders of a minority community who were offended by his disclosures. The chief minister had also said during the media meeting that the money generated out of smuggling and hawala cash transactions were being pumped into the State for anti-national activities. While Vijayan did not disclose the reasons behind the sudden change in his stance, he gave a clean chit to the Chennai based English newspaper for carrying in its column an apology for publishing a statement attributed to him which he said he had not told the journalist who had interviewed him in New Delhi. The said interview which was carried in the 30th September edition of the paper had featured the chief minister's allegation that large scale gold smuggling and hawala cash was taking place in Malappuram district. "I did not tell this reporter anything on this issue. When I was asked about Anvar and gold smuggling, my reply was that I had made it clear in the press meet held on 21st September itself and do not have much time to elaborate further on the topic," said Vijayan who patted the Chennai newspaper for its decision to run a public apology.

# CPI(M) demands 12 seats in MVA alliance



T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ahead of the formalisation of the seat-sharing tie-up among the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) for the Maharashtra Assembly polls, its smaller ally - the Communist Party of India (Marxist) - has staked claim for 12 seats. Confirming the development, CPI (M)'s Maharashtra State Committee Dr Uday Narkar said on Thursday: "We have attended a couple of meetings of the MVA...We have asked the MVA leadership to allocate us 12 seats." In the 288-member

Maharashtra Assembly, the CPI (M) represents one seat - Dahanu (ST) in Palghar district, from where its party man Vinod Nikole was elected in the 2019 polls. Apart from Dahanu (ST) seat, the other Assembly constituencies from where the CPI (M) wants to contest are Vikramgad in Palghar district, Shahpur in Thane district, Kalwan, Dindori, Nashik West and Igatpuri in Nashik district, Kinwat in Nanded district, Majalgaon in Beed district, Pathari in Parbhani district, Solapur City Central in Solapur district and Akole in Ahmednagar district. "For the past several years, we have been very active in the constituencies where we would field our candidates. We are part of the INDIA block at the national level. We expect the MVA to allocate the seats we have asked for," Dr Narkar said. The All India Kisan Sabha

(AKIS) had in the PAST led several farmers' movements in Maharashtra, while several Left unions are active in urban areas. The three major constituents of the MVA are Congress, NCP (Sharad Pawar) and the Shiv Sena (UBT). The Samajwadi Party, CPI, CPI (M), Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) are the smaller constituents of the MVA. It is doubtful whether the MVA will allocate 12 seats. If anything, the MVA may consider allocating 3 to 4 four seats to the CPI (M), as against 12 seats demanded by the latter. Because, the MVA's three major constituents will have to accommodate its other small allies like the SP, CPI and PWP. On their part, the Congress, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) have so far not yet commented on the demand for 12 seats made by the CPI (M).

# SC halts Isha Foundation probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the police probe into the alleged illegal confinement of two women at spiritual leader Jaggi Vasudev's Isha Foundation ashram in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. Transferring to itself a habeas corpus petition of a man alleging that his two daughters were held captive inside the premises of the Foundation, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud directed the Tamil Nadu Police to not take any further action in pursuance of the Madras High Court's direction asking it to inquire into the alleged illegal confinement of the women. "You can't let in the Army or the police into an establishment like this," the bench observed during the hearing. The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said the police shall file the status report, as directed by the high court in its September 30 order, before the top court. The top court passed the order after the Isha Foundation approached it challenging Madras High Court's order directing the Coimbatore Police to collect all case details registered against the Foundation and produce them before the court for further consideration. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the Foundation, sought a stay of the high court order, and said around 150 police officials have entered

the Foundation's ashram and are probing every corner. The bench, which interacted with the two women in-chambers through video-conferencing, noted they have stated that both of them are residing at the ashram voluntarily and without any coercion. "As regards the presence of police, in pursuance to the order of the High Court, it has been stated by the two individuals that the police left the premises last night, though they were there... In pursuance of the order of the high court," the bench noted. While taking up the habeas corpus petition, the bench permitted the father of the two women to appear before it through video-conferencing if he wishes to interact with the court in person or through counsel. The court said text of the high court's order indicated that they are presently 42 and 39 years old respectively. The bench noted the two women have stated that they are free to travel outside the ashram, which they had done from time to time and their parents have also visited there to meet them. The court noted it was submitted before it that a similar petition was filed by the mother of the two individual about eight years ago, in which the father had also appeared. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre, said the high court should have been "very circumspect". Madras High Court had on September 30 passed an interim order on a habeas corpus petition filed by Dr S Kamaraj.

# Bengal doctors divided over protest strategies



SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There seems to have developed differences of opinion among the doctors of Bengal agitating in demand of justice for their woman colleague who was on August 9 raped and murdered inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital with the seniors opposing the juniors' decision to resume indefinite "cease work" for the second time within a span of ten days following repeated attacks on their colleagues at various medical college hospitals. According to the senior doctors the protesters who had been getting full support from the general public should not take recourse to actions that could impede people's interest. "About 35,000 patients come to the five medical colleges in Kolkata alone for treatment most of them have supported our cause throughout the movement so we should also take their plight into consideration particularly during the festive season when many private doctors would go vacationing and the poor patients would be left in lurch," said one of the senior doctors while expressing his views in a general convention of doctors called in RGKMCH on Thursday. Another senior doctor said that "we have been by the side of these junior doctors and will continue to support their cause but without imposing our views on them we will just like to advise them that this is not right time to resume cease work impeding the interests of thousands of common people who have been by us all these days we cannot alienate the common man from this movement," said another senior paediatrician. The doctors who had gone on an indefinite cease work post the RGKMCH incident had resumed duty breaking their 42-days' cease work after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee assured foolproof security inside hospital premises besides conceding to their demand of removing Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal and two directors of Health. "But the Government which had given us assurance on other demands would not fulfill them forcing us to resume our movement," said Dr Aniket one of the leaders. Another doctor, a cardiologist suggested alternative mode of movement saying, "we can think about partial cease work or regular rallies and even dharnas or even go to the districts setting special medical care camps so as to make people aware about the plights of the doctors." The junior doctors had not presented their views when reports last came in. However some of them said that they would take the advice of the senior doctors and hold general body meeting of joint platform of junior doctors before taking a final decision. "It is clear that this Government is trying to create a rift between the common people who have supported us and the doctors but we will not fall in its trap if we withdraw our cease work then it will not be because of the government pressure but because of the needs of the people but still we will continue to agitate until attacks on doctors stop and until the Government takes some concrete steps to ensure safety and security inside the hospitals," said Dr Kinjal Nanda one of the agitating doctors.

# Bombay HC orders to expedite inquiry into custodial death

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After the BJP-led MahaYuti government set up a Commission of Inquiry into the "encounter killing" of Badlapur children sexual assault case Akshay Shinde, the Bombay High Court on Thursday directed the Magistrate looking into Shinde's death to expedite its inquiry and submit its findings to it at the next hearing on November 18. Hearing a PIL filed by the father of Shinde on the suspicious circumstances leading to the death of Shinde, a HC bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan asked the Thane Magistrate and the police to collect, preserve and get all the evidence relating to Shinde's death in police custody. Earlier, Advocate General Birendra Saraf told the court that all relevant documents have been forwarded to the magistrate for inquiry. While asking the Magistrate to start the inquiry proceedings quickly and submit its report quickly after hearing all parties in the case. "Law requires that when there is a custodial death, the investigation be conducted by the Magistrate. Let the investigation be conducted. We will wait for the report of the magistrate," the HC bench said. "The Magistrate should expedite the inquiry and submit its report to the court by November 18. Akshay Shinde -- key accused in the sensational Badlapur child sexual assault -- was shot dead at a point blank range while he was being taken from Badlapur to Thane in a van for investigation in another case. It may be recalled that two nursery girls - aged four and



six years -- were sexually abused allegedly by sweeper Shinde when they in the washroom of the kindergarten school run by Adarsh Vidya Prasarak Sanstha (AVPS) on August 13 for using the toilet there. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Thane police that investigated the case has filed a charge-sheet in the case before the special Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act court in Kalyan. The incident caused a major public uproar in the state and always as other parts of the state. The Opposition MVA - comprising Congress, Uddhav Thackeray-headed Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) - had demanded a judicial probe into the suspicious circumstances leading to the accused Shinde's death in a police van. Directing the prosecution to collect strong forensic evidence in the case, the HC asked the prosecution if the police had collected forensic evidence from the body of the deceased. "Every firearm has a peculiar pattern and the residue it leaves is also different. The residue left on the deceased's head where he was shot, his hands when he opened fire from the police's pistol needs to be collected, preserved and analysed forensically," the HC bench said. "Dead body is the most silent and honest witness... There is a need to collect and preserve all evidence. Bullets were fired from two different firearms in the incident. Empty shells found were of two different arms. The firing pin of every gun is different. This can be a conclusive proof which firing arm will have which firing pin," the HC bench said. "We want to see a report showing this conclusively," the HC bench said, while wanting to know from the police State CID police who are investigating the case if the bullet had pierced through the accused. Advocate General Saraf replied in the affirmative. Expressing its displeasure over the failure to recover a bottle of water that was given to the accused when he asked for water in the vehicle. "The police's case is that the handcuffs of the accused were removed after he asked for water after which he forcibly snatched the pistol of one of the police officers and opened fire. It (bottle) is an important piece of evidence," the bench said. Seeking the medical report of the police officer who sustained injury in the firing opened by the deceased accused, the HC bench said: "The police officer who sustained gunshot injury... Has he been examined properly? Was there any residue or blackening at the spot? We need to see that. Was there an entry and exit wound on the thigh of the police officer who got hurt?" At a hearing held on September 25, a HC bench of Justice Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan had questioned the version put out by the police Shinde was shot by the police in self defence. Justice Chavan said "it is hard to believe" that a man of slight build as Akshay Shinde could be overpowered by the four policemen when he turned violent and pulled the slide back on a 9 mm pistol for firing which "requires strength".



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## The caste contest

Haryana elections will be a tight contest. The BJP-JJP alliance breakup and Congress rebels have added uncertainty to it

As Haryana heads to the polls on October 5, 2024, the political landscape is marked by intense competition and shifting alliances. This election holds importance as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had formed a government in 2019 with the support of Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP), is now contesting alone. The breakup of the BJP-JJP alliance has left the BJP in a precarious position, governing as a minority until the upcoming elections. The ruling party, which is contesting without its former ally, the JJP, is focusing on its development agenda, highlighting its work on infrastructure, education and women's safety. However, the party faces challenges, especially in rural areas, where discontent over issues like agricultural reforms remains strong. The Congress is positioning itself as the main alternative to the BJP. Led by Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the party is banking on strong support in rural areas, especially among Jat voters and hopes to capitalise on dissatisfaction with the BJP government. Dushyant Chautala is attempting to redefine his party's narrative, distancing himself from the BJP's policies and advocating for farmer-friendly reforms.



Another unpredictable player is Aam Aadmi Party which is contesting in Haryana with renewed vigour. AAP is aiming to replicate its success in neighbouring Punjab. The party is focusing on issues such as health-care, education and anti-corruption measures, appealing primarily to urban voters. A strong contender of yesteryears, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) led by Abhay Singh Chautala has joined hands with Bahujan Samaj Party. But the agrarian sector remains a pivotal issue in Haryana, especially after the farmers' protests against the now-repealed agricultural laws. Farmers' resentment towards the government has not entirely subsided, and the opposition parties, particularly Congress and JJP, are using this to mobilise rural voters. Besides, Haryana has one of the highest unemployment rates in India. Both the BJP and Congress have promised to address the issue, with the BJP touting its industrial initiatives and the Congress proposing new employment schemes. But all said and done, it is the caste politics which decides who rules the State. The traditional Jat-non-Jat divide continues to shape Haryana's political landscape. The BJP, which has traditionally garnered support from non-Jat communities, faces the challenge of consolidating this base while the JJP and Congress focus on winning over Jat voters. Caste dynamics have always been a significant factor in Haryana's political landscape, deeply influencing voter behaviour and electoral outcomes. Jats, who make up approximately 25-30 per cent of Haryana's population, are the state's most politically influential caste group. The Congress, under Hooda, is attempting to bridge the gap between Jats and non-Jats by emphasising its rural-urban development plans but is plagued by rebels. The outcome of the elections will be favourable to the party which manages the complex caste matrix of the state well.

### PICTALK



A man makes red handprints on a wall as part of a tradition on the first day of the 'Navratri' festival, in Ahmedabad. PTI

## Online gaming industry needs regulation and govt support

A balanced, collaborative approach between the government and the online gaming industry is essential for responsible and sustainable growth

The online gaming industry in India is experiencing rapid growth but is often misinterpreted as being synonymous with gambling. This misconception fuels concerns about problem gambling and social harm, leading to a negative narrative surrounding the sector. In reality, much of the harm stems from illegal offshore betting and gambling platforms, which further exacerbate this misrepresentation. Every industry influences society in various ways, and it is the responsibility of regulatory frameworks to strike a balance—supporting legitimate enterprises while effectively curbing illegal activities. Conflating online gaming with gambling risks undermining an industry that is growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15.68 per cent on a base of USD 3.49 billion. This sector contributes significantly to job creation and tax revenues in India. With 83 per cent of the world's gamers, India boasts 568 million users and registered over 9.5 billion gaming app downloads in 2023. Real Money Games



alone contributed 60 per cent of their revenues to the Indian exchequer in FY 2023-24. Misunderstanding the online gaming industry as gambling could jeopardize its potential for economic growth and its contributions to national development. Regulators must prioritise cracking down on offshore and illegal businesses and apps that operate in violation of Indian law. Measures such as whitelisting legitimate platforms, and initiating legal actions against those facilitating illegal activities are crucial. Steps like freezing the bank accounts of operators and intermediaries, and working with financial institutions to block transactions tied to illegal gambling, are urgently needed. Practical enforcement challenges cannot be an excuse for inaction, as the

risks are significant. A coordinated effort involving the Ministry of Finance, Information Technology, Home Affairs, and Consumer Affairs is essential, with each department playing a critical role in enforcement and raising public awareness about the legal implications of supporting illegal operations. Without robust enforcement and heightened awareness, illegal gambling platforms will not only make Indian citizens vulnerable to gambling addiction but also siphon their hard-earned money into criminal networks. The profits from illegal gambling often fund organised crime, money laundering, and terrorism, with global examples linking gambling profits to drug trafficking and terrorist financing. This not only destabilises local economies but poses a serious threat to national security. As the government takes strict action against illegal gambling, it must also work closely with the legitimate gaming industry to differentiate between legal online gaming and illegal gambling. Such a partnership would not only help clear the negative perceptions but also sup-

port the industry's growth. This collaboration could further enhance the crackdown on illegal gambling through combined awareness campaigns and enforcement efforts. Finally, the government and the gaming industry must work together to develop a responsible gaming framework. This should include self-exclusion tools, age verification systems, game time monitoring, and partnerships with mental health experts. By promoting responsible gaming, the industry can ensure ethical practices, protect consumers from addiction, and foster a sustainable, well-regulated gaming ecosystem in India. A balanced approach that differentiates legitimate online gaming from illegal gambling, alongside stronger enforcement measures, is vital for the sustainable growth of online gaming industry. With govt and industry collaboration, responsible gaming practices can be promoted, ensuring the sector's positive contributions to economic growth and job creation.

(The writer is a partner at AP & Partners; views are personal)



ARJUN SINHA

## BJP strives hard to imbibe 'integral humanism'

As the BJP marks Deendayal Upadhyaya's 108th birth anniversary, it faces the challenge of aligning his "Integral Humanism" ideals with modern governance



K S TOMAR

On the occasion of the 108th birth anniversary of Deendayal Upadhyaya, a founding figure of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the proponent of "Integral Humanism," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) finds itself reflecting on how closely it has adhered to his visionary ideals. Upadhyaya's philosophy focused on a holistic approach to human well-being, emphasising decentralisation, indigenous culture, self-reliance, and ethical governance. Though the BJP has embraced these principles rhetorically, transforming them into practical realities remains a formidable challenge.

**Economic Ideals vs Modern Policies:** Deendayal Upadhyaya's vision of economic self-reliance and decentralisation stands in contrast to India's current globalised and capital-driven economic policies, particularly those introduced since the liberalisation reforms of the 1990s. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP has focused on economic growth through increased foreign direct investment (FDI), free-market reforms, and privatisation. Critics argue that this approach clashes with Upadhyaya's idea of a self-reliant economy, which emphasises supporting rural and local industries, creating jobs at the grassroots level, and minimising dependence on foreign capital. **Balancing Indigenous Culture and Globalisation:** Deendayal Upadhyaya advocated for the preservation and promotion of India's indigenous culture, even as the nation embraced modern advancements. Striking this balance has been a delicate task for the BJP. On one hand, the party emphasises cultural pride, nationalism, and traditional values, promoting initiatives like Ayurveda and yoga on the global stage. On the other hand, India's integration into the global economy, alongside the rise of modern lifestyle trends and technology, risks diluting the deeper cultural roots Upadhyaya sought to preserve. The BJP has been critiqued for veering toward an exclusionary



cultural nationalism, which may diverge from Upadhyaya's more inclusive vision. **Ethical Governance vs Corruption:** A key tenet of Upadhyaya's philosophy was the need for ethical governance, marked by integrity, honesty, and service to the people. While BJP leaders, including Modi, have presented themselves as champions of clean governance, the party has faced allegations of corruption, crony capitalism, and favouritism toward large corporations. Such accusations, particularly regarding land acquisition policies and privatisation, have cast doubt on the party's commitment to Upadhyaya's ethical standards. **Inclusive Society vs Polarisation** Upadhyaya's vision of an inclusive society focused on addressing the needs of all communities, ensuring harmony across social and religious divides. However, the BJP has often been criticised for promoting divisive politics, particularly along religious lines. Reconciling Hindutva-driven politics with the ideals of inclusion and social harmony remains a central challenge for the BJP as it seeks to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality. **Antyodaya - Uplifting the Last Person:** One of



UNDER PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, THE BJP HAS FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH INCREASED FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI), FREE-MARKET REFORMS, AND PRIVATISATION. THIS APPROACH CLASHES WITH UPADHYAYA'S IDEA OF A SELF-RELIANT ECONOMY

Upadhyaya's most important principles, Antyodaya, focus on uplifting the most marginalised in society. The BJP has made significant strides in this area through its welfare schemes such as the PM Ujjwala Yojana (providing LPG to rural households), the PM Awas Yojana (affordable housing), and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (improving sanitation). The BJP has adopted this principle through various campaigns, such as the global celebration of Yoga Day, the promotion of Indian languages, and the reassertion of India's historical achievements. **Political Decentralisation** A core aspect of Upadhyaya's philosophy was decentralising power, ensuring governance was closer to the people. The BJP's emphasis on cooperative federalism and policies such as GST and the creation of NITI Aayog are steps in this direction. Moreover, the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system and the Jan Dhan Yojana have empowered citizens by reducing middlemen and ensuring that subsidies and welfare benefits reach the people directly. Self-Reliance through Atmanirbhar Bharat; The Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, resonates with Upadhyaya's emphasis on self-

reliance. The promotion of local manufacturing, domestic industries, and efforts to reduce dependence on foreign goods align with his philosophy. The "Make in India" initiative, a key aspect of this vision, has made strides in boosting domestic production and job creation. However, the globalised nature of modern economics makes it challenging to fully realize a self-reliant economy. **Striving toward Upadhyaya's Vision:** As the ruling party, the BJP's journey in adopting and implementing Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideals has been a mixture of successes and challenges. While considerable progress has been made in promoting nationalism, self-reliance, and Antyodaya, the party faces significant hurdles in achieving true economic decentralisation, upholding ethical governance, and fostering social harmony. The complexities of modern governance, global economic integration, and political strategies often pull the BJP away from Upadhyaya's pure vision. However, the ideals of Integral Humanism remain a guiding light, challenging the party to strike a balance between philosophical ideals and contemporary realities in their pursuit of a better India. (Writer is a political analyst and strategic affairs columnist based in Shimla; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### DECLINE OF GANDHIAN IDEALS

Madam — Since the Mahatma was an epitome of confidence and possessed an international mindset, he didn't treat the hymns of the Scottish gem "Abide with me" as threat enough to get blown off his feet! Rather, he allowed the window of his mind to let in the breeze of all possible cultures around the globe, including the evergreen Henry Francis Lyte classic. It is indeed a matter of utmost disgrace to notice the closure of minds in the country of Mahatma Gandhi—the epitome of liberal values and humanitarian thoughts with an all-embracing mindset. Not to forget Gandhi's cardinal call: "Recall the face of the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything from it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? Will it lead to 'swaraj' for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?" Do the faces of any weak man get recalled today amidst the zealous trumpet of India being 'Viswaguru' (fast marching towards the status of "world's third largest economy") being beaten like a maniac! When none other than the Gandhians find themselves cornered and marginalised in the very state and den of Mahatma Gandhi itself (Sabarmati Ashram, Gujarat), rest assured about the fate of his values, ethics and humanitarian thoughts in the rest of the country! **Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata**

#### FLOODS HITS BIHAR

Madam — The rain in Nepal is wreaking havoc in Bihar. While 170 people have died in Nepal due to continuous heavy rains, floods and landslides, the terrible form of flooding is being seen in Bihar. In view of the flood, all 56 gates of Birpur Vairaj of the Kosi River and all 36 gates of Balmiki Nagar Vairaj of the Gandak River have been opened. This is not a disaster. It is a tragedy that

## India's triumph in Kanpur



Team India creates Test history on October 1. Kudos to Team India for defeating Bangladesh by 7 wickets on the fifth day of Kanpur Test and winning the Test series by

2-0. Team India has set a record of never losing to Bangladesh so far and has created a record on home ground by achieving a thrilling victory in the 18th series. With this extremely brilliant and powerful performance of Team India, India has reached the top position in the ICC World Test Championship table (WTC). Yashasvi Jaiswal scored his second half-century with great skill and scored 51 runs to win the title of 'Player of the Match'. Bangladesh's so-called opening batsman Shadman Islam and former captain Mushfiqur Rahim were forced to kneel in front of Indian bowlers. India's next match with Bangladesh will be in the 3 T20 match series from October 6. It is hoped that Team India will be successful in maintaining its magical status. **Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad**

is repeated every year. Bihar floods are writing the story of new misery and devastation every year; it is a serious humanitarian crisis. But no permanent solution has been found so far. How long will people continue to bear this pain? People are losing their homes, land, and loved ones. How many more lives will be lost, and how many more dreams will be shattered? However, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said that full attention is being paid to the flood at every level. All kinds of relief and rescue operations are being arranged. To stop this, the government should make immediate arrangements on a war footing. For which a permanent solution is needed so that this disaster is not faced in the future. **Anshu Bharti | Begusarai**

However, the return policy, seen as Siddaramaiah flipping, might actually be counter-productive. The Muda case pertains to allegations that compensatory sites were allotted to BM Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru that had a higher property value as compared to the location of her land that had been "acquired" by the authority. Siddaramaiah, BM Parvathi, Mallikarjuna Swamy, and one Devaraju were named in an FIR registered by the Mysuru-based Lokayukta police on September 27. This came after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) initiated a probe against her, Siddaramaiah, and her brother, Mallikarjuna Swamy, in what has now become popular as the Muda scam. Parvathi, the wife of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, has returned 14 plots of land to Muda. Thus, Siddaramaiah shot himself in the foot for gaining more wealth using power politics. **CK Subramania | Bengaluru**

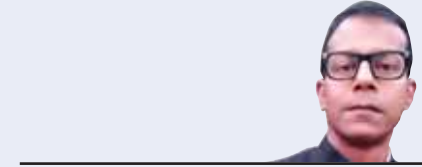
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## FIRST COLUMN

### REBALANCING THE GLOBAL ORDER

The escalating missile strikes between Israel and Iran threaten regional stability in West Asia



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The escalating situation in India's extended neighbourhood is threatening internal security for the region. The recent elimination of several top Hezbollah commanders, especially the killing of its top leader Hassan Nasrallah, by Israel, and Iranian missiles raining on Israeli territory is likely to widen the crisis in West Asia. PM Modi realised the sensitivity of the situation and immediately made a phone call to their Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu. Indian PM's message to Israel was "the crucial need for preventing regional escalation and the safe release of all hostages, terrorism has no place in any form and manifestation and India stands ready to support early restoration of peace and stability." Last month on the sidelines of the Summit of Future in New York, the PM met the President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas. A press statement released after the meeting read "The Prime Minister reiterated India's time-tested principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue, and called for ceasefire, release of hostages and return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy. He stressed that only a two State solution will deliver enduring peace and stability in the region. Recalling that India was one of the first countries to recognise Palestine, he conveyed India's continued support to Palestine membership of the UN." Even as the Indian PM was holding bilateral with several global leaders in the US, the newly appointed head of the interim government of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus was getting a much-needed pat on his back from Western leaders. Yunus during his US trip met the US President Joe Biden, former President Bill Clinton, US Secretary of State, Canadian PM, President of the European Union, heads of the World



Bank and ADB. He topped it up by having an unusually warm meeting with Pakistan's PM, where he expressed the desire to deepen their bilateral ties and revive the regional body SAARC. For India, these ties could potentially lead Pakistan and China to use this newfound bonhomie with Bangladesh to push its subversive agenda against India. Almost on cue External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in his remarks at the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York spoke on rebalancing the global order. He said "Rebalancing a global order which started with 51 founding members of the United Nations, which has quadrupled in the last eight decades, where you not only have more independent countries in the world, but the economic, political and even demographic weight of individual members of the global order has shifted, shifted to a point where many of us believe that today we are actually at an inflection."

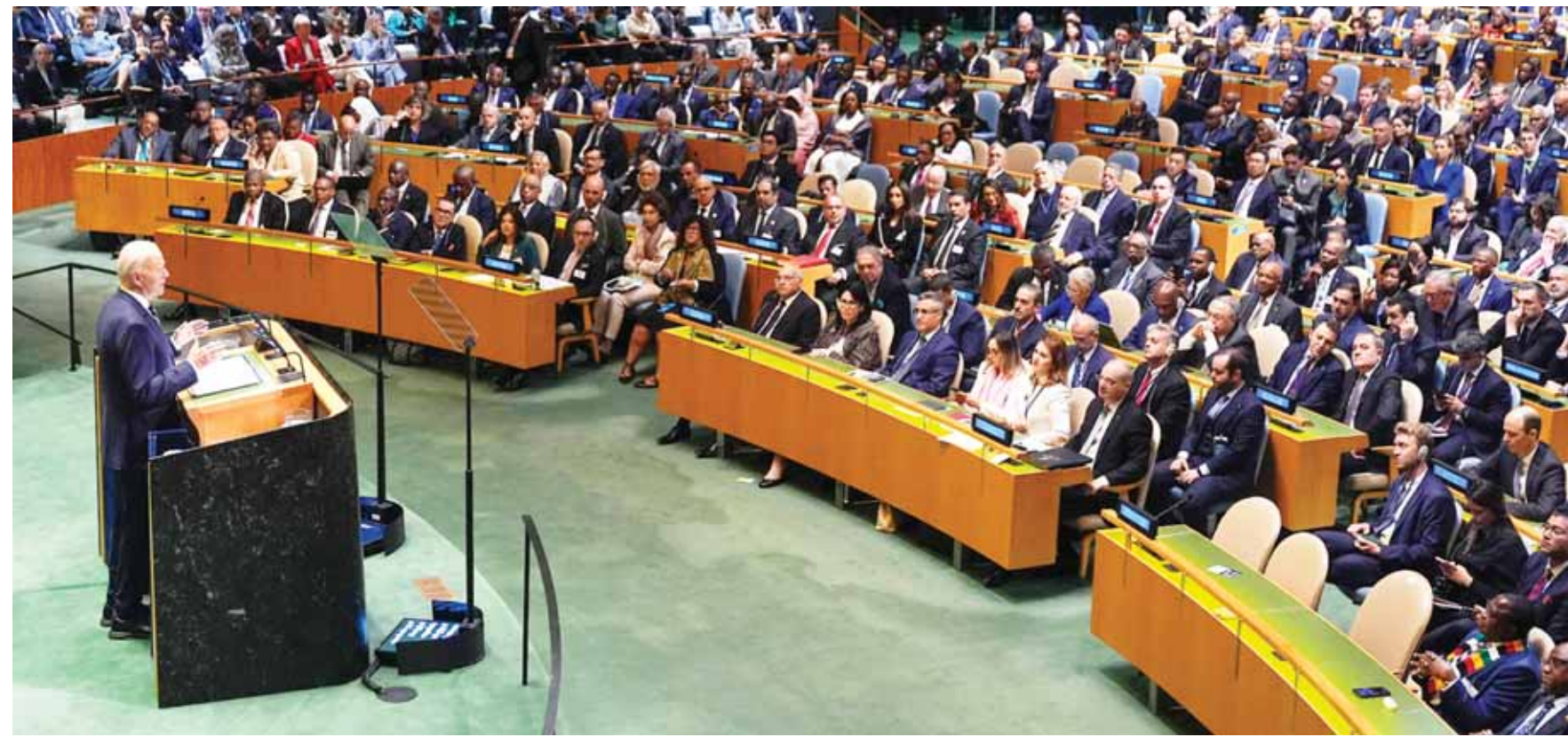
The minister carefully brought multipolarity and plurilateralism in same address while trying to define the evolving global order. He said "Today, we are looking really at a global landscape which is much more regional, which is, as I said, much more characterised by countries who have their strong interests and which have the ability to pursue that interest. And so a lot of what we see in terms of the world is really how does the politics of convergence of the world is really how does the politics of convergence play out. And a third word which would occur to me is 'plurilateralism'. It's a very ugly word, but it in a sense describes a world beyond bilateral relations but which are short of multilateral. That where countries form combinations based on these convergences and overlaps that I've talked about. And you have really this phenomenon of groups of countries coming together for often a limited agenda, sometimes in an agreed theatre to pursue their interests." The recent global events and India's measured stance on several of these reflect what the EAM spoke about in New York, and a rebalance is underway. (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

# How global powers exploit democratic ideals



V K BAHUGUNA

From the overthrow of governments to the double standards in addressing terrorism, democracy has been reduced to a fashionable tool of manipulation by global superpowers



One of the remarkable characteristics of the modern era is reflected in the progress of democracy, and the rise of nation-states. The modern era in the real sense started after the end of the Second World War with the establishment of the United Nations (UN) on October 25, 1945 at the end of the San Francisco conference which was attended by 50 countries and the UN Charter was adopted. The United Nations is the global diplomatic and political platform for ensuring international peace, progress and security. The democratic form of governance, freedom, equality and dignity of humanity is the cornerstone of the modern era. In this regard, world leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King played a very vital role in ending colonial rule in Asia, Africa and other such countries. Since then world leaders swear by the power of the masses in democracy and the rule of the elected leaders. The UN Security Council assumes the role of overseeing the peace and security of the world, especially the five Veto yielding countries China, Britain, France, Russia and the United States yield enormous clout in the Security Council. However, the Veto power in practice and particularly is used by these powers for thwarting any issue if one of them does not like it due to their geo-political interests and international alliance.

More than 80 years after the establishment of the UN, the world is still in the grip of intense conflicts and the noble objectives of the UN for ensuring world peace and security are lost in the realpolitik of big powers which smacks of hypocrisy and inherent bias. There are several examples of the derailing of the true democratic edifice of the world's governments, especially in third-world countries by the United States and Western powers. A recent example is dethroning of Sheikh Hasina Wazed's government in Bangladesh a classical example of hypocrisy by America and its allies. Similarly, in dealing with terrorism the white race has double standards. I can kill



**MORE THAN 80 YEARS AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UN, THE WORLD IS STILL IN THE GRIP OF INTENSE CONFLICTS AND THE NOBLE OBJECTIVES OF THE UN FOR ENSURING WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY ARE LOST IN THE REALPOLITIK OF BIG POWERS WHICH SMACKS OF HYPOCRISY AND INHERENT BIAS**

my terrorist anywhere in the world like America did to Osama Bin Laden and Khalistani terrorists and protagonists are provided with a platform to bash up India recently when the American President and Bill Clinton former President hosted and hailed Muhammad Yunus as a savour of democracy and human rights a few weeks ago with the promise of full support. Mr Yunus heads the puppet interim Government of Bangladesh as Chief Advisor. The world is asking America the lone super power is it permissible to oust a government by engineering well-orchestrated violent agitation. When the Indian Prime Minister was in the USA last month the Khalistani leaders were hosted by the white house. Every such thing is done in the name of democracy.

If this is allowed at the international level then any government can be ousted by the frustrated opposition in league with foreign powers. Is it, not neo-colonialism being practised under the nose of the United Nations itself? Though the Hasina government might have committed some blunders after all, it was an elected government and the world should not support such illegal seizure of power by students origin well-planned violent agitations. United States, China and the Western block have been supporting such regimes routinely in African countries and Pakistan and Bangladesh for the past several decades.

The anger against such hypocrisy of world leaders is growing and if the modern era has to survive the third world war which in any case is undergoing a different pattern in Europe and the West Asia, the people have to junk this system of the United Nations which is becoming a talking machine, a burden on its resources and sub-serving the

geo-political undemocratic stance of powerful countries making a mockery of the lofty UN Charter. The democracy Western leaders in UN practice can aptly be termed as 'Fashionable Democracy'. This fashionable democracy is a tool to perpetuate and support all kind of undemocratic regimes that comes to power in the name of democracy, human rights and liberty. These lofty goals are being pooh-poohed by the powerful countries. There are talks about deep states interfering in the affairs of the countries to upset the ruling regimes that do not fall in line. In this regard, the non-state actors play a significant role though the national governments may not be promoting it directly but in the name of democracy, many outsiders do influence the government.

The Indo-US relations built steadily after the end of the cold war during the last 25 years are a shining example of two democratic governments ensuring a global alliance of strategic importance to thwart the attempts of Chinese ambitions to browbeat other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. But the Cold War psychology of the white house is still promoting countries inimical to democratic values in the Indian sub-continent especially Pakistan which is ruled by the Army with a proxy government.

This may derail the India-USA strategic relationship. Even Sheikh Hasina opined that her government was toppled after she refused to part with San Martin Island to the United States. China instead of supporting India, with which it has cultural affinity as well as trade interests, supports and aids Pakistan and has been fomenting trouble in the North-East and Ladakh for a long time with its expansionist vision and is a poten-

tial threat to world peace. Thus, it is a clear indication that the geopolitics of the world needs a serious rethink. If one analysis the sequence of events over the past 80 years or so the main reason for such behaviour of powerful countries is due to the patently undemocratic nature of assigning the Veto power to winners of the Second World War.

As for democracy, I would appropriately call it fashionable democracy to fool the people around the world in the name of democracy and liberty and this disease is also spreading in most of the countries all over the world including India where democracy has given way to Dynastic Democracy. The state of present day democracies was aptly forecasted by Socrates the ancient Greek Philosopher who said more than 2000 years ago that 'Democracies would elect Demagogues'. India is a glaring example of such leaders in states who pander to this and skilfully use democracies to perpetuate their family interests in power games and practising vote bank politics.

The Father of Athenian democracy was Cleisthenes who lived from 570 BC to 508 BC and who as Chief Magistrate successfully imposed democracy in the Athens assembly against the nobles hence is appropriately called as Father of World Democracy must be weeping in his grave seeing how democracy is being run by the world leaders and thus people of the modern era in the 21st Century. Is it, not food for thought for all of us who believe in true democracy because there is no alternative to true democracy like the ancient Indian panchayat system? At least India should reform from within and then lead the rest of the world. (The writer is a former civil servant; views are personal)

## One Nation, One Ration: Revolutionising food security with 24/7 grain ATMs

These grain ATMs are a major step in India's fight against hunger. Biometric authentication and Aadhaar-linked portability ensures streamlined distribution

Since June 1, 2020, under the Modi administration, the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system has been implemented across India, marking the beginning of a revolutionary scheme. Its purpose is to provide food grains to the poor, particularly those who migrate from one state to another, through a single ration card.

Initially, the system was launched in two clusters comprising four states (Andhra Pradesh-Telangana and Maharashtra-Gujarat). Even then, work was underway on inter-state ration card portability in other states. The government claimed that the common people would benefit most from this scheme.



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

Previously, ration cards were issued by the government to provide food grains and other rations to the poor at subsidised rates. However, when workers moved to another state, they often lost access to these benefits, particularly in more developed states like Gujarat. With this new system, that issue is resolved, adding another significant chapter to this revolutionary initia-

tive. Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution, Nimuben Bambhaniya, recently inaugurated Gujarat's first grain ATM in Bhavnagar, facilitating 24/7 ration distribution under the Central Government's Public Distribution System (PDS). The grain ATM, called Annapoorti, was installed in the Karchaliapara area of Bhavnagar city to free the poor from India's outdated, bureaucratic ration distribution system. According to Minister Bambhaniya, the grain ATM represents a global success story. She expressed pride in the Annapoorti scheme, a globally awarded solution devel-

oped in India, which is set to be operational in multiple states. Based on a year-long pilot program, the Annapoorti technology, developed by WFP India, is an important step toward improving food security and ensuring that people receive their rations efficiently and accurately. The new system allows people to obtain their ration from any PDS shop, reducing dependence on shop owners and minimising corruption. After the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system, the biggest beneficiaries of grain ATMs will be migrant laborers and disadvantaged communities who live outside their home states for extended periods or are unable to reach grain shops. For



instance, if someone from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh trav-

els to Delhi or Mumbai for work, they will be able to easily access ration from PDS shops or ATMs in those cities. The 2011 census reported that about 4.1 crore people had migrated to other states for work. The Aadhaar numbers of family members on over 85 per cent of the country's ration cards are registered, enabling them to use the ATM system. India runs one of the world's largest food-based safety nets, providing subsidised grains to around 813 million people every month through a network of over 500,000 fair price shops (FPS). This initiative is key to the partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme to enhance food

security. ATMs will be installed across the state, offering 24/7 access to food grains under the National Food Security Act. The Annapurna Yojana allows anyone with a valid PDS ration card, regardless of their state or union territory, to access their entitlements. The ATM can deliver up to 50 kg of grain in just five minutes, reducing waiting time by 70 percent. Once biometric authentication with an Aadhaar card is complete, users will have continuous access to their entire ration. The modular design of the ATM allows for easy assembly based on the available space. Additionally, Annapoorti is energy-efficient and can be connected to solar panels for automa-

tic refilling. The grain ATM is designed to distribute wheat and rice and includes a tank with a capacity to hold 2,500 kg of grains, according to an official release. Officials explained that individuals covered under the National Food Security Act can visit the grain ATM at any time, punch in their ration card, authenticate their identity using the fingerprint scanner, and collect their monthly ration. However, there is speculation that the grain ATM in Bhavnagar could also be used to attract migrant voters in the upcoming assembly elections. (The writer is a senior journalist; views expressed are personal)





Prosecutors lay out new evidence in Trump election case

Donald Trump laid the groundwork to try to overturn the 2020 election even before he lost, knowingly pushed false claims of voter fraud and "resorted to crimes" in his failed bid to cling to power...

vince US District Judge Tanya Chutkan that the offences charged in the indictment are private, rather than official, acts and can therefore remain part of the indictment as the case moves forward...



ident, Mike Pence, was in potential danger after a crowd of violent supporters stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Kamala Harris surveys Hurricane Helene devastation in Georgia

Augusta (AP): Vice-President Kamala Harris handed out meals, embraced a shaken family and surveyed Hurricane Helene's "extraordinary" path of destruction through Georgia on Wednesday as she left the campaign trail to pledge federal help...

"We are here for the long haul," she said. Harris also toured a Red Cross relief center and received a briefing from local officials, praising those working to "meet the needs of people who must be seen and must be heard."

around and personally comfort people as Harris did in Georgia. Biden wore a vest and boots and, before his air tour, he hugged and grabbed the hand of Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer...

UK hands over Chagos Islands to Mauritius, holds on to military base

The UK on Thursday announced a "historic" agreement that will see Britain hand over sovereignty of the remote Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean to Mauritius while it retains the joint UK-US military base on Diego Garcia...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that my client Sri Meghraj Singh...

PUBLIC NOTICE: My client Mr. Jahanvir Alam S/o. Jagan Lal...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed to the General Public that Mrs. Vinila...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that my client Mrs. Sulikha Jindal...

E-AUCTION NOTICE: (Fire Affected/Damaged Tracked Excavator - Make JCB- JS-205-SC)

PUBLIC NOTICE: My client Mr. Jahanvir Alam S/o. Jagan Lal...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed to the General Public that Mrs. Vinila...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that my client Mrs. Sulikha Jindal...

NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL: Palika Kendra : Sansad Marg Electric Establishment-1, Personnel Department

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (AGRI...)

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, खण्डवा ( म.प्र. )

PUBLIC NOTICE: Notice is hereby given on behalf of VINAY MOOI who is aware of Plot No. 28, having area measuring 50 Sq. Yds...

NOIDA: Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida - 201301 (U.P.) Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE: E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded...

M/s MMR SAHA INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATE LIMITED has been granted Environmental Clearance (EC) regarding Revision & Extension of Mix land use project at Plot No. E-1, Sector -52, Noida, District - Gautam Buddha Nagar...

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून: सर्वजनिक निविदा सूचना

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम, चम्पावत

PUBLIC NOTICE: General Public is hereby informed that I, Anand Prakash Gupta, S/o Late Badri Prasad Gupta...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that my client Mrs. Sulikha Jindal...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed to the General Public that Mrs. Vinila...

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून: सर्वजनिक निविदा सूचना

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम, चम्पावत

PUBLIC NOTICE: Re: Industrial PLOT bearing NO. F-1232 area measuring 2000 sq mtrs situated Phase-I, RICCO Industrial Area, Bhiwadi Distt-Alwar, Rajasthan...

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून: सर्वजनिक निविदा सूचना

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम, चम्पावत

अल्पकालीन निविदा नोटिस: अध्यक्ष उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यो हेतु निर्दिष्ट श्रेणी में उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम / उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से मुहुरबन्द निविदायेँ...

अल्पकालीन निविदा नोटिस: अध्यक्ष उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यो हेतु निर्दिष्ट श्रेणी में उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम / उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से मुहुरबन्द निविदायेँ...

PUBLIC NOTICE: Re: Industrial PLOT bearing NO. F-1232 area measuring 2000 sq mtrs situated Phase-I, RICCO Industrial Area, Bhiwadi Distt-Alwar, Rajasthan...

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून: सर्वजनिक निविदा सूचना

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम, चम्पावत

अल्पकालीन निविदा नोटिस: अध्यक्ष उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यो हेतु निर्दिष्ट श्रेणी में उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम / उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से मुहुरबन्द निविदायेँ...

अल्पकालीन निविदा नोटिस: अध्यक्ष उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यो हेतु निर्दिष्ट श्रेणी में उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम / उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से मुहुरबन्द निविदायेँ...

E-TENDER NOTICE: E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded...

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम, चम्पावत

# Samsung workers protest continues to 4th week

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Workers of Samsung India Electronics Ltd on Wednesday observed a token fast near the factory in Chennai on Wednesday, as part of intensifying their ongoing protest which entered the fourth week. Communist Party of India (Marxist) led Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) which is spearheading the protest by the employees said they would be meeting the Director of Factories in a day or two, alleging that the Korean electronics giant has roped in temporary workers to work in the shop floors in view of the strike. About 1,100 employees of Samsung India Electronics Ltd are on strike since September 9 pressing for various demands including wage revision and better work conditions. While several rounds of talks held in the presence of the Labour Department and company



officials failed, another tripartite meeting has been planned for next week, said CITU leaders. "We are observing a token fast today. We want the state government to come forward and resolve the issue fast. Our most important demand is to recognise the Samsung India Workers Union by the labour department at the earliest. "The temporary

labourers are not trained like regular employees and this attitude by the management is not acceptable. We will file a complaint with the Director of Factories in a day or two," said the trade union leaders. Samsung's Chennai unit produces consumer durables at the factory including air-conditioners, refrigerators and television sets. Recently, Union Labour Minister

Mansukh Mandaviya wrote to the Tamil Nadu government urging to resolve the issue amicably. On Tuesday, the CITU members staged a protest in some districts as part of extending their support to the Samsung India workers. They were detained by the police and were released later. Samsung India recently said scores of agitating workers have returned to work soon after it issued a show-cause notice. "The management has already indicated that all the issues can be resolved by discussions and has made various harmonious attempts to resolve differences and for your report to duty," Samsung had said. Due to the strike, Samsung India said the impact on the plant operations was minimal and added that the welfare of the employees is of top priority and would engage with them to address any grievances they may have.

# Government launches internship programme for youth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday rolled out the internship programme that will provide financial assistance of Rs 60,000 per annum to 1 crore youth over a period of five years. In 2024-25, the total cost of the pilot project will be around Rs 800 crore and will look to provide internship to 1.25 lakh candidates during this fiscal, government sources said on Thursday. Announced in the Union Budget 2024, the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme in Top Companies will also provide insurance coverage to the interns. The scheme will be implemented through an online portal developed by the corporate affairs ministry. Subject to certain conditions, youth aged between 21 and 24 years will be eligible for the scheme, the sources said.



The internship programme will commence on December 2. The other company/ bank/ financial institution can participate in the scheme with the approval of the ministry, which will take into consideration factors like sectors and areas under-represented by the top 500 companies. The interns will be provided a financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per month and out of

the total amount, Rs 4,500 will be disbursed by the government and Rs 500 will be paid by the company from its CSR funds. Also, a one time grant of Rs 6,000 for incidentals will be disbursed by the ministry to each intern, upon joining the place of internship. Expenses associated with the training of interns under the scheme will be borne by the company from its CSR funds. Insurance coverage will be

provided to each individual intern under insurance schemes of the Union government, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana. The premium amount in this regard will be offered by the government. As part of the eligibility criteria, sources said, candidates enrolled in online/ distance learning programmes are eligible to apply. Candidates who have passed High School, Higher Secondary School, possess a certificate from an ITI, hold a diploma from a Polytechnic Institute, or are graduates with degrees such as BA, B.Sc, B.Com, BCA, BBA, B.Pharm, etc. Are eligible, sources said. Partner Companies will have a dedicated dashboard on the portal where they can post internship opportunities, detailing location, nature, required qualifications, and any facilities provided.



# Kia launches two new MPV

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kia India today launched the second-generation of their Kia Carnival Multi-Person Vehicle (MPV) and the EV9 electric MPV for Rs

63.9 lakh and Rs 1.29 crore respectively. The Carnival sold 14,500 units in its first generation and Kia expects the new vehicles to help it climb into the luxury segment in India.

# SEBI lowers InvIT trading lot to ₹ 25 lakh



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has drastically reduced the trading lot size of privately placed infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) to Rs 25 lakh in a bid to boost investors' participation and increase liquidity of such investment vehicles. The current trading lot for

secondary market trading for privately placed InvITs is set at Rs 1 crore. Further, if the InvIT invests at least 80 per cent of its asset value in completed and revenue-generating assets, then the trading lot is Rs 2 crore. "Trading lot for the purpose of trading of units on the designated stock exchange shall be Rs 25 lakh," Sebi said

in its notification dated September 26. The move came into effect the same day. The move will help increase the liquidity of privately placed InvIT units by permitting a broader base of investors to participate in the market and boost diversification of investment portfolios. In separate notifications, Sebi

has amended its rules on infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) and real estate investment trusts (REITs) to reduce compliance burden and facilitate ease of doing business. Under this, Sebi has fixed the timeline for undertaking distributions to unitholders by the REIT and InvIT to five working days from the date of declaration. The move is expected to bring efficiency to the distribution process and will aid in making funds available to investors within a relatively shorter period of time. The markets regulator has allowed REITs and InvITs to call a unitholders' meeting after giving shorter notice (less than 21 days) if consent is granted by writing or in electronic mode. In case of an annual meeting, consent by at least 95 per cent of unit holders will be needed and in case of any other meeting, consent by a majority of unit holders will be required.



# Mahindra Thar ROXX sees 1.76 lakh bookings in 60 minutes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahindra which in September overtook Tata Motors for the third position in India's passenger vehicle market and came extremely close to dethroning Hyundai from second position today claimed that their new Thar

ROXX SUV has bookings of 1,76,218 units in the first 60 minutes. The Mahindra Thar ROXX which is the five door variant of the very popular Thar off-road SUV was launched on August 14 and prices start at Rs 12.99 lakh going up to Rs 22.49 lakh for the fully-loaded AX7L 4x4 model.

# Goyal seeks US investments for Indian manufacturing



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has held a series of meetings with US business leaders in New York to seek investments in India. He met Chief Operating Officer of BlackRock Robert Goldstein, Chairman and CEO of Systems Technology Group Anup Popat, CEO of Tillman Holdings Sanjiv Ahuja, chief executive officer of C4V Shailesh Upreti, and Janus Henderson Investors CEO Ali Dibadi. During the meetings, Goyal discussed

opportunities for collaboration to position India as a global manufacturing hub and invited the investors to increase their commercial and trade footprints in India, the commerce ministry said. In another meeting, the minister emphasised the government's commitment to improving ease of doing business, infrastructure development, IPR (intellectual property rights) reforms, and prioritising manufacturing sectors through appropriate incentive schemes.

# Coal production jumps 32 per cent in FY24-25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The coal production from both captive and commercial coal blocks rose by 32 per cent to 79.72 Million Tonne (MT) in the April-September period of the ongoing fiscal. The coal output from both captive and commercial coal blocks was 60.52 MT in the first half of the previous fiscal. The coal dispatch rose by 34 per cent year-over-year, from 65.37 MT in H1 of FY24 to 87.86 MT in H1 of FY25. There has been "a significant rise in coal production and dispatch from both captive and commercial coal blocks during the first half of FY 2024-25, from April 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024, compared to the same period last year," the coal ministry said in a statement. The coal production in September rose by 32 per cent to 13.74 MT from 10.40 MT. Likewise, dispatch in the month of September has



grown by 47 per cent year-over-year, from 9.68 MT in FY24 to 14.27 MT in FY25. The coal ministry said that it applauds the efforts of all stakeholders, including coal companies and industry partners, for their invaluable support. Through collaborative initiatives and focused assistance, the ministry aims to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and output across the coal sector.

# BPCL signs pact for green fuel ecosystem at Mumbai port

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-owned BPCL has inked an initial pact with Mumbai Port Authority and Mumbai Port Sustainability Foundation (MPSF) for setting up a green fuel ecosystem at the port. The MoU is a pivotal step towards driving India's transition to cleaner energy solutions. By focusing on green fuel innovations, this initiative aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to the country's climate change goals, a BPCL statement said. Additionally, the pact outlines an exploration into the conversion of diesel-powered vessels to cleaner fuel alternatives, further enhancing the port's green infrastructure and reducing its carbon footprint, it said. The agreement was formalised during the launch of the Cruise Bharat Mission by Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal at Mumbai Port earlier this week, according to BPCL. As part of the initiative, the two partners will jointly set up



EV charging stations at Mumbai Port, promoting green energy adoption for port users and the general public, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) said. "This MoU is consistent with BPCL's plans towards a sustainable tomorrow alongside our own aspiration to achieve net zero emissions in Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2040. Enabling sustainable energy solutions like LNG and EV for the maritime sector is part of our endeavour to demonstrate social responsibility and partnering for our sustainable growth with that of the communities we serve," said G Krishna Kumar, Chairman & Managing Director, BPCL. The agreement also includes provisions for waste management, as BPCL and

MPSF will work on systems for source segregation, storage, and handling of recyclable and non-recyclable solid waste at Mumbai Port, it said, adding this initiative promotes socially responsible practices, ensuring a cleaner and more sustainable operational environment. "Our partnership with MbPA is a testament to BPCL's strategic vision of advancing the sustainable fuels business. By leveraging LNG and green energy infrastructure, we aim to reshape the future of maritime operations. This collaboration reflects our commitment to driving innovation in fuel solutions that not only reduce carbon emissions but also create long-term value for the environment and the industry," said Rahul Tandon, Business Head (I&C), BPCL.

# Ashok Leyland, Nidec tie up to develop e-drive motors for commercial vehicles

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland on Thursday said it has entered into a partnership with Japanese firm Nidec for developing e-drive motors for commercial vehicles. Under the multi-pronged collaboration, the two partners will work to establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Electric Drive Units (EDUs), which will focus on developing motor technologies and power electronics systems for EVs, along with innovations in gear-shifting mechanisms, Ashok Leyland said in a statement. "This collaboration allows us

to co-develop, innovative e-drive motors specifically designed for the unique demands of India's commercial vehicle market, while significantly advancing our electric mobility capabilities," said Shenu Agarwal, Managing Director and CEO at Ashok Leyland. The collaboration will also involve joint research and development efforts, with both companies contributing to skilling, lab infrastructure, and defining novel, differentiated motor technologies for the EV portfolio of Ashok Leyland and its subsidiary Switch Mobility, the company said. Ashok Leyland further said it will continue to source motors



from Nidec for its existing EV lineup, while collaborating on research and development for future electric solutions. "Our investment strategy and motor technology are well complemented by Ashok Leyland, who understand the precise and specific demands of the commercial vehicle market," said Michael Briggs, President at Nidec Motion & Energy.

The announcement comes days after the government launched the Prime Minister E-Drive Scheme with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore for faster adoption of electric vehicles, setting up of charging infrastructure and development of EV manufacturing ecosystem in the country. The scheme has come into effect from October 1.

# Tata Power-DDL conducts Extensive Safety Awareness Drive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited organised an extensive safety drive for its consumers and field staff to reduce the chances of electricity-related incidents. Under this drive, more than 2.28 Lakh installations including plain cement and concrete (PCC) poles, street lights, stay wires, towers, rail poles, fencing of sub stations, feeder & service pillars, PWD Poles, MCD Poles, ATMs & lights installed in parks were checked for any unsafe situation / hazard and rectifications thereof. Tata Power-DDL is dedicated to supporting Ramllela, Durga Puja, and other festive

events by providing temporary connections within 24 hours. While the discom is committed to offering tatkal connections during the festive season, the safety of people in mass gatherings remains of utmost priority. Tata Power-DDL's operations and maintenance teams would remain on high alert to handle any safety-related issues that may arise during this time. Additionally, consumers are advised to take due precautions with their wiring and avoid any loose connections, as these can lead to accidents. It is also crucial to install an ELCB (Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker)/RCCB to protect both people and equipment from electrical shocks.

## INBRIEF

### GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY RELEASES SCHEDULE

**AMRITSAR:** The online examination form submission and fee payments for December 2024 exams of Law FYIP/TYP, B.Ed., B.A.-B.Ed., B.Sc.-B.Ed., B.Com.-B.Ed and B.Ed.-M.Ed Sem-1 for regular students through online portal have been scheduled.

### GNDU NSS UNIT ORGANISES WORKSHOP ON E-WASTE MANAGEMENT

**AMRITSAR:** The NSS unit of Guru Nanak Dev University, successfully organized a comprehensive E-waste management drive under the banner of "Swachhata Hi Sewa." The initiative aimed to raise awareness about the pressing issue of electronic waste.

### ZONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL OF "GCA ZONE" KICKS OFF

**AMRITSAR:** The three-day Zonal Youth Festival of "GCA Zone" of Guru Nanak Dev University began here today with great enthusiasm and energy, marked by an impressive inauguration ceremony presided over by S. Charanjit Singh Sohal, IPS SSP Amritsar (Rural). The festival will be concluded on October 5, 2024.

WORLD ANIMAL DAY: OCTOBER 04, 2024

# A HOME FOR EVERY HEART

As we observe *World Animal Day 2024*, we embrace the theme, "The World is Their Home Too" This day serves as a powerful reminder that animals share our planet and deserve our care and protection. Let's come together to ensure that every creature feels safe and loved in the world we all inhabit, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



Collage: Satish C Jakhmola

On *World Animal Day*, we are reminded of a simple yet profound truth: animals share our world and in many ways, they reflect the best parts of ourselves. As we go about our lives, it's easy to forget the loyalty, grace and beauty that animals bring to this planet. Whether it's the silent strength of a tiger in the wild or the trusting eyes of a stray dog, animals have a way of touching our hearts. As the author **Anthony Douglas Williams** once said, "We have more to learn from animals than animals have to learn from us." Their unconditional love, resilience and ability to live harmoniously with nature offer us lessons in compassion, humility and care.

October 4th, *World Animal Day*, is a time to highlight the pressing issues that animals face across the globe. The theme for this year, "The World is Their Home Too," is a powerful call for all of us to recognise the rights of animals, whether they are roaming freely in the wilderness or wandering the streets as strays. This day is a chance to reflect on how we treat the creatures that share our planet and to realise that they, too, deserve safety, respect and love. From the majestic *Royal Bengal Tiger* to the critically endangered *Indian Rhinoceros*, the wildlife in India is under constant threat.

Habitat destruction, poaching and human-wildlife conflict have left these species teetering on the edge of survival. The tiger, once a symbol of untamed power, now roams in small, fragmented patches of forest. The *Indian Rhinoceros*, whose numbers were once decimated by hunting, faces the constant pressure of habitat loss and illegal poaching for its horn. Similarly, the Asiatic Lion, which now has a population of approximately 600 individuals confined to the Gir Forest, faces an uncertain future in its last remaining natural habitat. This small population survives in a limited area, making them vulnerable to catastrophic events like disease outbreaks or forest fires, which could wipe them out forever. These creatures, emblematic of India's natural heritage, are not merely animals, they are vital parts of ecosystems that sustain life, including our own. Yet, it's not only the rare and exotic species that require our attention. Animals that live closer to us, whether they are stray dogs, cattle, or even birds, also face significant challenges. *Stray dogs*, in particular, bear the brunt of urban neglect. But beyond the dogs, there are countless other animals like cows left to fend for themselves on the streets, often injured or malnourished. Birds, too,

Rather than purchasing pets, adopting from shelters not only saves lives but helps reduce the suffering caused by overpopulation. We must also push for stronger laws against animal cruelty and promote humane population control measures for stray animals, such as spay and neuter programmes. On this day, let's broaden our perspective. Let's not just think about the wild animals in distant forests or the pets in our homes. Let's consider all the creatures that make up our world: the birds, the cattle, the marine life and the strays and how each one plays a vital role in the delicate balance of life on Earth. Every action we take, no matter how small, contributes to creating a better world for them.

As we observe *World Animal Day*, let's remember that the answer for stray animals begins with a simple yet profound action: adopt, don't shop. Every stray dog on the street is a potential companion, waiting for a family. By adopting a stray, you give an animal a second chance at life and the warmth of a loving home. This small act not only transforms their lives but also enriches yours with unique love and companionship. Every life saved reflects our compassion for these deserving souls. The world is their home too and together, we can ensure that every animal feels safe, loved, and valued.

## BOOKS TO CELEBRATE WORLD ANIMAL DAY

**The Gopi Diaries** is a charming series for children by **Sudha Murty**, published by *Harper Children's*. The series follows Gopi, a lovable pup. In *Coming Home*, Gopi is adopted by a loving family and quickly learns about his new world. In *Finding Love*, he grows stronger and cheekier, facing new challenges and meeting exciting dog companions. Finally, in *Growing Up*, Gopi matures and welcomes a new friend, Nova, into his life. **Warrior Queens of Ranthambore** by **Manish Kalani**, is a unique coffee table book that captures the journey of five generations of tigresses in Ranthambore National Park. Featuring over 500 photographs taken over eight years, wildlife photographer **Manish Kalani** tells the story of the legendary tigress Machhli and her descendants, highlighting their beauty, strength and emotional bonds. The book emphasises the importance of tiger conservation and serves as a significant addition to wildlife literature in India. **Mountain Mammals of the World** by **M.K. Ranjitsinh**, published by *Penguin Ebury Press*, is a definitive guide that explores the larger mammals inhabiting mountainous regions globally. The book features

detailed profiles of approximately 62 species and 78 subspecies, highlighting their behaviour, ecology and conservation status. This work serves as an essential resource for understanding these majestic animals within their breathtaking mountain habitats.

**Wildlife Chronicles** by **Adit Jain** (Publisher: Rupa) is a travelogue and guide to India's national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. The book showcases the country's diverse landscapes and wildlife, featuring travel tips, must-see places, and captivating photographs. **Jain's** personal anecdotes aim to inspire interest in conservation while providing practical advice for travellers. **Wildlife India @ 50: Saving the Wild, Securing the Future** by **Manoj Misra** (Publisher: Rupa) commemorates 50 years of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The book chronicles India's wildlife conservation journey, reflecting on successes and missed opportunities through contributions from various experts. With a focus on the impact of colonial hunting practices and the need for wildlife legislation, it highlights the progress made and the challenges ahead in protecting India's biodiversity.

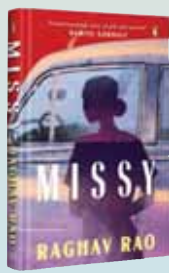


NEW ARRIVALS



**First Flood**  
By **KALKI**, TRANSLATED BY **GOWRI RAMNARAYAN**  
(PRICE: ₹799, PAGES: 544)  
Penguin Random House

In *First Flood*, the first installment of Ponniyin Selvan, **Kalki** delves into the political intrigue of tenth-century Tamil Nadu. As Emperor Sundara Chozha lies unwell in Tanjavur fort, a sinister plot unfolds to dethrone Crown Prince Aditta Karikalan. Entrusted with a critical message, Vallavaraiyan Vandiyatevan faces perilous challenges as he navigates betrayal and ambition. Beautifully translated by Gowri Ramnarayan, this timeless tale of loyalty and intrigue captivates readers with its rich storytelling and complex characters.



**Missy**  
By **RAGHAV RAO**  
(Price: ₹699, Pages: 312) Vintage Books

In *Missy*, **Raghav Rao** follows Savi, a gifted young woman from St. Ursula's Convent in Madras, who dreams of escape. After a night of trauma forces her and her lover, Ananda, to flee to America under new identities, Savi transforms into Missy, a pillar of the South Asian community in Chicago. As she raises her two daughters, Mansi and Shilpa, the arrival of Varun, a charming doctor, threatens to unravel her carefully built life. This extraordinary debut delves into themes of identity, love, and the inescapable nature of the past, showcasing a woman's resilience and courage.

# Hindus and the Modern Struggles of Religious Persecution

Anand Ranganathan's book, *Hindus in Hindu Rashtra*, offers a scathing analysis of the plight of Hindus in modern India, drawing parallels to historical persecution and raising crucial questions about religious dynamics in the country.

BY **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

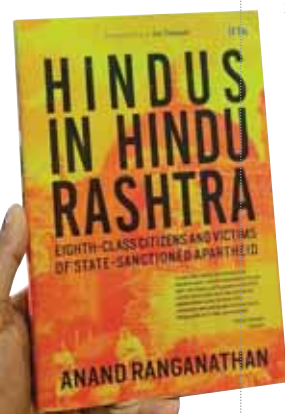
Sufferance is the badge of our tribe," Shylock, the Jewish money lender, says in the Shakespearean play "The Merchant of Venice." Had Shylock been around now, he would certainly have added Hindus too as the victims of hatred and cruelty perpetrated by the Abrahamic religions. History, as well as modern times, substantiate what Shakespeare made Shylock say in this path-breaking play. In October 2023, the dreaded Hamas organisation let loose one of the most barbaric attacks ever reported in history on the innocent Jewish residents of the Gaza Strip, kidnapping more than 300 of them and subjecting them to vicious torture. The Hamas terrorists were celebrating in style as their colleagues recounted how they raped young girls in front of their parents and tore them apart, a la Nirbhaya incident that shook India in 2012. It was only when Israel retaliated (like any other nation would) in a bid to release their brethren from the torturing cells of Hamas, that liberals, secularists and pseudo-intellectuals came out extending their open-hearted support to Hamas. The Israeli Defence Force was portrayed as the aggressor while the Hamas terrorists were seen as angels in the eyes of these paid intellectuals. The history of the Jewish people is packed with stories of persecution faced by them and their struggles for survival. No other community, other than Hindus, has faced the kind of cruelty to which the Jewish were subjected by their tormentors. To lambast Israel and eulogise the Arabs as well as Palestinians became the measure of one's intellectual dexterity. This is what the Hindus in India face now. Though 80 per cent of the Indian population are Hindus, they face the

same kind of torment and cruelty at the hands of the minorities. In the land of the Sanatana Dharma, the aggressors claim ownership of more than 70 per cent of the land. A cleric was heard claiming the other day that Antilia, the 27-storey personal residence of Mukesh Ambani in Bombay and valued at \$4.6 billion, has been constructed on Waqf land. It is for Mukesh Ambani to give clarification to this claim, while the day is not far off when the same people are likely to come forward claiming that Rashtrapati Bhavan as well as 7 Lok Kalyan Marg belong to them. Forget about these things. The Hindus have become eighth-class citizens and victims of State-sanctioned apartheid in their own country, according to Dr **Anand Ranganathan**, scientist, author and political critic who works in the Communist citadel Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU for short). Dr Ranganathan speaks and writes with conviction and articulation. True to his profession as a genetic engineer and biotechnologist, **Dr Ranganathan** has found out the basic reasons behind the plight of the Hindus in the country, and he has made it unambiguously clear with his latest book *Hindus in Hindu Rashtra*, published by BluOne Ink. The book of 128 pages is a power-packed punch from this frail professor, which the rivals would not be able to counter. The author has made his intention clear from the word go. "To those who claim we are now living in a totalitarian Hindu Rashtra, one must ask: What kind of a Hindu Rashtra is this where a billion-strong Hindus have been, through our parliament, courts, education system and our Constitution, reduced to not just second-class but rather, eighth-class citizens? What kind of a Hindu Rashtra is this where Durga Puja and Garba celebrations are stoned with impunity, where a sitting Prime Minister claims minorities have the first right to



ABOUT THE BOOK

**Book :** *Hindus in Hindu Rashtra*  
by **ANAND RANGANATHAN**  
**Publisher :** BluOne Ink  
₹399



resources?" Even as I write about the book, TV channels scroll news headlines about Ganapati statue immersions in Karnataka and Maharashtra being stoned by a group of people. The Marxist-Mullah-Congress axis held State-wide protest rallies in Kerala to express solidarity with the terrorists and extremists of Hamas and Hezbollah. A TV channel and newspaper owned by Jamaat-e-Islami laments 24x7 that there is no freedom of expression and religion in India since 2014. The channel beams anti-India news round the clock, forcing the viewers to complain to the ministries of home and information and broadcasting about the hidden agenda behind the channel and the newspaper. The Supreme Court comes to the help of the channel by blasting the Centre for its high-handedness. This is the kind of privilege enjoyed by the minority communities in India, only in India. A Hindu cannot be blamed for feeling compelled to convert to Islam, but what prevents most of the Sanatanis from doing so is the severe pain it may cause in the process. **Dr Ranganathan**, I feel, is lenient in his words. He explains through eight chapters the state of abyss the Hindus find themselves in. The powers that be, whether it is the Congress, BJP, or the motley crowd of the Third Front, do not have any answer for the questions posed by him in the opening chapter, "State Control of Hindu Temples". In Kerala, from where I hail, the most coveted post for which politicians who fail to make it to the assembly or parliament vie with each other is for the post of the chairman of the Devaswom Boards (Travancore, Kochi, and Malabar). Even rationalists and atheists in the CPI(M), CPI, and RSP turn believers to occupy the chairmanship and to

swindle the hundis (treasure boxes in which the devotees make offerings to the presiding deities). "The Hindus have no right to question the injustice meted out to them in the form of adding pig fat to laddus, a divine offering to God. If you dare to question the act, the Lordships would come down on you like an avalanche with the claim that 'Secularism is in danger.'" The term secularism has become the most nauseating one in India, as a jurist was heard asking the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh to keep quiet over the affair with the Tirupati laddu. To those who do not care about the ground realities facing the Hindus, we have to ask, "What happened to the Veda Patasalas and Gurukulas, which were the landmarks along the banks of Krishna, Godavari, Kaveri, Ganga, Yamuna, and Brahmaputra?" It is an unpardonable sin in the Hindu country to ask the questions posed by the likes of **Anand Ranganathan**, R Vaidyanathan, Rajiv Malhotra, Sandeep Balakrishna and of course Arun Shourie. India may be the only country in the world that keeps its citizens from the real history (the XI volumes of the History and Culture of the Indian People edited by that wonderful historian Prof R C Majumdar). It is a "crime" in this country to pinpoint the directives given by the one and only Prophet that the idolaters only are unclean (Surah 9, ayat 5) and the disbelievers are an open enemy to you (Surah 4:101) (Quotes from The Calcutta Quran Petition authored by Sita Ram Goel). If the Hindus fail to take note of the observations by **Anand Ranganathan**, they are doomed to be Pappus and village idiots. In this era of religious hegemony, scholars like **Ranganathan**, **Vaidyanathan**, and **Rajiv Malhotra** are beacons of hope. Please do not miss out on what they speak and write.

# INDIA NEED TOP GUNS FIRING IN UNISON AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

**PTI ■ DUBAI**  
A stellar effort by senior stars would be mandatory when India take on New Zealand in their opening Group A match of the women's T20 World Cup here on Friday, aiming for a strong start in their quest to wipe off the memories of past near-misses. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who in all likelihood, will be appearing in her last T20 World Cup, has been witness to several near misses and disappointing moments from close quarters, including India's capitulation to Australia in the final at Melbourne in 2020. As a has been in the past, this Indian line-up is rich in talent and, arguably, only Australia have a similarly well-oiled unit. But the reigning champions have six titles in their cabinet, and India's is still dust-laden. So, what pegs India back in global events? It seems more a case of mental fragility at clutch moments, and the Women in Blue tried to address that during a preparatory camp at the NCA (National Cricket Academy) with a few counselling sessions. But such external measures can only be of limited help in big tournaments, as it boils down entirely to flawless execution of strategies on a given day. In that context, India will not get a

better opponent than New Zealand, which is not a fancied side like its Trans-Tasman neighbour. But the two-time runners-up are as tough as nails. A victory against them could well be counted as a sign of being in fine shape — tactically and mentally — and that's a pre-requisite for India in a group that also has Australia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. To start with, India will require heavy contributions from their top guns — the 35-year-old Harmanpreet, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma and Deepti Sharma. Among them, Shafali and Mandhana have been in excellent touch, making runs in their last international outing in the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in July even though India lost to the hosts in the final. In fact, Mandhana's last five T20I innings include three fifties. But Harmanpreet and Shafali have been a tad underwhelming and the duo finding range is imperative for India's charge at the top and middle order. It is critical to India's chances as the pitches in the UAE, going through a harsh heat wave, might not be a treasure trove of runs, particularly deep into the tournament. However, the expected weariness of the track, in one way, will cater to India's strengths in the bowling department — spin.



They have only three pacers in their squad — Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Arundhati Reddy. In all likelihood, India will only play two of them, while depending on a plethora of spinners in their line-up. India have exceptional variety in that department. The attack will be marshalled by off-spinners Deepti and Shreyanka Patil, leg-spinner Asha Shobhana and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav.

But the Kiwis have a good blend of experienced and young players, who can lift them above such obstacles. Their talismanic skipper Sophie Devine, experienced all-rounder Suzie Bates along with veteran pacers Lea Tahuu and Leigh Kasperek form the crux of this New Zealand side. Add the exciting young all-rounder Amelia Kerr to the mix, and they have the wherewithal to spring a surprise or two in this tournament. But beyond them, the Kiwis are a bit green behind the ears and that could be their Achilles Heel.  
**TEAMS:**  
**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, Yastika Bhatia (subject to fitness), Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil (subject to fitness), Sajana Sajeevan  
**Travelling reserves:** Uma Chetry (wk), Tanuja Kanwer, Saima Thakur  
**New Zealand:** Sophie Devine (c), Suzie Bates, Eden Carson, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Fran Jonas, Leigh Kasperek, Melie Kerr, Jess Kerr, Rosemary Mair, Molly Penfold, Georgia Plimmer, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuu.



## Khushi seals dramatic bronze, takes India's tally to 15 at ISSF Jr Worlds

## Biggest challenges for India in Women's T20 WC will be Australia, SL: Harbhajan

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
India's World Cup-winning spinner Harbhajan Singh said the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side will face a tough challenge from Australia and Sri Lanka in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup. The global showpiece gets underway in the UAE from Thursday, and India are placed in Group A alongside Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and New Zealand. "I think India needs to be very careful when playing against Australia. Looking at this group, India has Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. But one match that I think will be a little tough is the India-Australia match," Harbhajan told Star Sports. "Australia is a good team, even though these matches are being played in Dubai, on subcontinent pitches that might not suit them as much as their home conditions. But Australia, no matter where they play, are hard to beat. So,

the biggest challenge for India may be Australia," he said. Harbhajan's fears were not entirely misplaced as the Australia have beaten India 23 times in 32 T20Is with the 'Women in Blue' winning seven of them. However, the 44-year-old warned India of another potential hazard on its way - Sri Lanka. The Islanders had recently trumped India in the Asia Cup final with Chamari Athapaththu and Harshitha Samarawickrama producing match-winning efforts. "Sri Lanka, too, after their recent series win against India, will be confident when they play against India. So, that will also be a good contest." But Harbhajan had little doubts that India have the skill sets to land their maiden ICC title. "Team India will be the team to beat in this tournament. They have both experience and youth. Harman (captain Harmanpreet Kaur) is in good

form, Smriti (Mandhana) is in good form, and Deepti (Sharma) is an unbelievable spinner. "They are a very capable team and have been playing very good cricket. The unit looks solid. If India plays good cricket overall, I believe they will win this tournament," he noted. The off-spinner, who has 711 international wickets, also advised the Indians to take it one match at a time, without succumbing to the big-moment pressure. "You have to try to give your best and not take pressure. At this stage, the only thing that matters is to know yourself, and play as a unit. Results will follow. "Don't think about the big picture; just take small steps with each match and focus on the process. I hope if they follow these things, our team will perform very well," he added. India open their campaign against New Zealand on Friday.

**PTI ■ LIMA (PERU)**

Khushi secured a hard-fought bronze in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions at the ISSF Junior World Championship here, dramatically qualifying for the final before rallying to claim the third spot. Her medal on Wednesday took India's tally to 15, including 10 gold, one silver, and four bronze medals, keeping the country at the top

of the standings. The youngster shot 447.3 in the final to finish behind Caroline Lund of Norway who won silver with 458.3. Caroline's compatriot Synnoeve Berg won gold with 458.4. However, Khushi's path to the podium was far from easy. She narrowly made it to the medal round, rallying brilliantly in the final standing position in qualifying to clinch the

seventh spot with a score of 585. It got so tight that there were four others on the same score. However, Khushi and Italian Anna Schiavon clinched the final two qualifying spots, scoring 29 inner-10 shots, while two Swiss athletes — Alexa Tela and Emely Jaeggi — managed 27. Khushi finished ahead of Anna on countback. In the eight-woman final, Khushi was fourth at the end

of the first two positions — Kneeling and Prone. A strong finish in the Standing position allowed her to pip Norwegian Pernille Nor-Woll after the 40th shot to move up to third. Synnoeve and Caroline were having their own battle for top-two throughout the 45-shot final. Khushi wobbled again on the 41st shot with 9.1 which put her back down to fifth, but a brilliant 10.7 in the 42nd and 10.4 in 43rd ensured the bronze. In the team competition in junior women's 3P, the trio of Sakshi Padekar, Melvina Joel Gladson and Prachi Gaekwad, finished fifth with a tally of 1757. Anoushka Thakur also shot 585 in qualification, but 26 hits in the inner-10 ring meant she ended 11th. Sakshi, Melvina and Prachi finished 24th, 32nd and 41st respectively.

## Weight management is athlete's responsibility: Mary Kom

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

No stranger to the physical toll of weight management during a competition, six-time world champion boxer M C Mary Kom Thursday waded into the debate surrounding wrestler Vinesh Phogat's Olympic heartbreak for being 100gm over, saying that to be within the prescribed limit is an individual responsibility. The 42-year-old mother of four, who is India's only woman boxer with an Olympic medal (a bronze in London, 2012), was in the city to promote Utkarsh Small Finance Bank, which named her as its brand ambassador. Speaking for the first time on Phogat, who was disqualified on the day of her 50kg finals in the Paris Games for being marginally over the prescribed limit, Mary Kom said weight management is an athlete's responsibility. "I felt so disappointed in the sense that I have also done the same (weight management) for the last so many years. Weight is important, that is my responsibility. I cannot blame anyone," she said. "I do not want to say this in her case. I am saying this in my case only. If I do not cut the weight properly then how will I play? I am there to win a medal and that is what I think," she continued.

Mary Kom, in the past, has spoken about her weight cut routines and how difficult the process can be. The Manipuri started out as a pin-weight (46kg) category boxer before settling for the flyweight (51kg) division in her amateur career. Phogat, who was being seen as gold medal contender in Paris, skipped meals and fluids, worked out an entire night and also cut her hair to be within the requisite category but the effort fell short eventually. She challenged her disqualification, calling the rules inhumane, but her appeal was rejected by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. The wrestler retired to join politics after the heartbreak and is contesting the Haryana assembly elections on a Congress ticket. **WANT TO DISCUSS INDIAN BOXING WITH SPORTS MINISTER:** Mary Kom was also quizzed about India's boxing campaign in Paris and she was still perplexed by how poor the performance was. She said she wants to have a meeting with the national federation and sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya to understand "what is lacking" and clear her "doubts". The Indian boxing contingent, which included two reigning world champions in Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain, cut a sorry figure



situation demands. If the sports minister has the knowledge (about the issues) I want to discuss that also," she said. Refusing to share her exact concerns, Mary Kom said she would rather discuss them in the meeting with Mandaviya and BFI brass. "The federation has provided all the coaches. But I have a few doubts as well. But what is the point in saying them now, the Olympics are done. Now there is no point in saying all that, but I want to discuss it with them in the meeting," said the former Rajya Sabha MP. "(The) sports minister is doing whatever he can do from his side, infrastructure, facilities or whatever (other) needs are there. But how did the federation handle the training? Was it done systematically or not? What happened exactly, I do not know," she wondered. "If I do not meet them and not discuss, how will I know about them?" Mary reiterated that she wants to participate in professional boxing "I have not retired yet but I want to compete. I am trying to get opportunities, waiting for my chance to fight pro. I just want to come back." "I can continue for another three-four years, that is my will. I have the passion and hunger. I want to continue," she added.

## Lionel Messi, Inter Miami win MLS Supporters Shield with 3-2 win at Crew

**AP ■ COLUMBUS (OHIO)**

Lionel Messi and Inter Miami have another trophy, along with home-field advantage throughout the Major League Soccer playoffs. Messi scored twice in the final minutes of the first half, goalie Drake Callender stopped a penalty kick in the 84th minute and Inter Miami beat the defending MLS Cup champion Columbus Crew 3-2 on Wednesday, wrapping up the Supporters Shield given annually to the team with the best regular-season record. It was Messi's 46th major trophy won for club or country, extending his record for the most by any men's soccer player in history. And it is the second he has won with Inter Miami, this Supporters Shield being added to the Leagues Cup trophy the Herons claimed shortly after Messi joined the club in 2023. "We knew this was a group that could fight for this," Messi said. Luis Suarez also scored for Inter Miami, which will open a best-of-three first-round playoff series in the final weekend of October. If the team wins that series, it would have the right to host every match it plays the rest of the season - an Eastern Conference semifinal (scheduled for

Nov. 23 or 24), the East final (Nov. 30 or Dec. 1) and the MLS Cup final on Dec. 7. "We have a nice opportunity to go down in history ... And now we think about what is coming," Messi told Apple TV after the match. "We have a great advantage in that we play all the games at home, which was what we were looking for. I think that we are very, very strong at home." Also still within reach for Inter Miami: the best MLS regular-season mark ever. Wednesday's win pushed Inter Miami's record to 20-4-8 this season, giving it 68 points. If the club wins its final two matches - Saturday at Toronto and Oct. 19 at home against New England - it would finish with 74 points. New England has the single-season points record, finishing with 73 in 2021. Messi opened the scoring in the 45th minute, taking a long pass from Jordi Alba - his longtime teammate at Barcelona, the club with which Messi won 35 of his trophies - and splitting two defenders before somehow getting the ball past Columbus goalkeeper Patrick Schulte for a 1-0 lead. And about five minutes into first-half stoppage time, Messi struck again on a free kick from about 30 yards out.



Schulte seemed fooled, and Messi squeezed the ball between the goalie and the near post for a 2-0 lead. "Dominant," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said. Diego Rossi scored in the first minute of the second half for Columbus to cut the lead in half, but it didn't take long for Inter Miami to restore the two-goal cushion. Almost immediately after play resumed, Schulte was upended by one of his own defenders and Suarez sent a header into an empty net for a 3-1 edge. Juan "Cucho" Hernández's penalty kick in the 61st minute got Columbus within 3-2. But once again, the momentum didn't last for long. Rudy Camacho was sent off for his second yellow card in the 63rd minute, meaning the Crew had to play with 10 men the rest of the way. Didn't matter. Columbus still created some big chances down the stretch. A deflected ball in the 76th minute got across the box and onto the right foot of Mohamed Farsi - but his shot was blocked by Callender, who was perfectly positioned to protect the lead. Then came more drama, when Inter Miami was called for its second handball inside the box - an automatic penalty kick - of the

second half. Hernández picked the left side of the net, but Callender made the save look almost easy. That save helped finish what Messi started. It was the fifth two-goal game of the MLS season for Messi, who now has 17 goals in 17 league matches this season. He's missed 15 of Inter Miami's MLS matches in 2024, either because of commitments to Argentina's national team or the two-month absence that he needed to recover from a badly injured ankle - an injury that happened during his nation's run to the Copa America title in July. Inter Miami, in MLS play this season, is now 10-1-6 with Messi in the lineup. "Throughout the year we had many, many injuries, where we couldn't all be together ... But the group was getting the most out of every tough game," Messi said. The Crew and the LA Galaxy entered Wednesday still with a mathematical hope of passing Inter Miami in the race for the Supporters Shield, and Cincinnati was nine points back with nine points still possible. But now, they're all playing for second. "Dec. 7 is what we want," Martino said, referring to the date of the MLS Cup final.