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SHUBHANKAR IN
FRENCH OPEN GOLF
12 SPORTS



Prime Minister will clean the air for Delhi this winter

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Concerned over the perennial problem of deadly pollution with the onset of winters in Delhi NCR, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Friday set the degree of engagement of stakeholders, including the NCT Government of Delhi, to combat the air pollution particularly augmented due to stubble burning in neighbouring States. The meeting comes a few days after the Supreme Court came down heavily on the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), for not taking any action on local officers amid a rise in crop burning in north Indian states, which leads to air pollution in Delhi. The SC said not a single committee was formed to tackle the stubble burning issue.

"Every year we see stubble burning. There has been total non-compliance of the CAQM Act. Have committees been constituted? Please show us a single step taken. Which directions have you used under the Act? You are silent spectators. You are doing nothing," the Supreme Court said on September 27, 2024. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr. PK



File Photo: The Pioneer

Mishra convened a High Level Task Force meeting for the purpose where he reviewed short term and long measures being undertaken to prevent, and abate, air pollution in Delhi, and simultaneously expressed concern over slow pace of

clearance of landfill sites in the national Capital and delays in implementation of waste to energy plans by the civic bodies. Agriculture stubble burning, a major source of seasonal air pollution in Delhi and neighbouring states was

addressed. Although Delhi has a relatively small paddy area, Mishra called for the complete elimination of stubble burning in the city as a model for surrounding regions.

According to a senior official, the meeting focused on assessing the readiness of the Delhi Government and other stakeholders in implementing both immediate and long-term measures to mitigate air pollution in Delhi. The Task Force, comprising senior officials from Central Ministries and the Delhi administration, reviewed current strategies and discussed additional innovative steps to tackle the pollution challenge.

Task Force, consisting of representatives from the Delhi Government, Central Ministries including Secretary MoHUA, Secretary MoEFCC, Delhi Police, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), and the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), reaffirmed their collective resolve to abate air pollution in Delhi, especially during the ensuing winter season.

Nayab Chief Minister for Haryana



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

After Bharatiya Janata Party's spectacular performance winning a third consecutive tenure, Haryana's incumbent Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is likely to take oath as the Chief Minister of Haryana on Tuesday, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union ministers, and CMs of BJP-ruled states, are also expected to attend the swearing-in ceremony.

According to BJP leaders, Haryana may follow the precedent set by other states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha by introducing two Deputy Chief Ministers. This dual-leadership model is anticipated to balance party seniority, and caste representation within the Cabinet. The senior-most leader, former Home Minister Anil Vij, is tipped to be one of the Deputy CMs, while the other position may go to a Brahmin MLA, potentially offering a more inclusive leadership structure.

In another development, Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma met Saini in Delhi, as his mother, Shakti Rani Sharma, had secured a win from the Kalka constituency.

Omar returns to Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Legislative party Omar Abdullah Friday evening staked claim to form the government, the first since the Centre scrapped J&K's special status in 2019.

Omar, dressed in a traditional salwar suit, drove to the Raj Bhawan to meet Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. During the meeting, he formally presented his claim to form the government in Jammu & Kashmir, following the support from Congress. Omar also presented letters of support from the alliance partners and independent candidates.

daughter Shruti Chaudhary, the newly elected MLA from Tosham, met with Union Minister Khattar, indicating a broader coalition-building process within the BJP. A 10-member committee headed by the Panchkula district commissioner has been set up by the state chief secretary to oversee the arrangements for the ceremony. The ceremony was initially scheduled for October 12, but was postponed to accommodate the Prime Minister's schedule. According to sources, the Parade Ground had been chosen as the venue as it was adjoining Indradhanush Auditorium Complex, which had a huge secured parking space for VVIPs.



Mahadev app kingpin arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Sourabh Chandrakar, one of the main promoters of the Mahadev betting app, is expected to be brought to India soon, following his recent formal arrest in Dubai on the basis of an Interpol issued arrest warrant in a money laundering and fraud case, official sources said Friday.

Chandrakar along with another promoter of the app, Ravi Uppal was detained and put under "house arrest" in that country late last year following the Enforcement Directorate (ED) request for issuance of a Redcorner Notice (RN) against them. The RN is issued by Interpol. Sources said Chandrakar is expected to be either extradited or deported to India over the next few days after he was formally placed under arrest in Dubai recently. The ED is in the process of sending relevant documents for his extradition to Dubai authorities following which a competent court there will be approached, they said.

Chandrakar is stated to have left for Dubai in 2019 and before that he used to run a juice shop named "Juice Factory" with his brother in Bhilai town of Durg district in Chhattisgarh. The ED has alleged that its probe in the Mahadev Online Book (MOB) gaming and betting app has shown involvement of various high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh, the state where Chandrakar and Uppal hail from.

Maa Kali decrowned in Bangladesh



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has urged Bangladesh to investigate the reported theft of a religious article that was gifted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Jeshoreshwari Kali temple during his visit in 2021.

In a social media post, the Indian High Commission in Dhaka expressed deep concern over the theft and called upon

the authorities to recover the article and take action against the perpetrators of the crime.

"We have seen reports of theft of the crown gifted by PM Modi to Jeshoreshwari Kali Temple (Satkhira) in 2021 during his visit to Bangladesh," it said, adding "We express deep concern and urge Govt of Bangladesh to investigate theft, recover the crown and take action against the perpetrators."

Separately, Indian government sources said New Delhi is

deeply disturbed by the reported incident of theft. The Indian High Commission in Dhaka is in touch with Bangladesh authorities on the issue, they said.

The Bangladesh law enforcement authorities have been urged to investigate the incident, recover the stolen article and bring the guilty to book, sources said.

As per reports, the gold-plated crown of goddess Kali at the temple in Satkhira's Shyamnagar was stolen on Thursday afternoon. The absence of the crown from the deity's head was noticed by the cleaning staff after temple priest Dilip Mukherjee left around two pm.

Prime Minister Modi had visited the Jeshoreshwari Temple on March 27, 2021, as part of his tour to Bangladesh. The visit coincided with the celebrations of Bangladesh's Golden Jubilee of Independence and the birth centenary of its founding leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The temple is considered among the 52 'Shakti Peethas' (seats of the Goddess) and is believed to have been constructed in the late 12th Century.

From Ratan to Naval, the Tata legacy moves on



T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a succession that came two days after the death of Ratan Naval Tata, his half-brother Noel Naval Tata was on Friday appointed new Chairman of Tata Trusts, the philanthropic arm of Tata Group. A formal announcement about Noel Tata's appointment as the head of the Tata Trusts came after the Trustees of various Trusts that come under the Tata Trusts held a joint meeting, condoled Ratan Tata's demise and noted his yeoman services not only to the Tata Group but also to nation building. "In separate meetings held immediately, thereafter, it was unanimously decided to appoint Mr. Noel Naval Tata as the Chairman of the

various Trusts that constitute the Tata Trusts and also designate him as Chairman, Tata Trusts," Tata Trusts said in a statement issued here in the afternoon.

Sixty-seven-year-old Noel Tata's appointment came into place with immediate effect. After being appointed as the new chairman of the Tata Trusts, India's oldest philanthropic institution, Noel Tata said that he was "deeply honoured and humbled" by the responsibility cast on me by my fellow Trustees and he looked "forward to carrying on the legacy of Ratan N Tata and the founders of the Tata Group".

"I am deeply honoured and humbled by the responsibility that has been cast on me by my fellow Trustees. I look forward to carrying on the legacy of Ratan N Tata and the founders of the Tata Group. Founded more than a century ago, the Tata Trusts are a unique vehicle for undertaking social good. On this solemn occasion, we rededicate ourselves to carrying on our developmental and philanthropic initiatives and continuing to play our part in nation building," Noel Tata said.

No ground rent from puja pandals



Announces CM Majhi

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR / CUTTACK : Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Friday announced that no ground rent would be collected from the puja committees holding community puja on government land during this year's festive season.

The CM, who went round several puja Mandaps in Bhubaneswar, also extended good wishes to the people of the State on the occasion of Maha Astami.

In response, several puja

committees across the State have expressed their gratitude to the CM.

"Earlier we had requested the Cuttack Municipal Corporation to make the Durga Puja mandaps tax-free. Our request was not accepted and we had to pay around Rs 24,000 as ground rent for setting up decorative gates and organising programmes. However, the Chief Minister has now announced that all the puja mandaps across the State will be rent-free. We express our gratitude to the CM for this," said Chhatra Bazaar puja committee president

Debendra Sahu.

"Several other committees have also paid rent like us. We request the administration to make necessary arrangements for refund of the amount," he added.

Holiday notice

The Pioneer wishes its readers a Happy Durga Puja. The offices of The Pioneer Bhubaneswar edition will remain closed on October 12 and 13 on account of Durga Puja. The next issue of the paper will appear on October 15, 2024.



Illegal parkings gobble up market roads at peak hours

Commuters leave their vehicles on the roadside, to avoid paying parking fees

BY SANJAY RAI

That there are traffic jams in and round major markets of the national Capital is now old news for the locals. However, not many talk about what causes these jams in those busy commercial areas. It is also interesting to see that the market associations have not objected to these illegal parkings as the shop owners also park all their vehicles on the road side, even before the market opens. And customers prefer to park on the roads outside the shops as the charges are lower in comparison to the official parking. These vehicles park for a short

time but block the oncoming traffic as they enter and leave the illegal parking bays constantly. The attendants stand on the road and stop the traffic flow to facilitate that.

The problem is especially severe near big market places where people park their vehicles on the roadside. Regular commuters are left with no choice but to stop-look-and-go every few metres. They say that complaints to the authorities go unanswered. Visitors park their cars and two-wheelers on the roadside and go shopping, and prefer to pay a 'token' parking fee of just Rs 10-20, seldom do they have to pay more even if they park for more than five hours. Usually they



Rajen Dimri/Pioneer

leave within an hour or so after shopping. It is this frequent 'side-movement' that then clogs the oncoming traffic.

For example an underground parking lot has been made by Delhi Municipal Corporation near Subhash Nagar Market, where about 600 vehicles can be parked. But more than 30 percent of the area remains vacant here. The reason behind this is parking charges. An employee working here told The Pioneer that the car parking fee is Rs 20 for every hour. The bike parking fee is Rs 10 per hour while the monthly pass costs Rs 2,000. But people living here or coming to the market always park their cars on the road,

which makes it difficult for pedestrians, and other commuters.

This results in the parking lot incurring losses every month. Apart from this, the condition of market areas such as Kamla Market, Rani Bagh Market, Karol Bagh, Lajpat Nagar, Avantika Market, Tilak Nagar, Rajouri Garden, and Uttam Nagar is the same. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has made underground parking on Asaf Ali Road at Delhi Gate, where vehicles gather dust and dirt. The monthly fee here is less compared to other parking lots, however roadside parking is also the norm here too.

Most-wanted realtor Niranjana Rana arrested

Duped crores in guise of providing flats, plots

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Builder and film producer Niranjana Rana (53), a resident of Baliaanta, has been arrested on the charges of cheating over 100 plot and flat buyers in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack to the tune of crores of rupees.

Rana is the managing director of Maa Tarini Estcon Private Limited and allegedly involved in fraudulent activities for more than two decades. He was earlier arrested by the Saheed Nagar police on similar charges. He was booked in 21 cases registered in various police stations across the capital city under the Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (OPID) Act 2011 and seven non-bailable warrants



(NBWs) are pending against him.

According to police sources, Rana shifted his office, which he had first opened at Saheed Nagar, to Pahal and fled to Mumbai after being released from jail. He had hired some people to run his office and was operating the busi-

ness from Maharashtra. Police raided his house as he returned to Bhubaneswar on Wednesday for Durga Puja and apprehended him.

Rana had diverted the money he duped from gullible investors into the film industry. He is known for making high-budget Odia films.

"He maintained a lavish lifestyle in Mumbai. A Toyota Fortuner bearing Maharashtra registration number and other incriminating articles were seized from him. Investigation is underway to ascertain the exact number of buyers whom he duped and the total money swindled by him," Bhubaneswar DCP Pinak Mishra said.

In June 2016, police had arrested him on the charges of swindling around Rs 9 crore from gullible customers by promising to provide them flats. He had floated Sai Enclave Project at Baliaanta on the outskirts of the city, for which he had allegedly collected money from at least 86 people. Those who had invested their money tried to get in touch with Rana but in vain, following which they turned to police for help.

Youth found dead near Khandagiri caves

Murder suspected; cops launch probe

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In yet another example of the surging crimes in the State capital, a mutilated body of a youth was recovered from near the Khandagiri caves under the Khandagiri police station on Friday.

Dressed in sportswear, the youth's body was found near a tree. The identity of the deceased was yet to be ascertained.

While no exact reason for the death was ascertained, it was suspected that the youth had been killed and later the assailants dumped his body at the secluded place. However, the Khandagiri police were yet to confirm the suspected murder.



The matter came to the fore after some locals spotted the body and informed the police. On the other hand, a few suspected that

the youth might have died due to electrocution after coming in contact with a live wire.

On being informed, a po-

lice officer rushed to the spot and recovered the body. The body was sent for postmortem while an investigation was underway.

304-yr-old Odia inscriptions found in Jatni temple

'Epigraphists decipher 304 years old stone inscription in Khurda'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Epigraphists from 'Kalinga Epigraphical Research Society' (KERS) have deciphered a 304 years old stone inscription in Jatani block of Khordha district.

The inscription was found engraved on a stone panel over the southern entrance into the Mukhasala of Kedaraswara Mahadev temple in Uparabasta village near Jatani town.

Members of KERS Bishnu Mohan Adhikari, Bikram Kumar Nayak, Mihir Bahinipati and Deepak Kumar Nayak have jointly deciphered the inscription having significant historical importance.

According to history researcher Deepak Kumar Nayak, the writing in the inscription is in Odia script and language. There are total four lines of writings found in the inscription, out of which few characters in the fourth line remain under colour

plastering and are unreadable.

As per the inscription, the Kedaraswara Mahadev temple of Uparabasta village was constructed by one Madhusudana Samantarai in the 5th regnal year of Harekrushna Deva. The Mukhasala of the temple was constructed by Madhu Harichandana in the 3rd regnal year of Gopinath Deva, said Nayak.

Bishnu Mohana Adhikari, an epigraphist and member of KERS suggested that the kings mentioned in the inscription belonged to the Bhoi dynasty of Khurda. Historian Kedarnath Mahapatra had given details on the anka year used by these Kings. From his work 'Khurda Itihasa' it is known that the 5th anka of King Harekrushna Deva fell in the year 1718 CE and 3rd anka of King Gopinath Deva corresponds to year 1720 CE. So, it can be said that the temple of Kedaraswara is 306 years old whereas the Mukhasala was built 2 years later. From this inscription the structure and usage of Odia language 300 years back is known to us, said Adhikari.

Odias to celebrate Bali Yatra In London

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

For the first time, Bali Yatra will be celebrated in London to promote Odisha's culture and heritage on November 30. It will be hosted by the Odisha Society of the United Kingdom (OSUK) in support with the Odisha Government.

OSUK director Partha Sarathi Panda met Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Culture Minister Suryabanshi Suraj recently and discussed details of the event. "Both have expressed their commitment to support this celebration. This year, we are organising two major

events in London, and Bali Yatra is one of them," Panda was quoted to have said.

Panda believed that the Odia community in London would not just showcase Odisha's heritage but would also promote the bilateral trade relations. Shweta Mohanty, a member of OSUK, reportedly said this event would help highlight the potentials for investment in sectors like livestock and food processing.

The OSUK has been working to preserve and promote Odia language, literature, culture and tradition in London for over 40 years.

In Jajpur 7 cops injured while rescuing kidnapped minor girl

PNS ■ JAJPUR

As many as seven policemen sustained injuries after they were attacked while rescuing a kidnapped minor girl in the Barchana area in Jajpur district. The cops were thrashed by the miscreants who have been accused of 'kidnapping' the girl.

According to sources, a girl from the Delang area in Puri district was allegedly kid-

napped and kept captive in the Barchana area. Based on a complaint by the girl's parents, a team of the Delang police arrived in Barchana to rescue the girl.

With the help of their Barchana counterparts, the Delang police reached the village to rescue the victim when the miscreants attacked the cops. Seven police personnel, including the Delang PS IIC, were seriously injured.

Four cops from Barchana who had accompanied the Delang police in the rescue operation were also beaten up.

The Barchana police registered a case in this connection and a special team has been formed to apprehend the miscreants, who are on the run.

Pipili SDPO Biranchi Narayan Pati said, "A minor girl was allegedly kidnapped

from Delang. A team from the Delang police station had gone to Barchana to rescue the girl. They were returning after rescuing the girl when the accused and other villagers attacked the police team." "Our staffs have suffered injuries. The police personnel of Barchana have also been injured. We have registered a case in this connection and a special team is formed to nab the miscreants," he added.

Activists concerned as PVTG nutrition prog stopped

Thousands of kids may be deprived of food security

BIJAY MISHRA
BHUBANESWAR

Affected guardians and concerned social activists have expressed grave concern as the Government has unilaterally stopped the three-year long PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) nutrition development programme (A community based creche programme) for children between 0 to 3 years of age since September 30.

Before shutting it down, the Government did not consult any elected people's representatives, groups of tribal communities, any statutory/advisory body, individuals or organisations involved in policy making in areas of health and nutrition focusing children under-3 of the PVTG communities.

The ST/SC Development Department of the Govern-

ment of Odisha launched a special programme called "PVTG Nutrition Improvement Programme" (OPNIP) in Odisha to improve health and nutrition among the 13 PVTG communities in the State as part of its ongoing OPLIP (Odisha PVTG Livelihood Improvement Programme). The OPNIP was implemented in 89 gram panchayats of 17 micro project agencies in 12 districts of Odisha. The three main component of OPNIP are community-based crèche (Sishu Gruha) for children under the age of 3 years (Total no of creches. 61), maternal spot feeding centre (MSFC) for pregnant and lactating women (Total No. of centre 161) and spot feeding centres for children in remote villages (for children between 3 to 6 years) (SFC) (Total No. centres 111).

The Sishu Gruha programme, commonly known as Matru Sishu Poshan Kendra-MSPK, provides childcare services during daytime for children under the age

of 3 years in PVTG villages, with special focus on feeding, regular growth monitoring, early childhood care, early stimulation and programme management etc. These centres provided basic daycare facilities (for 7-8 hours per day) to children between the ages of six months and three years of age, six days a week, as well as provided two snacks with one hot cooked meal every day at the centres.

Similarly, in inaccessible areas, pregnant mothers and 3 to 6-year-old babies were given hot cooked food. For this, along with the State Government, there was direct and indirect support from the IFAD, Ministry of Tribal Affairs of the Central Government and the Azim Premji Foundation, an all India resource organisation for providing technical support on health and nutrition.

But the noble initiative has recently been stopped by the Government of Odisha as a result of which thousands of children belonging to primi-

tive tribes are going to get trapped into the vicious circle of malnutrition, causing irreversible damage to their physical, emotional, intellectual and mental development.

By this, children will not be able to be at par with the children of other sections of our society in the field of education, health, R&D and the overall socio-economic development. They will be alienated from the social mainstream and facing the conventional process of marginalisation.

Social activists Prafulla Samantara, Manas Pattanaik, Pushpa Das, Gourang Mahapatra, Dr Biswajit, Samit Panda and Mihir Pratap Das on behalf of Odisha Right to Food Campaign, Jana Swasthya Abhiyan and Lok Shakti Abhiyan called upon the Government to immediately intervene in the issue and immediately reopen the crèche programme to secure the rights of the PVTG children and maintain the development trend of the State.

Guidelines for Madho Singh Haath Kharcha

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government has issued operational guidelines for implementation of the Shahid Madho Singh Haath Kharcha Yojana aimed at checking the dropout rate among students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes studying in Classes-IX and X in government and aided schools.

The students will be provided with one-time financial assistance of Rs 5,000 each.

As per a resolution issued by

the SC and ST Development Department, a good number of tribal students are getting enrolled at the elementary level. However, high dropouts are also being noticed among them after Classes-VIII and X causing less enrolment in secondary and higher secondary levels, respectively. The department also noted that the ST students getting benefits under any other scholarship schemes are also eligible to avail the incentive amount under the Shahid Madho Singh scheme.

Anushka's Telugu movie shooting in Koraput

As Tollywood is increasingly focussing Odisha for film shooting

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Lady superstar Anushka Shetty is filming her upcoming movie 'Ghaati' in the scenic locales of Lamtaput, Machakund, and Anakadeli town in Koraput district. Directed by Krish, the Telugu action-revenge drama is nearly complete with its final schedule underway.

After the stupendous success of stylish star Allu Arjun's 'Pushpa' and 'Arya', filmmakers from Telugu film industry are flocking to Odisha to shoot more movies.

"Everybody talks about Kerala, Goa, Tamil Nadu or Himachal Pradesh; please come to Odisha, they have amazing places. Here you can explore a lot, feel free and enjoy yourself with a little cash," said popular south Indian actor-director, John Vijay.

"All the youngsters need to be here. This is very close to Arch Valley, one of the most beautiful places in Odisha. I'm glad to be talking about this amazing place. This is also my

first experience here in Odisha. There are so many amazing things here. From the food, people, dams, ambience and great waterfalls you can explore a lot here," he added.

"We have seen several Odia movies like Bhaunri, Swayamsidha and others being shot here. But, this is the first time a Telugu movie of Anushka Shetty, the lady superstar of Tollywood, is being shot here. We are super excited that such a big scale movie is being shot in our area. Hopefully, this will pave the path for more movie shoots and subsequently bring development to our area," said a local Amar Panigrahy.

"This is also a message to the government that many more movies can be shot in our picturesque location if our area is being developed," he added.

Worth mentioning, Anushka Shetty's highly anticipated film 'Ghaati' directed by Krish is nearing completion and is already 90% complete with the final schedule taking place in Odisha. The film is an action-revenge drama and will feature Anushka in a never-before-seen role with a mafia touch.

Durga Puja 'Shakti Vahini' to provide security to women

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a bid to provide security to women devotees during Durga Puja celebrations, the Commissionerate police on Thursday constituted a team of 40 women cops in the name of 'Shakti Bahini'.

Commissioner of Police S Devdatta Singh flagged off the team.

The 40 policewomen would be deployed around the mandaps to keep an eye on miscreants and would respond immediately. They would also help unite a mis-

sing child with his or her parents.

These cops christened as 'Shakti Bahini' have been asked to move from mandaps to mandaps, ensuring the safety of women pandal hoppers. As many as 20 scooters have been provided to them. It means each scooter carries two cops.

The Commissionerate police have already made ample arrangements for the safety of pandal hoppers. This women's group is an addition to provide more safety, especially to women.

BJP's brouhaha over Haryana win baseless

As it's going to rule State with just 39.9% votes, thanks to faulty FPTP system

India is having an unjust, unfair electoral system, technically known as FPTP (fast past the post). Under the system, there is no proportional or fair representation.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP got 45% of votes in the State of Odisha. The BJD got 37.5% of votes. Out of 21 seats of Odisha in the Lok Sabha,



B RAMCHANDRA CST VOLTAIRE

BJP marched with 20 seats. BJD got no seat. This is the utter absurdity of our electoral system. No Professor of Political Science, no writer of eminence bothers about it.

In the recently held Haryana Assembly elections, the Congress was projected to win the majority of seats. Electoral trends showed it for some time. But, ultimately the "unpredictable" happened. With the same percentage of votes, BJP got 48 seats while the Congress got 37 seats.

Prime Minister Modi who has no mind to study the dark side of the FPTP system of election went into hammering the Congress. He called it a parasite party. He called it anti-national and slammed it in various other ways.

The crux of the matter is:

Parties are "disproportionately" represented in the Legislature under the FPTP system. With the same percentage of votes one party can be ahead of another party. BJP has got a majority of seats. It could have happened otherwise. The Congress could have 48 seats and BJP 37 or less number seats. So, no leader of sound common sense should get excited about the results of such a poll.

To have fair representation in India - at the Lok Sabha Assembly or local levels, we must go in for the Mixed Proportional Representation

(MPR) System of Election of Germany, or of New Zealand or of Nepal. The beauty of the system has been well exhibited in 94 countries of the world and they are called "free" democracies. Why should India lag behind? Why should not the Indian voters get political justice in full measure?

All parties should be fairly represented. The system of MPR has stamped out Maoist violence from the soil of Nepal since 2008. Why should we go on killing the Maoists in India? PM Modi must visit Germany, New Zealand, Nepal,

South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and introduce the MPR System of election in India so as to make Indian democracy a "free" one. With 39.9% of votes, no political party captures power in Germany or New Zealand. The combination of parties or a single party must get more than 50% of the votes in order to rule the nation. The absurd democracy that has been exhibited in Haryana on October 8, must be stamped out for all times to come. The BJP has no ethical right to rule the Haryana people with 39.9% of votes.

(General secretary, FPI)

In Jajpur Notice issued to HM for coming to school drunk

PNS ■ JAJPUR
The Block Education Officer (BEO) of Dharmasala in Jajpur district on Thursday issued a show-cause notice to a headmaster of a government primary school in Anjira Panchayat for coming to school in an inebriated condition. The action was taken after the school managing committee and some guardians of students brought the

incident to the notice of the BEO and demanded stringent action against the headmaster. They demanded immediate transfer of the teacher elsewhere as he is often seen coming to school drunk. They also showed a video of the drunk headmaster to the committee which has gone viral on social media. In the purported video, the headmaster is seen lying on the road, a few yards away

from the school, in an inebriated state. "We have issued a show-cause notice to the headmaster and asked him to reply in three days. After getting a reply, we will initiate appropriate action based on it," the BEO said. This is not the first case of a teacher attending school in a drunken condition. Last year, three such cases were reported in the same district.

Improvements in MKCG services sought

Press Club takes up issues with MCH Dean

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Brahmapur Press Club demanded for substantial improvements in the healthcare services at the Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati (MKCG) Medical College and Hospital on Wednesday here. Submitting a memorandum to the MKCG Dean Professor Suchitra Das, the club called for immediate action to address the hospital's ongoing issues, urging the Health Minister's intervention to ensure quality care for patients. The memorandum raises critical concerns, including the lack of experienced doctors in the casualty ward, leading to compromised patient care. In



a detailed discussion with Dean Das and Registrar Sangram Panda, the Club representatives emphasized the need for urgent reforms. Professor Das responded with a firm commitment to resolving the problems, assuring that necessary steps would be taken promptly. The key demands included providing dedicated services for journalists, improving emergency care facilities, and ensuring proper functioning of critical units like the ICU and trauma center. The Club

also called for better accommodation facilities for patients' attendants and round-the-clock access to essential diagnostic services. Leading the initiative were Club president Ashok Kumar Brahma, secretary Prahallad Sahu, treasurer Siba Narayan Panda and joint secretary Gopal Krishna Reddy, alongside several senior journalists. Dean Das assured the journalists that immediate measures would be taken, with further discussions planned to fast-track the necessary reforms at the hospital.

IN BRIEF

Bus runs over lady police constable in Tirtol

Jagatsinghpur: A passenger bus ran over a lady police constable killing her on the spot at Tirtol in Jagatsinghpur district on Friday. The deceased, identified as Suraja Munda, had been posted at the Tirtol police station. The mishap took place at Tirtol Bazaar when Munda was returning home after finishing her duty. Palpable tension prevailed in the area following the accident. A case was registered in this connection and police seized the bus and detained the driver, sources said.

Worker dies at Paradip terminal

Paradip: Tension prevailed at the Paradip International Cargo Terminal (PICT) when a worker was crushed to death under a moving forklift on Friday. Bholanath Swain, a contractual worker and surveyor from Dhanurbellari under the Balikuda police limits, was allegedly run over by the forklift on the jetty, leading to his death on the spot. His family members demanded adequate compensation and a job for a kin.

Croc sighting triggers panic among villagers in Kanas

Puri: A crocodile spotted in the Rajua river near Kanas in Puri district triggered panic among locals on Friday. Villagers, who had gone for bathing, saw the crocodile swimming between the Tirulam and Haladiapada areas. Soon after the news spread, village heads barred people from going near the river



and alerted Forest Department personnel. The reptile was frequenting the riverbank which compounded the locals' fear. The villagers urged forest personnel to capture and release it somewhere safe. Forest Department sources said the crocodile would have swum into Rajua from the Daya river. Till last reports came, efforts were on to shift it to a separate location.

Ganjam Dist Council meet: Several issues discussed

PNS ■ CHHATRAPUR

The sixth council meeting of Ganjam district Zilla Parishad was organised on Wednesday after a long gap of 15 months. The meeting was held under the presidency of ZP Chairman Anjali Swain. Mines, Iron and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena attended the meeting as a guest. The Minister asked all local representatives to work together staying above party lines for the development of the district.

The Minister informed about several plans of the new government like sanction of Rs 350 crore for construction of Arjyapalli Jetty, renovation of Haripur and Markandi jetties and construction of Gopalpur-Sambalpur via Phulbani rail tracks.

Fishery and Animal Husbandry Minister Gokulananda Mallik urged for regular meetings of the district council to monitor proper implementation of development programmes. Brahmapur MP Pradeep Panigrahi raised issues like increasing accident cases in Lanjipalli and Haldiapadar bypass road and suggested the NHAI officials to either construct flyovers or under passes in the locations. He also raised concern for better health services in MKCG Medical College, new rail tracks and water conservation of the Rushukulya river.

Among others, Aska MP Anita Subhadarshini, district Collector Dibya Jyothi Parida and several MLAs of Ganjam and District Council members attended.

In Karanjia Sexual harassment awareness held for girl students

PNS ■ KARANJIA

An awareness programme on "Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace" under the aegis of Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) of Panchpir Women's Degree College, Karanjia, in Mayurbhanj district was organised on October 8 at the college campus.

Speaking on the occasion, chief guest SDPO Karanja Subrat Kumar urged the students and faculty members to be aware of the scope of the ICC and report things without any hesitation and fear. He also focused on the laws prevailing to give justice to the girl students everywhere in his deliberation.

While president of the Governing Body Jugal Kishore Agarwal was present, guest of



honour social worker from Indian Grameen Services, currently working as a livelihood expert with Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Karanjia, Bharati Raj, spoke as a resource person and briefed the gathering about the details and the scope of ICC. She also added that women and especially girls must be aware

of their safety and security. Saying that a time has come to open up and act against any victimisation, she urged the girls not to remain silent if anyone suffers from sexual harassment at any place. Principal-cum-secretary Pranati Barik presided over the session and highlighted the Sexual Harassment Act

2013. Members of the ICC Lecturer in Education Millamani Mohanta and Lecturer in Sanskrit Chinmayee Mohanta also addressed the gathering. Lecturer NSG Payal gave introduction of the dignitaries and welcomed them to the dais and ICC member Chinmayee Mahanta gave the vote of thanks.

Prof Patra joins as NIST Univ VC



PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Prof Dr Priyadarsan Patra has been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of NIST University.

Dr Patra holds a PhD degree in Computer Sciences from the University of Texas at Austin, an MS from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and a B Engg from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Dr Patra has over 30 years of research, academic and administrative leadership experience.

His research interests include VLSI, applications of Machine Learning, Big Data

and Cloud Computing, and the design of Low-power and Intelligent systems. He has edited multiple technical proceedings, has authored 80+ indexed scholarly publications, five scientific books, 13 USA and international patents, and other influential articles.

Prior to joining NIST University, he served as the Pro Vice Chancellor and Distinguished Professor at DIT University, as Chief Architect and as Principal Scientist of the R&D Divisions of Intel Corp (USA), Dean of Computer Sciences at UPES University and the Dean of Research at Xavier University.

Dist tag to Brahmapur 'Submit new representation to State Govt'

HC directs forum RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAPUR

In a pivotal move concerning the long-pending demand for Brahmapur district formation, the Orissa High Court has instructed the Milita Kriyanasthan Committee to submit a new written representation to the State Government. The directive came during a hearing on Thursday, in response to a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by the committee. The case was heard by a division bench comprising Chief Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh and Justice Debabrata Dash.

The court further clarified that if the Government does not take action within a specified timeframe, the committee

would be entitled to reapproach the court for intervention. The ruling has reignited hopes for the formation of Brahmapur district, deemed crucial for balanced regional development.

Advocates for the new district argue that, given Brahmapur's population density and geographical boundaries, it is highly qualified for district status. Previous recommendations from a committee established under the Biju Patnaik Government had included Brahmapur as a prospective district. However, despite creating 30 districts during that period, Brahmapur was not given district status.

Before the last election, the BJD Government had also announced plans for new district formations, but the pro-

posal was sidelined after their electoral defeat. The current BJP-led Government is now under pressure to address the demand.

Ganjam, presently one of Odisha's largest districts, has seen uneven development, with Brahmapur in particular lagging behind. The formation of a new district would enable the implementation of district-specific projects and infrastructure development. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) could focus on education, healthcare, heritage, tourism, and economic growth.

Brahmapur has the potential to emerge as a commercial and industrial hub, with opportunities in manufacturing, IT and textile industries. Enhanced transportation in-

frastructure, including national highways, the proposed greenfield airport, and the development of Gopalpur Port, could fuel regional growth. Additionally, a military base in the vicinity strengthens prospects for establishing institutions like a Sainik School or an NDA branch.

Chairman of the committee Sanjiv Kumar Patnaik called on the new Chief Minister Mohan Majhi-led Government to take swift action on the Brahmapur district formation. He cautioned that failure to do so within three months would lead to the committee seeking further judicial intervention. Senior advocate Baijayanti Mahanty represented the case on behalf of the committee.

India Post has basketful of financial services

The foundation day of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), October 9, is World Post Day. India Post will observe the National Postal Week from October 7 to 11 this year to raise awareness of its various services that connect people, businesses and the Government for the development of the country. During the National Postal Week, India Post observes October 11 as Vittiya Sashaktikaran Diwas.

The largest postal network in the world i.e. India Post has 1,64,972 Post Offices (POs) out of which 1,49,478 (90.6%) are Rural POs and 15,494 (9.4%) Urban POs. It provides services to the last mile through 1,39,891 Branch POs, 24,271 Sub POs and 810 Head POs/GPOs. On an average, 8,415 people are served by a PO in the country. In a rural area, a PO serves 6,030 people



GADADHAR RATH

whereas, in an urban area, a PO serves 31,422 people in an average area of 19.93 sq km.

In addition to core services and premium services, India Post also provides financial services through Post Office Savings Bank (POSB), Postal Life Insurance (PLI), Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI) and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB). It provides banking facilities to the remotest corner of the country on behalf of the

Union Finance Ministry, since 1882 through POSB. Presently, the POSB is accessible to its account holders online and anytime anywhere banking using mobile internet banking and ATM. It offers 10 small savings schemes like Post Office Savings Account (SB), National Savings Recurring Deposit Account (RD), National Savings Time Deposit Account (TD), National Savings Monthly Income Account (MIS), Senior Citizens Savings Scheme Account (SCSS), Public Provident Fund Account (PPF), Sukanya Samridhi Account (SSA), National Savings Certificates (VIIIth Issue) NSC, Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) and Mahila Samman Savings Certificate. In some schemes of the POSB rate of interest is higher than other banks. New initiatives like the opening of MIS, SCSS and MSSC accounts through internet banking, the

maximum limit for investment in SCSS and MIS and NEFT/RTGS facility for money transfer from bank account to PPF/SSA and Post Office Savings Account were undertaken during the last financial year.

India Post offers two types of life insurance schemes namely Postal Life Insurance (PLI) and Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI). The oldest life insurance scheme for the benefit of Govt/Semi Govt employees is PLI which was introduced in the year 1884 and now it has widened its service area to recognized schools, registered professionals like doctors, engineers, consultants, CAs, architects, lawyers, MBAs, all Graduates /Diploma holders, bankers and employees of listed companies with NSE/BSE. PLI covers six types of policies namely Whole Life Assurance (Suraksha), Convertible Whole Life Assur-

ance (Suvidha), Endowment Assurance (Santosh), Anticipated Endowment Assurance (Sumangal), Joint Life Assurance (Yugal Suraksha) and Children Policy (Bal Jiwan Bima). RPLI was introduced in 1995 for the benefit of rural people. It also covers six types of policies namely Whole Life Assurance (Gram Suraksha), Convertible Whole Life Assurance (Gram Suvidha), Endowment Assurance (Gram Santosh), Anticipated Endowment Assurance (Gram Sumangal), 10 Years RPLI (Gram Priya) and Children Policy (Bal Jiwan Bima). The maximum limit of insurance for PLI and RPLI is Rs 50 lakh and Rs10 lakh respectively. India Post has introduced a dedicated sales force like Development Officers (DO), Department Employees (DE), Field Officers (FO-Retd Employees) and Direct Agents (DA) at the

Division level for marketing of PLI/RPLI schemes and established PLI CPC at Head Post Offices to provide after-sale services. For administrative matters the office of Deputy Divisional Manager functions at Circle level under PLI Directorate, New Delhi.

The India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) is a public sector financial institution inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India in 2018 under the Department of Posts to offer affordable and accessible banking services to unbanked and underbanked segments of the population, leveraging a network comprising 1,64,972 Post Offices and its human resource i.e. about 4.17 lakh employees including Gramin Dak Sevaks. "Aapka Bank, Aapke Dwaar" is the tagline of IPPB and it has a clear focus on financial inclusion, particularly for the common man in rural India. It aims to

provide banking services at the doorstep of every citizen in rural and remote areas with a focus on promoting financial literacy, digital payments, and easy access to banking services through a cost-effective, technology-driven system. The IPPB is a game-changer in India's financial landscape, offering banking solutions tailored to the unique challenges of rural and underserved populations.

The IPPB offers services like savings accounts, remittance services, mobile banking, and third-party financial products. As per regulations fixed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the IPPB cannot offer loans or credit cards to its customers. Products and Services offered by IPPB are Premium Savings Account, Regular Savings Account, Digital Savings Account and Basic Savings Account. Provision of virtual debit cards and mobile banking access are available

with these Accounts. It also provides services like Mobile Banking, SMS Banking, Missed call Banking, Phone Banking, IPPB and Post Office Savings Account linkage and Domestic Money Transfer which are related to banking transactions whereas the Digital Life Certificate service helps pensioners to get a Life Certificate at their doorstep for disbursement of Pension and Child Enrolment Lite Client (CELC) Services help to enrol the children below 5 years by capturing just the photograph and few demographic information in addition to biometric authentication of parents.

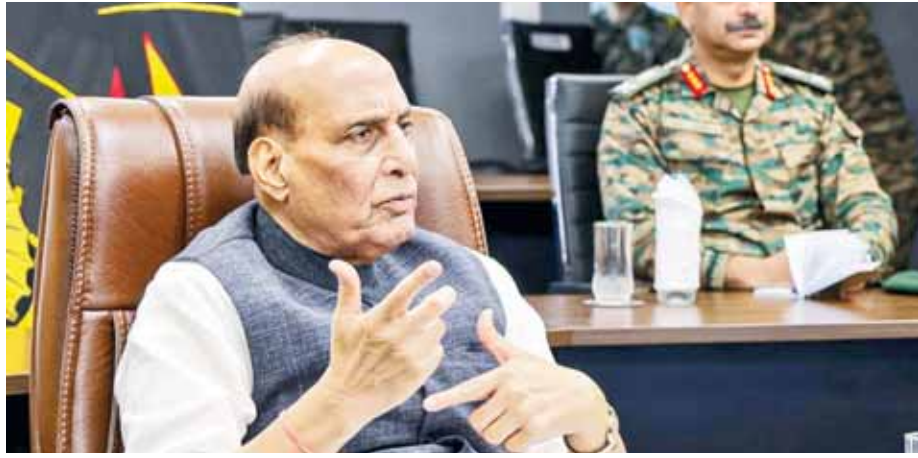
(The article was prepared based on data available in Annual Report 2023-24 of Department of Posts)

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Defence Minister urges military to be alert amid global uncertainty

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said the present complex and ambiguous world situation affects everyone globally and urged military top brass to be alert, regularly modernise and prepare continuously for various contingencies. Making this assertion while addressing the Army Commanders' Conference in Sikkim, he said "Unconventional and asymmetric warfare, including hybrid war will be part of the future conventional wars and the same is evident in the recent conflicts happening in various parts of world. This necessitates that Armed Forces should keep all these facets in consideration while planning and formulating strategies. We must keep learning from the incidents to include the global ones, happened in present as also in past, so as to avert the damage control." Commenting on the current situation along the Northern



borders facing China, the defence minister expressed full confidence in the Army for any contingency though, the ongoing talks for peaceful resolution will continue at all levels. The second Army Commanders' Conference this year commenced in a hybrid format on Thursday in a forward location at Gangtok. Conduct of the Senior Commanders Conference at a forward location underlines Indian Army's focus on ground realities. During the event, Indian

Army's apex leadership comprehensively deliberated upon all aspects of existing security scenarios, situation along the borders and in the hinterland and challenges for the present security apparatus. In addition, the conference is also focusing on issues pertaining to organisational restructuring, logistics, administration and human resource management. Owing to the bad weather at Gangtok, Rajnath addressed the commanders in virtual mode from an army location Sukna,

West Bengal. Referring to the situation along the Western borders with Pakistan, he complimented the Indian Army's response to cross border terrorism, however the proxy war with the adversary continues. "I compliment the excellent synergy between the CAPF/ Police forces and the Army in tackling the menace of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The synergised operations in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are contributing to

increased stability and peace in the region which was also evident in the recently conducted elections in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, and for this I again compliment the Indian Army," he said. The Defence Minister commended the Army for the high standard of operational preparedness and capabilities which he has always been experiencing first hand during his visits to forward areas. Rajnath stressed upon the technological advancement taking place in every sphere of our life and applauded the Armed Forces for aptly incorporating them. He appreciated the Army's efforts to develop niche technologies in collaboration with civil industries, including premier educational institutions and thereby progressing towards the aim of 'Modernisation through Indigenisation' or 'Atmanirbharta'. He stated that modernisation of weapons for every soldier through Atmanirbharta is the key focus of the government and the government is completely with the Armed Forces in this aspect.

Act or face consequence: FEMA, IMA tell Mamata Banerjee

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA



Both the Federation of Medical Associations (FeMA) and the Indian Medical Association have asked Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to take cognizance of the ongoing indefinite fast of the junior doctors and resolve the impasse by acceding to their 10-point demands that include justice for the lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital who was on August 9 raped and murdered while on duty inside her hospital. In a strongly worded letter to Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee the Federation of Medical Associations (FeMA) has written that if there was a casualty among the doctors who were fasting unto death then the consequence would be uncontrollable. "We have realised that Mamata Banerjee is least interested in addressing the genuine demands" of the junior doctors who had been on a fast unto death. Threatening a complete cease work of doctors and also a bigger movement the FeMA has warned that "no amount of vote bank or police force will be able to stop the movement. We will make sure that this extreme step that you are

forcing us to take will be supported by every common man and even your own vote bank. It will soon be followed by similar action Pan India. Even central forces will not be sufficient to douse the flames," the FeMa wrote. The letter barely a few hours before Aniket Mahato a striking doctor was hospitalized in a "critical condition." Nine doctors, seven in Kolkata and two in Siliguri were sitting in fast unto death in support of their demands post the brutal rape and murder of "Abhaya" the victim doctor of RGKMCH. In a ten-point demand the doctors have been asking for a central referral system with real time monitoring so that no patient has to run from hospital to hospital losing vital time of treatment, installation of CCTV cameras, foolproof security of medical staff, end of threat syndicate inside medical colleges and related "rule of and rule by corruption," and conducting of college elections so as to end the "threat and extortion raj being perpetrated in the

colleges," the doctors said. The Bengal chapter of IMA too wrote to the Chief Minister to end the imbroglio by providing the junior doctors with a written deadline by which their demands would be fulfilled. "It (has) almost (been) a week since the young doctors of Bengal (started their) fast onto death. The Government is entirely capable of meeting all the demands. Peaceful ambience and security are not a luxury. They are a prerequisite. We appeal to your good self to settle the issues with the young generation doctors as an elder and the Head of the Government," the letter said adding how "the entire medical fraternity of India is concerned and trust you would be able to save their lives." Meanwhile, Dr Aniket Mahato, one of the junior doctors participating in the strike, was hospitalized after his condition worsened. "He is presently stable and is responding to treatment but we are keeping watch on other doctors too as their parameters are going down too we hope the Government loves its doctors and it knows how to show that love," Dr Subarna Goswami one of the senior doctors said.

Mortal remains of missing Coast Guard pilot recovered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The mortal remains of Commandant Rakesh Kumar Rana, the missing pilot of the Advanced Light Helicopter MK-III of Indian Coast Guard (ICG), which made an emergency landing last month, have been retrieved approximately 55 kms south west off the coast of Porbandar, defence ministry said here on Friday. After over 70 air sorties and involvement of multiple ships, the mortal remains of Commandant were retrieved on Thursday. The Commandant, who was the helicopter's pilot-in-command, was on a medical evacuation mission along with one pilot and two air crew divers to evacuate a seriously injured crew member from Motor Tanker Hari Leela. The helicopter had to make an emergency landing on September two, after which ICG along with the Indian Navy launched a massive search and rescue operation



for the missing personnel. One crew was rescued, while the mortal remains of three others were recovered on September three. "His mortal remains will be cremated as per service traditions and honour. A warm salute to the three brave souls from Rank and File of the Indian Coast Guard who laid down their lives in the line of duty," it said. The Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) of the Coast Guard with four crew members met with the

accident while trying to evacuate an injured man on board motor tanker Hari Leela, nearly 30 nautical miles from the Porbandar coast. While one of the four crew members on the helicopter, diver Gautam Kumar, was rescued immediately, three went missing. A day later, the bodies of pilot Vipin Babu and diver Karan Singh were recovered. But Rana remained missing, prompting a massive search operation.

India expresses concern over security in West Asia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday said it was "concerned" at the "deteriorating" security situation in parts of West Asia, amid reports that United Nations peacekeepers have been caught in the intensified fighting in southern Lebanon. In a statement, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also said New Delhi continues to monitor the situation closely. "We are concerned at the deteriorating security situation along the Blue Line. We continue to monitor the situation closely," the MEA said. There are about 600 Indian soldiers as part of the UN peacekeeping force, it was learnt. The 120-km Blue Line is a United Nations-recognised demarcation line to indicate that Israel had withdrawn its military from southern Lebanon. It separates Lebanon from Israel and the Golan Heights, but it is not



an official international border. "Inviolability of UN premises must be respected by all, and appropriate measures taken to ensure the safety of UN peacekeepers and the sanctity of their mandate," the MEA said in its statement. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL),

the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, said in a statement on October 10 that "recent escalation along the Blue Line is causing widespread destruction of towns and villages in south Lebanon." "In the past days, we have seen incursions from Israel into Lebanon in Naqoura and

other areas. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers have clashed with Hizbullah elements on the ground in Lebanon," it alleged in the statement. "This morning, two peacekeepers were injured after an IDF Merkava tank fired its weapon toward an observation tower at

UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura, directly hitting it and causing them to fall," the UN statement read. "The injuries are fortunately, this time, not serious, but they remain in hospital," it added. The situation along the Israel-Lebanon border has escalated rapidly after the killing of former Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have accused Hezbollah of operating in areas near UNIFIL posts. In a statement, the IDF said, "The IDF is operating in southern Lebanon and maintains routine communication with UNIFIL." "This morning (Thursday), IDF troops operated in the area of Naqoura, next to a UNIFIL base. Accordingly, the IDF instructed the UN forces in the area to remain in protected spaces, following which the forces opened fire in the area," the statement added.

Ghanshyam Tiwari appointed Chairman, Rajya Sabha Ethics Committee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bhartiya Janta Party MP From Rajasthan, Ghanshyam Tiwari, has been appointed as the chairman of the Ethics Committee of Rajya Sabha by Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar. The Committee has been reconstituted by the Rajya Sabha chairman with effect from October 10. Among other members appointed as members of the Committee are Pramod Tiwari (Congress), Derek O'Brien (TMC), Tiruchi Siva (DMK), Sanjay Singh (AAP), V Vijayasai Reddy (YSRCP), Sasmit Patra (BJD), Prem Chand Gupta (RJD), Medha



Vishram Kulkarni and Darshana Singh (both BJP). The Rajya Sabha chairman has also changed the nominations of members in the department related to Parliamentary Standing

Committees, with Fauzia Khan changed from Social Justice and Empowerment to Committee to the Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel, V Vijayasai Reddy from Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture to Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. Babubhai Jesangbhai Desai has also been nominated by the chairman to the Committee on Health and Family Welfare, from the Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj earlier, and Neeraj Dangi from the Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj to the Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture.

The chairman has also nominated Seema Dwivedi to the department-related to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources. The Ethics Committee of the Rajya Sabha has the mandate to oversee the moral and ethical conduct of members and to examine cases referred to it with reference to ethical and other misconduct of members. In respect of procedure and other matters, the rules applicable to the Committee of Privileges apply to the Ethics Committee with such variations and modifications as the chairman, Rajya Sabha, may from time to time make.

PM Modi pays tribute to Jayaprakash Narayan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday paid tribute to socialist stalwart and anti-Emergency movement icon Jayaprakash Narayan on his birth anniversary. In a social media, the Prime Minister said Narayan dedicated his life to bringing positive change in the country and society. His personality and ideals will remain an inspiration for every generation, he said. Modi also paid homage to Nanaji Deshmukh, a leading member of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, on his birth anniversary. Modi said, his dedication and service for the empowerment of villagers,

especially the deprived sections, will always be remembered. A fierce socialist and freedom fighter, Narayan, fondly called JP, led a popular movement against the Indira Gandhi government's alleged corruption and repressive politics in the 70s before she imposed an Emergency. He then united opposition parties and rallied the masses against Congress in the first election after the Emergency in 1977, scripting a crushing defeat for the ruling party. Associated with the RSS, Deshmukh was an active member of the anti-emergency movement and later quit politics to become a social activist who dedicated his life to improving the lives of villagers.

Modi invites EAS countries to Nalanda Conclave

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday invited East Asia Summit countries for the first-ever Heads of Higher Education Conclave to be held at Nalanda University in Bihar. He extended the invitation during 19th East Asia Summit (EAS) at Vientiane, the capital of Lao People's Democratic Republic. "Reiterating the importance of the EAS mechanism and reaffirming India's support to further strengthen it, the PM recalled support received from EAS Participating Countries on the revival of Nalanda University. The PM took this opportunity to invite the EAS countries for a

Heads of Higher Education Conclave to be held at Nalanda University," an official statement said. The statement did not mention the date of the conclave. The EAS has 18 members the 10 ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) along with Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. Modi had in June inaugurated the new campus of Nalanda University at Rajgir in Bihar. The University is conceived as a collaboration between India and the EAS countries.

India's vaccine regulatory system gets WHO approval

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Drug regulator Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the National Regulatory Authority of India have met the standards set up by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for a functional vaccine regulatory system. A team of international experts from various countries led by WHO headquarters in Geneva reviewed India's vaccine regulatory system from September 16 to 20, the health ministry said in a statement. Safety, efficacy, and quality were the three basic parameters of assessment of vaccines, it said.



The WHO has established global standards and benchmarks for assurance of vaccine quality through the

development of tools and guidelines, benchmarking of the National Regulatory Authorities (NRA) and pre-qualification programme of vaccines, the statement said. The WHO NRA re-benchmarking was aimed to assess and document the status of the India regulatory system in the area of vaccine regulation, re-benchmark the status of the India vaccine regulatory system against the WHO NRA Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT) and measuring the maturity of the system. "India has been declared 'functional' against all the core regulatory functions of the WHO Global Benchmarking Tool Version VI. India's vaccine regulatory system was

benchmarked in 2017 against Global benchmarking tool (GBT) version V which is now revised to GBT VI with raised bars and stringency in benchmarking criteria," the statement said. India retains maturity level 3 with highest marks in several functions. Speaking about the achievement, Punya Salila Srivastava, Union Health Secretary, stated, "The Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO), in collaboration with WHO, has made exemplary efforts towards this achievement. India is one of the main players in the pharmaceutical industry worldwide and is known for its affordable vaccines and generic medicines."

Indian Navy hosts NIIO Seminar 2024

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The third edition of the Indian Navy's Naval Innovation and Indigenisation (NIIO) Seminar, Swavlamban 2024, will take place for two days starting October 28 at Bharat Mandapam here, navy said on Friday. Giving details, officials said over the last two editions of Swavlamban, the Indian Navy has received more than 2,000 proposals from the Indian industry that have been converted into 155 challenges to facilitate development of prototypes. This initiative has enabled collaboration with more than 200 MSMEs/Startups under the iDEX Scheme. 'Swavlamban 2024,' is expected to build on the



experiences and insights gained through the conduct of previous editions of the seminar, and provide new and substantial impetus to the innovation and indigenisation endeavour. The event will showcase products of niche technologies such as air and surface surveillance, autonomous systems in surface, aerial and underwater domains, AI and quantum technologies, they said.

Domain specific interactive sessions on October 29 at Bharat Mandapam will provide an opportunity for interaction among policy makers, innovators, startups, MSMEs, financial institutions and venture capitalists to discuss and deliberate on issues such as emerging technologies, future warfare, indigenisation, boosting innovation ecosystem and inculcating an innovative culture.

Row erupts over JPNIC as SP, BJP clash

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The Jayaprakash Narayan International Centre (JPNIC) in Lucknow, home to a museum honoring the iconic socialist leader, has become the focal point of a political standoff between Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with Akhilesh even asking Nitish Kumar to sever ties with NDA.

The row erupted during Jayaprakash Narayan's birth anniversary, with SP accusing the BJP of preventing their tribute to the revered leader. Late Thursday night, entrances to the JPNIC were barricaded with tin sheets, and security was heightened Friday morning with heavy police presence, a day before Mr. Yadav's planned visit to

garland the statue of Narayan inside the complex. Sharing videos of the barricades outside his residence, Mr. Yadav accused the BJP government of obstructing his tribute. "Whether it is the BJP or their government, every action is a symbol of negativity. Barricades have been put up to prevent us from honoring Jayaprakash Narayanji on his birth anniversary, just like last time," Yadav said.

Responding to the allegations, BJP spokesperson Alok Awasthi defended the government's actions and asserted that the BJP holds great respect for Jayaprakash Narayan, hailing him as a "symbol of simplicity." However, Awasthi sharply criticized Yadav, questioning his alignment with Narayan's values.

"Mr. Akhilesh Yadav, do you



even possess a single quality of Jayaprakash Narayan? You lead a luxurious life. During your tenure, lawlessness, hooliganism, and corruption were rampant," Awasthi said. He added that Yadav's actions were contrary to the principles upheld by both Jayaprakash Narayan and socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia.

With his visit to the JPNIC blocked, Mr. Yadav garlanded a bust of Jayaprakash Narayan mounted on a vehicle outside his residence. Photographs of the tribute were widely shared, accompanied by the defiant message: "Socialists are not afraid of dictatorship."

Yadav also made a political appeal to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, a former ally of Narayan, calling on him to sever ties with the BJP over the incident. Nitish Kumar's

Janata Dal (United) party, which is allied with the BJP, plays a significant role in the NDA government.

"What does the government want to hide by blocking the gate with tin sheets?" Yadav questioned late Thursday night. "A museum was built here to honor a great socialist thinker. Why is the government doing this?"

Birth Anniversary Standoff

This marks the second consecutive year that Yadav has been prevented from paying his respects at the JPNIC. In 2022, he famously scaled a wall to garland the statue, a symbolic act he cited as evidence of the government's hostility towards socialists. "Every year on this day, socialists gathered here to honor Jayaprakashji. He never bowed before the government of his time, and we won't either," Yadav declared.

The JPNIC, inaugurated by Akhilesh Yadav in 2016 during his tenure as Chief Minister, has been mired in controversy since the BJP came to power in Uttar Pradesh in 2017. Yadav has repeatedly alleged that construction at the center was deliberately stalled after the BJP's electoral victory and accused the government of planning to sell off the property.

The LDA, responsible for the maintenance of the JPNIC, has stood by its decision to deny Yadav access to the site. In its official statement, the authority reiterated concerns over the ongoing construction and the potential hazards posed by recent heavy rains. The letter also mentioned the heightened security risk posed by Yadav's Z+ security cover, a status shared only by the Prime Minister.

Mayawati rules out future alliances with regional parties

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) Supremo Mayawati announced on Friday that her party will no longer form alliances with regional forces in Uttar Pradesh or any other state, citing the poor performance of previous partnerships.

This move, she said, is aimed at protecting the morale of her party workers and preserving the BSP's political movement. Mayawati also reiterated her stance of maintaining a distance from both the BJP-led NDA and the Congress-led INDIA alliance. The decision was made during a review meeting held to analyze the "bitter experiences" from the Haryana Assembly election results and prior Punjab elections. In a series of posts on X (formerly Twitter), the former four-time Uttar Pradesh chief minister expressed her dissatisfaction with past alliances.



"The BSP had consistently transferred its votes to alliance partners during elections in Uttar Pradesh and other states, but these partners failed to reciprocate. This led to disappointing results, which demoralized our party workers and hurt the party's movement," Mayawati said. She emphasized the impor-

ance of shielding the party cadres from further disappointment, which could potentially damage the party's progress. Referring to the recent Haryana elections, where the BSP had partnered with the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) but failed to win any seats, she highlighted how the lack of reciprocation from allies had cost them.

"In light of the Haryana assembly election results and the previous Punjab elections, today's review meeting for Haryana and Punjab has decided that the BSP will no longer form alliances with regional parties. We will also continue to distance ourselves from both the BJP/NDA and the Congress/INDIA alliances, as we have done in

the past," Mayawati declared. She reaffirmed that the BSP remains committed to its core ideology of empowering the Bahujan Samaj (the marginalized sections of society) and upholding Ambedkarite values. She pointed out that, despite efforts by "casteist forces" to weaken the BSP, it remains the only party dedicated to this mission.

"The BSP is not a party that merges with others for selfish reasons. Instead, it is a movement aimed at uniting the various sections of the Bahujan Samaj into a powerful political force, based on mutual cooperation and brotherhood, to elevate them to a ruling class status," she added.

In the Haryana elections, the BSP, in alliance with INLD, failed to win any seats. After the results, Mayawati blamed the "casteist people of the Jat community" for not voting for BSP candidates, despite the party's efforts to transfer its vote base to the alliance partner.

Ratan Tata Memorial meeting held at Kasaragod

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

No citizens in Kasaragod have met Ratan Tata, India's leading industrialist. But that did not prevent them from organizing a memorial meeting on Friday in honor of Ratan Tata who breathed his last late Wednesday night.

"It is because of the philanthropy of Tata that we are all alive today. When Covid-19 struck Kasaragod in a major way in 2019, the district was declared a no go area and all boundaries with Karnataka and other districts in the State were shut down. This made Kasaragod a ghost district as hundreds died without getting medical care," said Sukumaran Periyachoor, patron of Saparya, a socio-cultural platform which organized the meeting.

The district was short of hospitals and residents had to depend on hospitals in Karnataka's Mangalore for



medical aid. Since the borders of the district were shut off, there was no means for the locals to commute to Karnataka for treatment. "It was at this juncture Ratan Tata came across our plight and he ordered the immediate setting up of a specialty hospital to treat Covid-19 patients. A full-fledged hospital was set up in record time of three months at Chattanchal. It was a 600-bed hospital and treated more than 6000 Covid-19 patients. The hospital cost the Tata Trusts more than Rs 60 crore," said Sukumaran who expressed his

gratitude to The Pioneer, the only newspaper that highlighted the concern of the people in the delay associated with the opening of the hospital.

"While the media in Kerala ignored the sufferings of the Kasaragod people, The Pioneer was the only newspaper which highlighted the delay in commissioning the hospital because of the lethargy and indecisiveness of the Government," said Sreedevi Ambalapuram, who paid glowing tributes to Ratan Tata in the meeting.

The resolution adopted in the meeting described the philanthropy works carried out by the Tata Trusts as proof of value based economy. "Though none of us has seen Ratan Tata in person, we were all praying for his recovery and longevity so that more and more people could get the benefits showered by Tata Trusts, of which he was the soul and energy," said Premachandran Chombala.

ED registers money laundering case into recent drug seizure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday registered a money laundering case into the recent narcotics seizure worth over 7,000 crore in the national Capital and conducted searches in Delhi, Mumbai, Gurugram and some other cities. Delhi police which is probing the city's biggest-ever seizure of cocaine worth over Rs 7,000 crore, has issued look-out circulars (LOCs) against six people, including an Indian-origin UK national who fled the country before the latest recovery of 208 kg of the drug from west Delhi. The Delhi Police Special Cell on October 2 seized over 560 kg cocaine and 40 kg hydroponic marijuana, estimated to be worth Rs 5,620 crore, from a godown in the Mahipalpur area of south Delhi. According to police, a total of seven persons have been arrested by the police till now in the case.

ED sources said the federal agency raided the premises of various accused and suspects including that of Tushar Goel and his wife in Vasant Enclave and Rajouri Garden areas of Delhi. The residential premises of Himanshu Kumar in Prem Nagar in Delhi and that of Bharat Kumar in Nalasopara, Mumbai, are also being searched.

"The business premises of Tushar Books Publication Private Limited and Tulip Publications Private Limited in the Jhandewalan area of Delhi and ABN Buildtech Private Limited in Gurugram were also raided," a source said. In the second such narcotics haul, the Delhi Police Thursday seized 208 kg of cocaine worth Rs 2,080 crore from a rented shop in west Delhi on Thursday.

The drug was kept concealed in plastic packets of snacks with "Tasty Treat" and "Chatpata Mixture" written on those. About 20-25 such hauls, they said.

Meanwhile, Delhi police has issued look-out circulars (LOCs) against six people,

including an Indian-origin UK national who fled the country before the latest recovery of 208 kg of the drug from west Delhi. According to police sources, the UK national, Savinder Singh, came to India last month to supervise the transportation and delivery of the 208-kg consignment suspected to have been brought from South American countries. The sources said Singh spent around 25 days in three separate locations in Delhi before fleeing to the United Kingdom soon after the arrest of the first four members of the syndicate. These arrests were effected on October 2. "As of now, we have issued LOCs against half-a-dozen people, some of them foreign nationals. One of them is the person who kept 208 kg of cocaine hidden in west Delhi's Ramesh Nagar and fled to the UK," a police officer, who is privy to the investigations, said. The officer said a dozen people suspected to be involved in the syndicate are on the radar of the Delhi Police. Earlier, police had issued an LOC against the syndicate's kingpin, Virender Basoya alias Veeru, who is believed to be staying in Dubai. Basoya was allegedly running the syndicate with the help of India-based Tushar Goyal and UK-based Jitender Gill alias Jassi and Savinder Singh, police said. Goyal and Gill have been arrested while Basoya and Singh are yet to be nabbed, the officer said. In the second big drugs haul in a week, the Special Cell of the Delhi Police seized 208 kg of cocaine worth Rs 2,080 crore from a rented shop in west Delhi on Thursday.

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Ashuras too have begun to celebrate Durga Pujas

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The "big breaking news" is: The hedge of stated 'discord' between the "descendants of Gods and Ashuras" is obliterating fast. Unlike their ancestors the Ashuras are joining Durga Puja celebrations in a big way. Cut to Jalpaiguri in North Bengal where the members of Ashura tribe --- many of whom consider themselves the descendants of demon kings --- have cast off the age old "stigma" of being the descendants of Mahishasura to take part in the festivities. "We are proud of our Ashura culture ... when we come to celebrate Durga Pujas it is an assimilation of culture and not representation of hostilities," says Jamini an amateur artist from the community. "Till even a few years ago the members of our tribe would not go out and mingle with the people in Durga Pujas as our ancestors did nothing of

that sort ... we remained confined in our homes in these 10 days of Durga Pujas ... but modern education seems to have broken that barrier," said Rajiv Ashur of Nagrakata in Jalpaiguri. "We as children would not go to pandals though we were attracted by the pomp as people mostly the descendants of the Aryans would think that we were bad being the descendants of Mahishashur ... but our mythology says that he was a good king ... however that sense of stigma is diminishing and the people are taking part in the festivities as social beings ... even they come to our festivals," he says. His grandfather Charu Ashur though however refuses to visit the pandal as he thinks that Mahishasur --- the demon God who was slain by the Mother Goddess to rid the Universe of evil --- "was a very benevolent king who did great good to his subjects



but for the intervention of the Gods who tried to impose their will on the Ashuras taking away their lands and everything leading to a battle in which he was eventually martyred." Charu however does not come in the way of h is grand-

children mingling with the children of Durga as "past is past ... now time has come when all should live together happily sharing mutual respect for each other." However Usha Ashur who has done her Masters in sociology is vehement in pre-

serving her culture. "There is no problem mingling but why should be done by demeaning of our ancestors. According to her the myth that "the war between Gods and Demons is an eternal battle between good and evil" and that "the alleged epitome of evil that is Mahishasur is finally forgiven by the Goddess, should also be discarded" as "this leads to "continual marginalisation and exclusion of Mahishasur's descendants from the cultural mainstream." But once again she has no problem joining in the festivities but with a caution "this must not mean white-washing of the Ashura culture." Her own brother who is a member in a Durga Puja community in Jalpaiguri says, "how can you resist the children who get a good opportunity to get new clothes, sweets, and a long drawn off from the schools ... their friends are

from what you call the traditional Aryan communities ... so it is better to get the cultures to mingle." But he does not reject his sisters' views that the Ashura community and its culture must not be allowed to be overwhelmed by the Aryan majoritarian culture. According to the 1991 census, the population of Ashurs --- one of the 40 scheduled tribes of Bengal --- was about 4864. Of these, the total number is 3108 in Jalpaiguri. There were some Ashurs in Darjeeling and Cooch Behar districts too. Bikash Ashur a private teacher and also member of a Puja club says "the time has come when Ashur or Shur should be identified by the inner quality and not the looks or descent ... after all the Hindu mythology itself says that the Gods and Ashuras were siblings with one being the descendant of Aditi and the other of Diti."

Development of Gurugram district my priority, says Badshahpur MLA

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Newly elected Badshahpur MLA and senior BJP leader Rao Narbir Singh said that the development of Gurugram district is his priority. In his first instructions after winning the elections, he said the foundation stone would be laid soon for making Gurugram free from garbage and dirt and for the construction of a civil hospital and bus stand. Gurugram district is now going to move towards new changes of development. Singh asserted that along with winning most of the seats in southern Haryana, the BJP government is going to be formed in Haryana for the third time. "BJP government has worked on the principle of Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas and has brought equal development in the whole of Haryana," Singh said. At the same time, people



want to get so much work done so that in future, the BJP candidate does not have to go to seek votes and people themselves come and give their votes and support to the BJP," he lamented. Singh said he had instructed the administrative officials to make Gurugram a garbage-free beautiful city. Illegal constructions made in the green belt should also be removed, the work of which has also started. We want that all types of garbage, polythene and dirt should be disposed of by Diwali. The construction work of the civil hospital will be started in one to one and a half months and the foundation stone of the bus stand will also be laid within three months, he said. Apart from this, to improve the education system, model schools will be built in Gurugram under the CSR fund. In which better education will be provided. The metro rail project will also be expanded in Gurugram.

Ahead of commissioning, IAF aircraft lands at Mumbai International Airport

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a significant milestone witnessed months ahead of the commissioning of the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), a C-295 transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) landed on its runway on Friday afternoon. The C-295, a medium tactical transport aircraft, landed around 1215 hrs after which it was accorded a water salute. As the transport aircraft touched the NMIA's runway, there was a stunning flypast by Sukhoi-30 fighter jets of the IAF. The inaugural landing of aircraft marked a new beginning in the country's aviation sector. The NMIA has been developed by the Navi Mumbai International Airport Pvt Ltd (NMIAL), which is a special-purpose vehicle formed by the Adani Airports Holdings Ltd (AAHL) and City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra



that the Mumbai airport currently handles 26 million passengers annually and the traffic flow has now increased to 45 million passengers and the figure will go up to 119 million by 2035. After the landing of the transport aircraft, chief minister Eknath Shinde inspected the runway at the airport, and congratulated the IAF officers present. He also sat in the cockpit of the The C-295. "After the successful testing of the runway, it will soon be possible for us to operate domestic and international flights from this airport," Shinde said. "A historic moment for Navi Mumbai as we celebrate the first landing on the new airport with the Indian Air Force's C-295! Grateful for the support of IAF, including a stunning low pass by the Su-30. This marks the dawn of a new era in Indian aviation, where the sky is no longer the limit. Together, we soar higher." AAHL Director Jeet Adani wrote on micro-blogging site "X".

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PAPER WITH PASSION

India acts East

PM Modi visits Laos for the 21st India-ASEAN Summit; says the 21st century belongs to India and ASEAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Laos for the 21st India-ASEAN Summit reestablishes India's diplomatic engagement with Southeast Asian nations. With a focus on enhancing connectivity and resilience, Modi announced a comprehensive 10-point action plan aimed at fortifying the India-ASEAN partnership. This initiative not only underscores the importance of regional collaboration in a time of global uncertainty but also highlights the potential for growth within the 21st-century landscape, which PM Modi asserts 'belongs to India and ASEAN.' PM Modi emphasised the critical need for friendship and cooperation among India and ASEAN countries, especially as tensions rise globally, with conflicts affecting various regions. He reiterated that India-ASEAN friendship, coordination dialogue and cooperation are essential at a time when several parts of the world are facing conflicts and tensions. The summit also coincides with the review of a decade of India's Act East Policy, which has significantly contributed to the doubling of India-ASEAN trade to over USD 130 billion in the past ten years.



The Prime Minister's vision for deeper ties with ASEAN encompasses several key areas. One of the important initiatives is the enhancement of connectivity, marked by the establishment of direct flight connections with seven ASEAN nations. This move aims to facilitate easier travel and trade, further integrating the economies of the region. In the realm of technology, PM Modi announced the launch of fintech connectivity with Singapore, setting a precedent for future collaborations across the ASEAN region. This initiative promotes technological advancement and financial inclusion, essential for emerging economies. Cultural ties are also a focal point, with efforts to restore shared heritage in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Indonesia reflecting India's commitment to preserving regional history and identity. Moreover, Modi stressed the urgency of completing the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (AITIGA) review to unlock greater economic potential for both parties. He highlighted the significance of educational exchanges. Over 300 students from ASEAN countries have benefitted from scholarships at Nalanda University, fostering deeper educational ties. As regional tensions persist, especially concerning maritime disputes in the South China Sea and the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, PM Modi's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative underscores the need for collaborative efforts in ensuring regional stability and security. This approach, along with a commitment to humanitarian cooperation, highlights India's readiness to support ASEAN nations in times of natural disasters. India's vision is firmly anchored in a people-centric approach, indicating a commitment to sustainable development that addresses the needs and aspirations of citizens across both regions. Indeed India and ASEAN nations have much in common; they share heritage and values which date back to centuries. It is time to revive them.

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PICTALK



An artist paints effigies of the demon king Ravana on the Dussehra, in Prayagraj

Strengthening RTI Act with practical reforms



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

As the Right to Information (RTI) Act completes 19 years, it is time to amend the rules and expand its scope to ensure it continues to serve its purpose effectively

The Right to Information (RTI) Act, implemented on October 12, 2005, marked a monumental step toward government transparency and accountability in India. Over the years, the Act has been instrumental in exposing corruption and various scams, empowering citizens to demand information from public authorities. However, while the Act has undeniably brought about significant reform, certain amendments to the RTI rules—not the Act itself—are necessary to prevent misuse, streamline the process, and reduce the burden on the courts.

Addressing Misuse and Unnecessary Litigation

One of the key challenges facing the RTI framework today is the misuse of the system by individuals and groups, often leading to unnecessary appeals and challenges in courts. The Central Information Commission (CIC), tasked with handling RTI appeals, is often burdened by frivolous cases that clog the system and delay the resolution of genuine complaints. Amendments to the RTI rules, particularly in the area of public-private partnerships (PPPs), sports bodies, and cooperatives, could alleviate some of this pressure.

By declaring PPPs, sports bodies, and cooperatives as public authorities under the RTI Act, a significant amount of time and resources could be saved. These entities often handle substantial public funds, and their exclusion from RTI coverage has raised questions about transparency. Including them under the Act would not only enhance accountability but also reduce the number of cases that reach Information Commissions and courts, streamlining the entire RTI process.

Bringing Government Allotments Under RTI

A critical area that requires attention is the issue of government land and accommodation allotments. Many government-owned properties are allotted at subsidised rates, often raising concerns about favouritism or corruption. To address this, all such allotments should be brought



under the purview of the RTI Act. Moreover, future allotments should be made conditional upon compliance with the Act, ensuring that beneficiaries are transparent about the process and accountable to the public. This move would further reduce the burden on Information Commissions, as it would discourage non-compliant beneficiaries from evading public scrutiny. It would also provide citizens with a tool to question and monitor how public resources are being allocated, contributing to more transparent governance.

Streamlining High Offices' RTI Applications

High offices such as those of the President, Prime Minister, and Chief Ministers often receive RTI applications that may not be directly related to their functions. To improve efficiency, these offices should only address RTI applications that pertain specifically to their roles. Any other applications should be returned to the applicant, along with advice on which department or authority they should approach instead. This measure would reduce the workload on these high offices while ensuring that citizens receive the information they seek from the correct sources.

Bringing Private Sector Banks Under RTI

The financial sector has long been an area where greater transparency is needed, particularly in light of recent scan-



ONE OF THE KEY CHALLENGES FACING THE RTI FRAMEWORK TODAY IS THE MISUSE OF THE SYSTEM BY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS, OFTEN LEADING TO UNNECESSARY APPEALS AND CHALLENGES IN COURTS

dals and issues of financial mismanagement. While public sector banks are already subject to RTI, the private sector remains outside the Act's purview. This is a matter of concern, given the extensive use of public funds by private banks and the critical role they play in the economy. To address this gap, private sector banks should be brought under the RTI Act. This would allow citizens to seek information about their financial practices, thereby increasing accountability in the sector.

Standardising RTI Fees and Preventing Misuse

Another issue that plagues the current RTI framework is the inconsistency in application fees across states. RTI fees should be standardised nationwide at Rs 50, which would cover the cost of 20 photocopied pages. Furthermore, no fees should be charged for appeals. These changes would simplify the process for citizens and eliminate confusion regarding varying charges in different states. However, there is also a need to address the misuse of free RTI applications by certain vested interests. For instance, contractors have been known to exploit Below Poverty Line (BPL) workers by having them file RTI requests on their behalf, thus avoiding fees. To prevent this, the free provision for BPL applicants should be limited to 20 pages. Any additional pages should incur a nominal charge, ensur-

ing that the system is not abused while still providing free access to information for genuinely disadvantaged individuals.

Enhancing Accessibility and Digital Integration

To further streamline the RTI process, post offices across the country should accept post-free RTI applications. This would make it easier for citizens, particularly those in rural areas, to file applications without worrying about postage costs. In addition, a mandatory requirement for ID proof, as seen in states like Punjab and Haryana, should be implemented nationwide. This would prevent misuse of the RTI system and ensure that applications are being filed by genuine individuals seeking information. The introduction of online RTI portals has been a positive step in recent years, but there is still room for improvement. All states should adopt the National Informatics Centre (NIC)-designed RTI websites, which allow for greater standardisation and ease of use. These portals should feature auto-emailed responses and alerts, keeping applicants informed of the status of their requests. Moreover, outdated state-specific RTI laws, such as the Delhi RTI Act, should be repealed in favor of the national RTI Act to ensure uniformity across the country.

(The writer is a RTI activist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIAN WORKERS ARE OVERBURDENED

Madam — "Work more, take less" is the mantra of the Indian employers of all sectors who are hell-bent on extracting more and more work from their employees while the emolument is not parallel to the labour at all. Consequently, stress tends to percolate through the workplace as shown by two work-related deaths of young employees in private companies. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) report that Indians work 46.7 hours per week, much higher than their American, Japanese, South African and Chinese counterparts, speaks volumes about the workload taken by an average Indian worker.

It is documented in other papers, too, that more than sixty percent of the Indian workers are stressed at work, while in general the Asian countries' workforce is more burdened by work. The primary cause for all this can be traced to the burgeoning unemployment in the country and the dearth of the right job for the right person. Employers' proclivity to recruit less to save their coffers has compounded the problem. Egoistic and haughty employers, fretting and fuming over no real reason, have pushed an already overstressed Indian worker to the edge. There is no time to waste: balancing work with rest should engage everyone's attention including that of the government.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS IMPROVE

Madam—India and its neighbour Maldives recently concluded a bilateral summit and agreed upon numerous deals. This came after a strain of ties between the two nations for almost one year after Mohamed Muizzu became president of the Island nation. India came forward to help the Maldives recover from its economic distress by signing a currency swap deal of around 385 million dollars. The two nations also agreed to enhance strategic and defence cooperation in the future. This visit has

Sports promote social unity



From time immemorial, sports have always been more than just games; they are powerful agents of social change, capable of uniting people, breaking down religion and caste barriers, and driving positive transformations in society. From local community

games to international tournaments, sports have a unique way of bringing people together, fostering a sense of community, and promoting health and well-being. One of the most compelling aspects of sport is its ability to bridge cultural gaps. Whether it's a small-town soccer match or the grandeur of the Olympic Games, sports create a common ground where individuals can connect and share experiences.

This shared passion fosters mutual respect and understanding, promoting peace and camaraderie among different cultures. The impact of sports on society is profound, touching on aspects of culture, economy, and personal development. As we move forward, embracing the positive aspects of sport while addressing its challenges will ensure that it continues to be a powerful force for good in the world.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

THE BJP WINS HARYANA

Madam — Contrary to all expectations and predictions, the BJP was able to retain Haryana for the third time. All pollsters, analysts and exit polls have been proved wrong. Politics is an unforgiving game and the defeat of the Congress has created ripples in opposition unity as the Congress will have lost its bargaining power.

The victory for BJP will undoubtedly give them a lot of confidence to face assembly elections in Jharkhand and the all important Maharashtra. It is not in the best interests of Indian democracy to use caste equations to try and win elections. All parties are guilty of the practice of pandering to particular castes for gaining their votes. Time and again, it has been seen that in a one-to-one fight, the Congress is no match for the well-oiled BJP election fighting machinery.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Deba Prasad Nayak | New Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

A new era of global opportunities awaits India in higher education

With initiatives like 'Study in India' and the recognition of qualifications of other countries, India is positioning itself as a growing hub for international education



SAHIL GUPTA

India offers tremendous opportunities in various sectors, the education is no different. Internationalisation of this sector was envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP), and the Government of India has taken effective steps over the last 4 years towards achieving this goal. Initiatives such as Study in India, Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEIs) setting up campuses in India, collaborations between Indian institutions and FHEIs, and mutual recognition of qualifications between governments are already seeing positive results. Enabling FHEIs to set up their campuses in India was allowed through Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) regulations as well as by the University Grants Commission (UGC). These regulations aim to attract top-ranked global universities and institutions to India and offer Indian students a chance to avail global certifications at comparatively affordable costs in their home country. We have already seen Deakin University operationalise its



campus in July this year and the University of Wollongong preparing for their launch, both at GIFT City. The University of Southampton (UK), ranked 80th in the 2025 QS World Rankings, became the first university to receive a Letter of Intent (LoI) from the Indian Government to establish its campus in India. We are also seeing Indian institutions set up campuses overseas as part of the internationalisation initiative. IIT Delhi has set up its first international campus in Zanzibar. The UGC Institutions of Eminence (IoE) guidelines enable IoEs to set up their campuses overseas and BITS Pilani and Manipal Academy took advantage of the window to do their forays outside India. While there is a lot of inter-

est from other private universities to set up campuses overseas, promulgating an enabling framework through regulations by the government would catalyze this interest further. In May 2022, the government revamped the collaboration guidelines to allow for joint degree, dual degree and twinning programmes between Indian institutions and FHEIs. We have already seen a lot of traction in this space, with Manipal Institute of Technology tying up with Deakin, the University of Australia, and Shoolini University offering dual degrees with the University of Melbourne being some recent examples. Studying in India is another initiative towards the internationalisation of the Indian education system. It is a flagship programme of the Government of India in line with PM Modi's vision. The website portal acts as a single window system for admission and visa applications for foreign students wanting to pursue higher education in India, with more than 60,000 students already registering through this portal. The

bation of internationalisation of education is also being taken forward through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and the Mutual Recognition of Qualification (MRQ) Agreement between India and other countries, which aims to facilitate student and faculty exchanges.

There are around 50 plus active MoUs (including France, and Germany) with a few under negotiation. MRQs have been signed with a few countries as well and some are under negotiation. A fabulous start to an era of transformation of the Indian education landscape! Is there a need to do more? A more targeted approach, probably through a campaign run with Indian consulates in overseas countries, could further the cause of internationalisation. FHEIs are now rethinking their strategy. Possibly an opportunity for India to tap - open an FHEI campus in India and offer itself as an alternate education hub in the region.

(The writer is Partner, Deloitte India, inputs by Guncha Prakash, Assistant Manager, Deloitte India; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

OVERCOMING ANXIETY: THE RIGHT WAY

Mindfulness, mental resilience and stress-relieving activities are essential to combat anxiety



RAVI VALLURI

Sameer was armed with a degree in management from an estimable institute. Having specialised in the field of marketing management, he was well versed in the 4Ps of marketing. At this juncture of his life, the young trainee fantasised about joining an FMCG company, earning an exorbitant salary and over a period acquiring an opulent property in an up-market area of the town. But there was an element of hesitation in his mind about successfully crossing the final hurdle – the interview. As the mind was not in the present moment and instead fixated on the future it remained anxious and continuously agitated. Thus, it was not in a state of equilibrium, equipoise, or equanimity. Meanwhile, Siddhartha, his school mate majored in architecture and apprenticed at a celebrated architectural firm in the city. Siddhartha however, was not content in designing buildings.

He possessed a febrile mind that ached to pursue a greenfield area called entertainment design. The strapping self-taught himself and acquired ultra-modern and newfangled skill sets. Fortified with the newly acquired knowledge he prepared a portfolio consisting of visionary and ingenious graphics, sketches and paintings. Yet, mentally he was anxious, tense and strained as to what lay in future. It is a normal human tendency to be apprehensive before anxious situations as it is not in the present moment. Several individuals become splenetic and waspish. Invariably there is a churning in the abdomen region and the mind is subsumed with anxiety. Arjuna, in possession of a lethal arsenal, was numbed seeing the mammoth army of the Kauravas. This, even though Lord Krishna was his charioteer! At zero hour, before the showdown at Kurukshetra, he lay down his weaponry. The consummate warrior could not distinguish between righteousness and malevolence. The demons in his mind were



eventually dispelled through the Vishwarupa Darshan of Lord Krishna and the song celestial – The Bhagavad Gita. Psychologists have advanced a two-pronged strategy to combat such inhospitable states, firstly by closely monitoring the piquant state and taking prompt and effective action and second, by avoiding and blunting the situation. Monitoring involves taking several proactive steps which help in the preparation of the mind. Advanced and well-rehearsed preparation before a significant event; this is tapasya and no one can relax on this ground.

The mind should be resolute and robust, to practice incessantly like the celebrated archer Arjuna. In the process, the individual de-clutters the mind and gets rid of the baggage of anxiety and fear. The Inoculation Technique is another effective strategy. An individual insulates the self against the perils of stress through constant exposure to rehearsals and role-playing.

This mentally toughens up the candidate to be prepared for the scrutiny and appraisal with utmost confidence and credence. Further, adopting a positive dispensation is invaluable. In addition, there are blunting tactics and strategies which help to augment the above. It is perspicacious and canny to drown in physical activity. It could be going for long walks, swimming, hitting the gym, taking up a sport or learning yogic techniques to de-stress the mind. These activities release endorphins which assuage the mind. Simultaneously, an individual will appear chiselled and smart. There are other ways to remain happy. For instance, join the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living to learn the unique rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya which calms the body and mind. Learn pranayama and various techniques of meditation to remain in the present moment. Only when a human being is in the present moment is he insulated from anxiety and manages inexpedient and onerous situations?

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

‘Fourth transformation’ of Mexico embraces inclusivity



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

Claudia Sheinbaum’s leadership promises to reshape the nation’s trajectory away from its violent past, embracing inclusive and human-centred policies

Claudia Sheinbaum’s swearing-in on October 1 as Mexico’s first female President marks a transformative moment not only for gender equality but also within the broader historical trajectory shaped by violence, revolution and the ongoing pursuit of justice. In a nation long burdened by colonial legacies and systemic inequality, her presidency signals a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and human-centred governance. Declaring a “fourth transformation,” Sheinbaum’s leadership reflects the weight of Mexico’s tumultuous history and the lives lost in its struggles. Her rise to power disrupts the deeply entrenched male-dominated political sphere, accentuating the resilience of women fighting for representation in a country plagued by gender-based violence and femicide.

Historically, Mexico has undergone significant transformations marked by bloodshed and resistance. The country’s struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule in the early 19th century was fuelled by revolutionary fervour and the desire for self-determination. Statesmen like Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos emerged as symbols of resistance, galvanising the population against colonial oppression. The violent conflicts that followed laid the groundwork for a nation striving for autonomy, albeit at a considerable human cost. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the divide between church and state catalysed further revolutions and conflicts. The Liberal Reform, led by figures such as Benito Juárez, sought to dismantle the power of the Catholic Church and establish a secular state.

This period was marked by violence and civil strife, as conservative factions resisted these changes. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 further exemplified the nation’s tumultuous journey, with leaders like Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa rallying for agrarian reform and social justice. The revolution, while transformative, came at a heavy price, resulting in the loss of countless lives and widespread suffering. The bloodshed that characterised these early transformations stands in stark contrast to Sheinbaum’s vision for the fourth transformation, which she advocates as a path of non-violence and reconciliation. She seeks to distance her administration from the militarised approach that has defined previous efforts to combat crime and violence. In her inaugural speech, she emphasised that “we must turn the page on the cycles of violence that have plagued our country.” By framing her presidency as a continuation of a peaceful and humanistic governance model, she aims to redefine Mexico’s political structure.

The economic model embraced by Sheinbaum’s administration marks a significant departure from the neoliberal policies that have dominated Mexico for decades. The neoliberal framework, characterised by deregulation, resource exploitation, privatisation, and an emphasis on unethical free-market principles, has often exacerbated social inequalities and marginalised vulnerable populations. In contrast, Sheinbaum’s “Mexican Humanist” approach seeks to prioritise social welfare, equity, and sustainable development. This shift is not merely a matter of policy but represents a broader socio-political transformation in the way governance is conceived. Sheinbaum advocates for a model that empowers communities and fosters inclusivity, stating, “We must build



IN THE CONTEXT OF CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM’S PRESIDENCY, THE ENDURING LEGACY OF CIA COVERT OPERATIONS AND FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS LOOMS LARGE

a Mexico where no one is left behind.” This vision reflects a recognition that systemic issues require collective solutions and that the voices of marginalised communities must be heard in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Yet, while Sheinbaum’s approach has garnered support from many, it also faces criticism and scepticism from those who question the feasibility of her proposed reforms. Critics argue that the structural challenges posed by organised crime and entrenched political corruption may undermine her efforts to implement meaningful change. The harsh realities of violence and inequality persist, and many Mexicans remain wary of promises that may be difficult to fulfil in the face of overwhelming opposition. The historical backdrop of Mexico’s political volatility illuminates the formidable challenges in achieving authentic progress, as the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and systemic oppression remain deeply ingrained.

The ongoing struggles for justice and equality have come at a profound cost, with the violence woven into Mexico’s history continuing to influence the present and complicate future paths.

The Zapatista movement, which arose in the 1990s in response to neoliberal policies and the marginalisation of Indigenous communities, stands as a powerful testament to the fight for social justice. Led by Subcomandante Marcos, the Zapatistas championed self-determination, autonomy, and the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights, challenging dominant political narratives and inspiring a new generation of activists, including Sheinbaum. Yet, their movement also reveals the challenges inherent in revolutionary politics; while their promise of non-violence

and social justice aligns with Sheinbaum’s vision, navigating the realities of power and governance often demands difficult compromises. The pressing challenge remains: how to dismantle deeply rooted systems of inequality and violence without mirroring the oppressive methods of the past. Sheinbaum’s fourth transformation for Mexico calls for a reevaluation of economic policies and a fundamental shift in political culture, emphasising transparency, accountability, and democratic principles that prioritise the needs of the many.

She stresses the importance of restoring faith in institutions and rebuilding the nation’s social fabric. However, the ongoing issues of alleged corruption and political machinations, exacerbated by her predecessor López Obrador’s concentration of power and undermining of democratic institutions, raise concerns about the sustainability of her reforms. In the context of Claudia Sheinbaum’s presidency, the enduring legacy of CIA covert operations and foreign interventions looms large. Historically, the United States has intervened in Latin America to safeguard its interests, often undermining democratic governance and social justice.

The repercussions of these interventions have fostered a deep-seated distrust and scepticism toward foreign influence in Mexico’s internal affairs. As Sheinbaum endeavours to establish a nation committed to human rights and social justice, she must grapple with the pervasive effects of these historical injustices and the Western media narratives that distort the actual picture of Mexican society. In terms of international relations, Sheinbaum vehemently opposes foreign intervention, particularly regarding the US blockade against Cuba, which harms ordinary cit-

izens rather than the government. She advocates for cooperation rather than militarisation in addressing drug-related violence, emphasising that the drug market is intricately linked to US consumer demand. As she aptly stated, “We must honour our past, learn from our struggles, and build a future that reflects the aspirations of all Mexicans.” Yet, the pursuit of a more just and equitable Mexico demands collective action, engagement from diverse communities, and a steadfast commitment to dismantling systemic barriers, as Sheinbaum seeks to embody the hopes of a nation shaped by resilience and struggle. However, the structural challenges, as Enrique Dussel, an Argentine-Mexican philosopher, explained in his writings, continue to haunt Mexico, posing real threats to the stability of political leadership. He emphasises the need for integrating diverse cultural perspectives and fostering dialogue from the Global South, as seen in his concept of transmodernity. Dussel also highlights the coloniality of power, illustrating how historical injustices persist in contemporary governance, perpetuating inequality. Furthermore, his ethics of the Other calls for recognising the experiences of marginalised individuals as central to any discourse on justice. Additionally, the aporia of borders illustrates the contradictions communities face at national edges, such as the Mexico-US border, where ideals of freedom and security often clash. Addressing these issues demands a nuanced approach that acknowledges the voices of those usually left unheard, which presents a significant challenge for the historic administration of Dr Sheinbaum.

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

Half of the world’s GDP at risk due to environmental degradation

The conservation and restoration of depleted forests are essential steps to combat climate change

Climate change has become an important challenge for the whole world. Conservation and restoration of depleted forests can become a necessary step to deal with this challenge.

Regarding this, many companies around the world have pledged to plant over 12 billion trees in the next seven years. The report published by the World Economic Forum on Nature and Biodiversity on January 18, 2024, clarifies that half of the world’s GDP, i.e. about \$44 trillion, is in danger. Which is due to the loss of nature.

To save it, more than 100 companies have pledged to conserve, restore and plant new trees of over 12 billion



RAJEEV AACHARYA

five new companies Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL), Burberry China, Go To Group, RPG Enterprises and Vale. Member companies of It.org are committed to implementing the goal in line with the Paris Agreement to save trees and reduce carbon emissions. Tree conservation is not only important for environmental sustainability, but it is also a part of our cultural and religious heritage. Trees learn from each other. That research was published on May 28, 2024 in the Current Forestry Reports magazine of Springer Nature, America.

This research is based on the topic that how trees planted in agro-forestry and urban

forestry can learn from each other and flourish. According to the research, both systems can be seen as natural solutions. Both systems also have similarities in ownership and management responsibilities. For example, most of the agricultural land in the Global North is privately owned, just as a large part of the green cover is seen in cities. Increasing the density of trees improves air quality. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore conducted a study in 2023 on the role of trees in the urban environment. This study was mainly done in urban areas of Bangalore. It was found that trees in urban areas play an important role in improving air quality as well as controlling

temperature. In this research, it was told that the higher the density of trees, the greater the increase in air quality and the effect of heat can also be reduced.



temperature. In this research, it was told that the higher the density of

trees, the greater the increase in air quality and the effect of heat can also be reduced.

This study also found that the mental and physical health of people living in green areas improves. The density of trees prevents soil erosion.

A study conducted by the University of Sydney, Australia, says that dense cover of trees can control the flow of water and help prevent soil erosion. This study also stated that the conservation of trees helps in reducing the effects of climate change. All these studies confirm how important the conservation of trees is for our future. In Indian culture, importance has been given to the conservation of trees since the beginning. According to Matasya Purana, “Dashakoopasama Vaapi, Dashavaapisamo

Hradah. Dashahradasamo Putro, Dashputrasamo Drumah.” That is, one tree is equal to ten sons. Similarly, it is said in Vishnu Purana that the person who plants a tree earns virtue not only in his life but also for the coming generations.

Planting and caring for trees has been described as an important religious and social work in Indian scriptures. At present, planting trees is not only to save lives but also to save the earth. Let us take resolve to conserve nature. Each one of us must take a pledge to plant at least 5 trees, only then this disaster of global warming can be dealt with.

(The writer is an environmentalist; views are personal)

Nobel Peace prize awarded to Japanese organisation for work against N-weapons

AP ■ OSLO

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded Friday to Nihon Hidankyo, a Japanese organisation of survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for its activism against nuclear weapons.

mittee "wishes to honour all survivors who, despite physical suffering and painful memories, have chosen to use their costly experience to cultivate hope and engagement for peace."

ational politics and, in the longer run, to eliminate such arms." This year's prize was awarded against a backdrop of devastating conflicts raging in the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan.

"the spectre of Hiroshima and Nagasaki still looms over humanity. This makes the advocacy of Nihon Hidankyo invaluable. This Nobel Peace Prize sends a powerful message. We have the duty to remember. And an even greater duty to protect the next generations from the horrors of nuclear war."

ple" who demonstrated against "Iran's theocratic regime's policies of discrimination and oppression targeting women." In a year of conflict, there had been some speculation that the Norwegian Nobel Committee that decides on the winner would opt not to award a prize at all.

Hezbollah militants firing rockets into Israel, while Iran -- which backs both Hamas and Hezbollah -- fired ballistic missiles into Israel.

its third winter with a massive loss of human life on both sides. The UN has confirmed more than 11,000 Ukrainian civilian dead, but that doesn't take into account as many as 25,000 Ukrainians believed killed during the Russian capture of the city of Mariupol or unreported deaths in occupied regions.

Trump says India biggest tariff charger; vows to reciprocate if elected to power

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Vowing to introduce a reciprocal tax if elected to power, former US president Donald Trump on Thursday alleged that India, among all major countries, imposes the highest tariffs on foreign products.

man. He's brought it together. He's done a great job. But they probably charge as much," he said. "I mean, I think they probably charge more than, in many ways, China. But they do it with a smile. They do it... Sort of a nicer charge. They said, thank you so much for purchasing from India."



build your plant there, we're not going to charge you anything. I mean, you can do whatever you want. I said I don't like that. And I see they went, they built the plant, and now they do their business with India. They probably do it outside of India too. They built a very big plant in many countries, they do that. Then all of a sudden, you hear

friend of mine. He's great. Before him, they were replacing them every year. It's very unstable. He came over. He's a friend of mine. But on the outside, he looks like he's your father. He's the nicest, but he's a total killer," he said.

22 killed in airstrikes in central Beirut

AP ■ BEIRUT

Israeli airstrikes on central Beirut on Thursday left two neighborhoods smoldering, killed 22 people and wounded dozens, Lebanon's health ministry said, as well as further escalating Israel's bloody conflict with Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

security official with the group, had failed. It said that Safa had not been inside of either of the targeted buildings. Thursday's strikes followed a year of tit-for-tat exchanges between Hezbollah and Israel that boiled over into all-out war in recent weeks, with Israel carrying out waves of heavy airstrikes across Lebanon and launching a ground invasion.

The Lebanese Health Ministry said 22 people were killed and 117 others wounded, without elaborating on their identities. Recent Israeli airstrikes in neighborhoods adjoining Beirut, in particular the densely populated southern suburbs, have killed Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and other senior commanders.

Zelensky meets Pope, pushes his 'victory plan'

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis met Volodymyr Zelensky at the Vatican on Friday, the latest step on the Ukrainian president's European tour to win support for his proposed "victory plan" aimed at ending the war with Russia.

Russia attacks Ukraine's grain-exporting Odesa region

AP ■ KYIV

A nighttime Russian missile strike on Odesa killed at least four people including a 16-year-old girl, regional authorities said Friday, in the latest in a series of attacks this week on the southern Ukrainian region that are likely intended to disrupt the country's grain exports.

regional Gov. Oleh Kiper. The apparent Russian effort to frustrate Ukraine's exports, which bring vital revenue for a national economy battered by more than two years of war, coincided with a renewed push by Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to ensure continuing military and financial support from his country's Western partners.

Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi was sent as a special envoy on a mission to ease tensions among the parties at war, meeting with political and ecclesiastical leaders around the world. His mission was, in particular, to encourage exchanges of Russian and Ukrainian prisoners and to find a way to facilitate the return of children forcibly deported from Ukraine to Russia.

UN peacekeepers caught in intensified fighting

AP ■ BEIRUT

The UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, said in a statement that its headquarters and positions "have been repeatedly hit" by Israeli forces.



UNIFIL, which has more than 10,000 peacekeepers from dozens of countries, was created to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon after Israel's 1978 invasion.

Hurricane Milton leaves 8 dead, Florida in darkness

AP ■ ST PETERSBURG (FLORIDA)

Rescue teams plucked Florida residents from the flotsam of Hurricane Milton on Thursday after the storm smashed through coastal communities where it tore homes into pieces, filled streets with mud and spawned a barrage of deadly tornadoes.

waves up to 25 feet (7.6 metres) high during his night on the water. "This man survived in a nightmare scenario for even the most experienced mariner," Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Dana Grady said.

nadoes in the Spanish Lakes Country Club near Fort Pierce, on Florida's Atlantic Coast, where homes were destroyed, authorities said. Police also found a woman dead under a fallen tree branch in Tampa.



survive this," she said. They returned to find the roof torn into sheets across the street, shredded insulation hanging from exposed ceiling beams and their belongings soaked.

County, where it was 8 to 10 feet (2.5 to 3 metres) — lower than in the worst place during Helene. The storm also dumped up to 18 inches (45 centimetres) of rain in some areas. Officials in the hard-hit Florida counties of Hillsborough, Pinellas, Sarasota and Lee urged people to stay home,

Reynolds, 90, spent the morning sweeping out 4 feet (1.2 metres) of mud and water and collecting chunks of aluminum siding torn off by a twister that also picked up a car and threw it across the road.

Elsewhere on the island, a house was blown into a street, temporarily blocking it. Some structures caught fire. Reynolds said he planned to repair the home he built three decades ago.

across the South. In many places along the coast, municipalities raced to collect and dispose of debris before Milton's winds and storm surge could toss it around and compound any damage.

Harris as prepared to be President as any nominee in past: Obama

PTI ■ WASHINGTON Vice President Kamala Harris is as prepared for this job as any nominee for the president in the past, former president Barack Obama said on Thursday, noting that the November election will be "tight" between her and Republican candidate Donald Trump.

US worried about China's actions in disputed sea: Blinken

AP ■ VIENTIANE (LAOS) US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Southeast Asian leaders Friday that the US is concerned about China's "increasingly dangerous and unlawful" activities in the disputed South China Sea during an annual summit meeting, and pledged the US will continue to uphold freedom of navigation in the vital sea trade route.

By that it's obligated to defend the Philippines — its oldest treaty ally in Asia — if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

20 killed in attack on miners in Pakistan

PTI ■ KARACHI At least 20 miners, including from Afghanistan, were killed and eight others injured on Friday when terrorists attacked a private coal mine with rocket launchers and automatic weapons in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province.

Remains of British climber believed found 100 years after Everest ascent

AP ■ LONDON with his co-climber, the legendary George Mallory, near Everest's peak on June 8, 1924. The pair, who were seeking to become the first people to conquer Everest, were last seen around 800 feet (245 metres) from the summit before they disappeared.

Central Rongbuk Glacier below the North Face of Mount Everest. "It is a monumental and emotional moment for us and our entire team on the ground, and we just hope this can finally bring peace of mind to his relatives and the climbing world at large," said climb team member and National Geographic explorer Jimmy Chin.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS CHANGE OF NAME I, Gaurav Batra S/o Shri Ram Batra R/o 8/71, Geeta Colony, Delhi, inform that Gourav Batra (as mentioned in 10th class marksheet) and Gaurav Batra both are the one and same person.

PD(847)A I, hitherto known as Sudhanshu S/o Shri Vir Singh R/o H.No-D-257, Street No.4, Pratap Nagar, Saboli, Dist: North East Delhi-110093, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sudhanshu Chaudhary.

PD(854)C I, Khushi Gupta, D/o Kanhiya Lal Gupta, R/o Plot No-230 Flat No-309 Gali No-8, Patel Garden Kakrola Dwarka, Dwarka-110078, Delhi, India has changed my name from Khushi to Khushi Gupta and my father name has also changed from Kanhiya Lal to Kanhiya Lal Gupta For all Purposes.

PD(855)C LOST & FOUND I, Jatinder Luthra S/o Des Raj Luthra R/o A 204, Rishabh Paradise, Ahinsa Khand 2, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad. The last paper of the registry of my flat no. A-204, Rishabh Paradise Ahinsa Khand 2, Indirapuram whose book no. 1, volume no. 2856, pages 515 to 564, No. 5510 is lost somewhere. Anyone who finds it please call and inform. Phone No. 781284177 PD(848)C

PUBLIC NOTICE General public is hereby informed that MRS. KRISHNA GUPTA is the owner of the plot situated measuring 14914 Sq Yds. i.e. 12470 Sq. Meters, out of Gata No. 1013, Section 3, Khasra Khajuraha, Bahar, Chauri Pargana & Tehsil Khajuraha, District Bulandshahr, U.P. to be financed Capital Capital Ltd. The Original Sale Deed dated 24.02.2011 vide Doc. No. 2956 pertains to the aforesaid property has been lost and LAR NO. 202400086796 has been registered on 07/30/2024 with LAR Pradeesh Police.

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given that the share certificates NO 310084 for 350 shares bearing distinctive No(s) 13536087-13536436 standing in the name of Nandini Vaish in the books of M/s Dalmia Bharat Limited, has been lost/misplaced and the advertiser has applied to the Company for issue of duplicate share certificate(s) in lieu thereof. Any person(s) who has/have claim(s) on the said shares should lodge such claim(s) with the Company's Registrars and Transfer Agents viz KFin Technologies Ltd., SELENIUM TOWER B, PLOT NO 31 & 32, GACHIBOWLI, FINANCIAL DISTRICT, NANAKRAMANGA, SERILINGAMPALLY, HYDERABAD - 500032, TELANGANA, Toll Free No: 1800-309-4001 within 15 days from the date of this notice failing which the Company will proceed to issue duplicate share certificate(s) in respect of the said shares. Date: 11 October, 2024 Name of the shareholder: Nandini Vaish Place: New Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the general public that SHRI LOKESH MOHAN SHARMA is the absolute owner of the built-up plot No. 201, Block-C-4, situated in the Layout Plan of Capital Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Known as Capital Apartment at Plot No. 3, Vasundra Krishna, (hereinafter referred to as the "said property"). Ownership was acquired through a Conveyance Deed Dated 04.12.2001, which was duly registered with the office of Sub-Registrar-III, Delhi, as doc. no. 18322, Book 1, Vol No. 881, Page No. 92 on 04.12.2001 as per the Owner's Bonafide Deed dated 04.12.2001 documents for the entire built-up property, including the (i) original conveyance deed dated 04.12.2001 executed by Delhi Development Authority in favour of Shri Lokesh Sharma @ Shri Lokesh Mohan Sharma, which is duly registered with the office of Sub-Registrar-III, Delhi, as doc. no. 18322, Book 1, Vol No. 881, Page No. 92 on 04.12.2001 and (ii) original conveyance deed dated 04.12.2001 executed by Delhi Development Authority in favour of Shri Lokesh Sharma @ Shri Lokesh Mohan Sharma, which is duly registered with the office of Sub-Registrar-III, Delhi, as doc. no. 18322, Book 1, Vol No. 881, Page No. 92 on 04.12.2001 and original substitution letter issued by the society in favour of Mrs. S. Poonam & Shri Jawahar Lal are currently unavailable for verification, as they have been lost/misplaced. A lost report regarding these documents has been filed with the Delhi Police Crime Branch, vide L.R. No. 2059791/2024 dated 06.09.2020. The owner has asserted that the said property is free from all encumbrances, an agreement to sell has been executed for the sale of the said property to Mrs. Shrut Banwal, and the owner intends to create a charge, VIZ mortgage or otherwise, on the property for the purpose of availing a housing loan on credit facility from the State Bank of India, Home Loan Centre, Thapar House, Janpah, New Delhi, any person(s) or financial institution claiming any right or interest in the said property regarding the said property based on the aforementioned lost documents is hereby requested to contact the aforementioned SBI branch as well as the undersigned at the email address: ratish318@gmail.com within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, any such claim shall be deemed null and void, and the title to the property shall be considered clear, marketable, free from defects or encumbrances, and open to creating an effective mortgage. Ratan Kumar Jais (Advocate) Chamber-23, Western Wing Tis Hazari Court Delhi-110054, Mobile: 9990647903

PUBLIC NOTICE To whomsoever it may concern Our Client HDFC Bank Ltd States That Mr. Satpal Sharma is the Absolute Owner of Property Bearing Address House No. 480, Sector 19, Dwarka, New Delhi-110045 by virtue of Sale Deed Duly Registered On 23/05/2018 Vide Reg No. 5210. That the Original Documents Of The Said Property i.e. Sale Deed Duly Registered on 23/05/2018 Vide Reg No. 5210 is misplaced by Our Clients Panel Lawyers Office Namely Advocate Chandra Kishore Jha While in their Custody and is Considered Lost. The Said Property is Absolutely Free From Any Encumbrance Whatsoever. It is also Stated That In Case The Sale Deed Duly Registered On 23/05/2018 Vide Reg No. 5210 is Found By Our Clients Panel Lawyers Office, Same Shall be Kept In The Safe Custody of Our Client And Returned To The Property Owner. If Any Person Finds The Said Sale Deed Registered on 23/05/2018 Vide Reg No. 5210 Or Has Any Claim or Interest Over The Said Property, He/She is Requested to Forward The Information or their Claims along with the relevant Documents to us Within 15 days of this Public Notice. If we do not receive any Information or Claim from Any Person Within 15 Days, It Will Be Strictly Presumed that This Property is Absolutely Free From Any Claim or Encumbrance and No One has any Claim over This Property. Ravi Chopra, Advocate, Office No. 1, First Floor, Dda Market Pockets-1, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-110096, Mobile No. 9811020745

PUBLIC NOTICE It is hereby notified that my client SH. ARUN GUPTA son of late Jai Parkash Gupta, R/o House No. 104, New 10-A, Khasra No. 96561, Ground Floor, Sri Ram Road, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054 is the owner and in possession of one shop on the ground floor in property bearing No.VI/4450, Mohalla Darawara, Nai Sarak, Delhi-110006 (the said property) vide registered sale deed dated 8.8.2012 having purchased the same from Smt. Yashoda W/o late Sh. Notan Dass Behrani & Others. That the previous original title documents of the said property i.e. original sale deed dated 28.11.1990 being registration No.6354 book No. 1 volume 5377 on pages 144 to 148 registered on 28.11.1990 before Sub Registrar-I, North, Kashmere Gate, Delhi and Relinquishment Deed executed by Smt. Kanchan Lachari registered as document No.7697 in additional book No.1 volume 4492 on pages 23 to 26 registered on 25.7.2012 in the office of Sub Registrar-I, North, Kashmere Gate, Delhi, are misplaced/lost and are not traceable. Any person(s) having any claim, right in to or upon the said property or any part thereof on the strength of the aforesaid misplaced/lost documents or otherwise is hereby required to notify the same in writing along with supporting documents to the undersigned with 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any claim and/or objection, if any, shall be considered as vague and abandoned and should not be binding in law upon my client. M.P. Bansal Advocate Delhi High Court Ch. No. 268-269, Civil Wing, District Courts, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054 M.: 9810220752

One killed in elevator mishap at gold mine in Colorado

AP ■ DENVER One person was killed and 12 people were rescued after being trapped for about six hours at the bottom of a former Colorado gold mine when an elevator malfunctioned at the tourist site, authorities said.

CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED Registered Office: Aggarwal Corporate Tower, Plot No. 23, 5th Floor, Govind Lal Sikka Marg, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008 E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE "APPENDIX IV-A" [SEE PROVISIO TO RULE 8(6)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005 The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd., Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005 The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

BSES BSES Yamuna Power Limited, Delhi ... A Joint venture with Govt. of NCT of Delhi NOTICE INVITING TENDER Date: 12.10.2024 E-tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) are invited as per the following details:-

RBI asks banks to ensure easier accessibility for persons with disabilities

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday asked banks to review their payment systems to ensure easier accessibility to persons with disabilities.

All sections of the population, including differently-abled persons, are increasingly adopting digital payment systems, it said in a circular.

"To promote effective access, payment system participants (PSPs, that is, banks and authorised non-bank payment system providers) are advised to review their payment systems/devices in terms of accessibility to Persons with Disabilities," it noted.



Based on the review, banks and non-bank payment system providers may carry out the necessary modifications in payment systems and devices like point-of-sale machines, which can be accessed and used by persons with

disabilities with ease, the RBI said.

The RBI also asked them to refer to the accessibility standards issued by the Ministry of Finance in February.

While selecting potential solutions for the purpose, care should be taken to ensure that the modifications or enhancements do not compromise security aspects of the systems, the central bank said.

PSPs have been asked to submit to the Reserve Bank, within one month, details of their systems/devices that need to be modified, along with a time-bound plan of action for achieving the same.

Life insurers' new premiums rise 14 per cent to ₹ 35,020 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Life insurers recorded a 14 per cent rise in underwriting new business with a premium collection of Rs 35,020 crore in September. New business premiums stood at Rs 30,716 crore in same month a year ago.

The new business premium collection in the first half of FY25 rose 19 per cent to Rs 1,89,214 crore from Rs 1,58,377 crore in the same period last year, as per the monthly data released by the industry body Life Insurance Council.

Driven by a strong demand for enhanced insurance protection from individual consumers, new policy issuances too increased by 45.49 per cent on a year-on-year basis in the month, resulting in the addition of new 32,17,880 policies vis-à-vis 22,11,680 policies in the



year-ago period, it said. According to data released by the Life Insurance Council, the life insurance industry saw individual single premiums growing 13 per cent to close at Rs 5,142 crore for September while year-to-date growth stood at 14.99 per cent.

Meanwhile, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) collected new premium of Rs 20,369 crore as against Rs 18,126 crore in September 2023, recording a growth of 25 per

cent. However, private sector put together grew 12 per cent to Rs 73,664 crore as against Rs 65,734 crore garnered in the same month a year ago.

The life insurance industry in India has been making significant strides by expanding access to insurance and making an effort to reach out to areas and segments of the country's population that were previously underserved when it comes to their insurance needs, it said.

PwC India partners with Meta for AI solutions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

PwC India has announced a collaboration with Meta to expand and scale its open-source AI solutions to enterprises and citizen services on Meta's Llama models.

This collaboration will promote the adoption of the Llama open-source platform and help PwC develop innovative solutions powered by Generative AI (GenAI) on a global scale, the consultancy firm said in a release. In light of the Indian government's announcement to launch the IndiaAI Mission and its investment in building a robust AI ecosystem, the moment is ideal for businesses to harness the potential of GenAI, it added.

"With Llama Models, we see a unique opportunity to democratise this technology across industries, and drive innovation while solving real-world challenges. Together, we aspire to create a more



digitally enabled future for our clients and our communities - to create value and drive meaningful change at scale," Sanjeev Krishan, Chairperson of PwC India, said. The collaboration will help PwC India and Meta to democratise GenAI and make it more accessible to businesses by jointly building and deploying enterprise-grade and citizen-service GenAI solutions.

It aims to create an ecosystem of GenAI solutions that will be built on Meta's technical expertise and powerful Llama open-source platform along with PwC India's domain expertise.

Sandhya Devanathan, Vice President and Head at Meta India, said Gen AI solutions, including Llama, are poised to revolutionise India's businesses and accelerate the country's digital transformation journey. "By harnessing the power of natural language understanding and generation, Llama can unlock new efficiencies, enhance customer experiences, and drive data-driven decision-making. As India strives to become a leading digital economy, Gen AI will be instrumental in empowering businesses to innovate, scale, and compete on a global stage," Devanathan said.

Edible oil imports drop 29 per cent in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's import of edible oils fell 29 per cent annually in September to 10,64,499 tonnes due to lower inward shipments of crude and refined palm oils, according to industry data.

Import of edible oils stood at 14,94,086 tonnes in the same month last year.

Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) on Friday released the import data for vegetable oils (both edible and non-edible) for September.

Imports of non-edible oils fell to 22,990 tonnes in September from 57,940 tonnes in the year-ago period.

According to the data, import of vegetable oils in September declined 30 per cent to 10,87,489 tonnes compared to 15,52,026 tonnes a year earlier.

In the edible oil category, the SEA data showed that import



of crude palm oil declined to 4,32,510 tonnes last month from 7,05,643 tonnes in September last year, while refined palm oil shipments were down to 84,279 tonnes from 1,28,954 tonnes.

Imports of crude sunflower oil also declined to 1,52,803

tonnes from 3,00,732 tonnes. SEA attributed the fall in import to higher inward shipments during July-August, and subdued demand, resulting in stock building at port.

Moreover, the association said importers have become

cautious because of volatility and firmness in prices.

Reduction in import was led by palm oil, which is trading above soyabean oil and sunflower oil prices, SEA said, adding that domestic players have reduced their buying.

According to SEA data, the overall import of vegetable oils during the first 11 months of the current 2023-24 marketing year ending October declined 6 per cent to 1,47,75,000 tonnes as compared to 1,56,73,102 tonnes in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Of the total vegetable oil imports so far in 2023-24 marketing year, the imports of edible oil fell to 1,45,35,955 tonnes from 1,54,68,912 tonnes. Imports of non-edible oils rose to 2,39,045 tonnes from 2,04,190 tonnes.

India imports palm oils from Indonesia and Malaysia, and soyabean oils from Brazil and Argentina.

More than 50 per cent of India's edible oils demand is met through imports. Recently, the government increased import duties on edible oils to protect farmers interest amid harvest of kharif crops.

JioFinance app launches with diverse services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jio Financial Services on Friday announced the launch of a new and improved JioFinance App that offers a range of services, including loans, savings accounts, UPI bill payments, recharges, and digital insurance.

A beta version of the JioFinance App was launched on May 30, 2024. Over six million users have experienced Jio Financial Services Ltd's (JFSL) new-age digital platform, and the valuable customer feedback received was instrumental in improving the app's overall user experience.

"A wide array of financial products and services have been added since the Beta launch, including loans on mutual funds, home loans (including Balance Transfer), and loans against property.



These loans are available at competitive terms and will offer substantial savings for our customers," JFSL said in a statement.

The new app is now available on the Google Play Store, Apple App Store and MyJio, with a wide range of attractive offerings, it said.

On the savings front, the digital savings account from Jio Payments Bank Ltd (JPBL), which can be opened digitally in 5 minutes, offers a secure bank account with biometric authentication and a physical debit card, it said. Over 1.5 million customers manage their routine,

recurring expenses using their JPBL account. Additionally, it said, features such as seamless UPI payments, mobile recharge, and ability to pay credit card bills are empowering customers to transact digitally with ease. The JioFinance app also offers customers an aggregate view of their holdings across different bank accounts and across their mutual fund holdings, helping them manage their finances better.

Moreover, it said, the JioFinance app brings as many as 24 insurance plans spanning a comprehensive suite of life, health, two-wheeler and motor insurance digitally. JFSL, along with its joint venture partner BlackRock are also working towards bringing world-class and innovative investment solutions.

Markets close lower; Sensex drops 230 points

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday, dragged by selling in banking, utility and financial stocks as investors turned cautious ahead of key macro data.

Besides, a mixed trend in global equity markets and unabated foreign fund outflows also hit investors' sentiment, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 230.05 points or 0.28 per cent to close at 81,381.36. During the day, it declined 307.26 points or 0.37 per cent to a low of 81,304.15.

The NSE Nifty slipped 34.20 points or 0.14 per cent to 24,964.25. It hit an intraday low of 24,920.05.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services, Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Maruti Suzuki India, Power Grid, Axis Bank



and Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones were among the laggards. The government is scheduled to release IIP data later in the day.

On the other hand, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys and Titan were among the gainers.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and Hong Kong were closed in green territory, while Shanghai and Seoul ended in the red.

European markets were trading on a mixed note in mid-session deals. US markets ended lower in overnight deals on Thursday. Global oil benchmark Brent Crude fell 0.77 per cent to USD 78.79 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,926.61 crore on Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 3,878.33 crore, according to exchange data.

On Thursday, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 144.31 points to settle at 81,611.41, while the NSE Nifty climbed 16.50 points to close at 24,998.45.

IN BRIEF

NIFTEM-K CELEBRATES XTH FOUNDATION DAY

NEW DELHI: The National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli (NIFTEM-K), celebrated its Xth Foundation Day on 7th October with immense enthusiasm and grandeur.

PUNJAB GOVERNMENT APPOINTS PSPCL DIRECTOR

PATIALA: Punjab Government has appointed Er. Harjit Singh as Director/Generation, Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd (PSPCL) for two years. Hailing from Patiala, Harjit Singh an alumnus of Thapar University, has around 30 years of experience in the field of Design/Construction/Operation & Maintenance.

SRM UNIVERSITY-AP SENDS AN EXPEDITION TO MT. EVEREST

ANDHRA PRADESH: SRM University-AP flagged off the much-awaited Everest Base Camp Expedition that will take place from October 12 - 27, 2024.

NFR RECORDS SIGNIFICANT GROWTH

MALIGONA: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is working relentlessly round the clock to serve its customers and ensure the timely delivery of essential commodities to end users.

IREDA receives DIPAM approval for new Subsidiary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-run IREDA has received approval from DIPAM to set up a wholly-owned subsidiary to undertake retail and B2B business in the renewable energy sector.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), under the Ministry of new and renewable energy, is a non-banking financial institution.

It has received in-principle approval from the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to establish a wholly-owned subsidiary to handle retail business under PM-Suryaghar (Rooftop Solar), PM-KUSUM schemes, and other B2C segments in the renewable energy (RE) sector, IREDA said in a statement on Thursday.

The subsidiary will also focus on emerging RE sectors, including EVs, energy storage, green technologies, sustainability, energy efficiency, etc. IREDA CMD Pradip Kumar



Das said, "By extending our expertise in RE finance to retail market, we will provide innovative financing options for both urban and rural consumers, promoting sustainable practices and reducing carbon footprints." The company presently is engaged in developing and extending financial assistance

for setting up projects relating to new and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation. On Thursday, IREDA reported a 36 per cent rise in its profit after tax to Rs 387.75 crore in the September quarter from Rs 284.73 crore PAT in the same period of the preceding 2023-24 fiscal.

TCS stock falls two per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) fell 2 per cent on Friday after its September quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

The scrip of the Mumbai-based company slipped 1.93 per cent to close at Rs 4,146 apiece on the NSE.

On the BSE, stock of TCS went down by 1.84 per cent to end at Rs 4,150.60 per piece. In terms of volume, 57.59 lakh equity shares were traded on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and 2.86 lakh shares exchanged hands on the BSE during the day.

It emerged as the biggest laggard among the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty firms. TCS, the country's largest IT services firm, on Thursday reported a 4.99 per cent increase in September quarter net profit at Rs 11,909 crore, held back by a narrowing of profit margin.

Mobius Foundation advocates for Greening Education curriculums

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 6th International Conference on Sustainability Education (ICSE) was organised by the Mobius Foundation in collaboration with prominent global partners, concluded successfully with a resounding call to integrate sustainability into educational curriculums.

Held over two days, the conference drew more than 500 experts, educators, policymakers, and environmentalists from over 20 countries, focusing on the theme 'Greening Education for a Sustainable Future.' The discussions emphasised the growing need for sustainability to be a core part of education, promoting eco-conscious living and sustainable lifestyles. A significant takeaway from

the event was the endorsement of India's National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework 2023. They both seen as crucial frameworks for advancing sustainable education. This year's ICSE also highlighted the importance of 'green education' and 'green jobs' as key components of future sustainability efforts both in India and globally. Since its launch in 2019, ICSE has become a vital platform for addressing sustainability challenges within education systems worldwide.



SHUBHO BIJOYA DASHAMI!



WALKING THROUGH THE HEART OF THE FESTIVAL



In 'Chittaranjan Park', New Delhi, Durga Puja comes alive with families in festive attire, dhol beats echoing, and the aroma of delicious Bengali food, creating a vibrant celebration of community, says SAKSHI PRIYA

As the festive days of Durga Puja come to an end, we celebrate Vijaya Dashami with love and gratitude. Today, we say goodbye to Maa Durga until next year, thanking her for the blessings and protection she has showered upon us. On this special day, may you and your loved ones be blessed with joy, peace, and happiness. Shubho Bijoya Dashami to everyone!

In C.R. Park, located in South East Delhi, Durga Puja isn't just another festival - it's an emotion. Often called the mini Kolkata of Delhi, this bustling neighbourhood truly becomes the heart of the city during these days. Families eagerly wait the whole year for this, preparing for pandal hopping, relishing Bengali delicacies and being part of the vibrant celebrations that make this time so special.

with every new sight. The sound of dhols echoes through the air, and in the evenings, the Sandhya Aarti becomes a beautiful and calming experience for everyone watching. The streets of C.R. Park transform into a magical world, full of lights, music and devotion, and no matter how many pandals you visit, the excitement never dies down.

A FEAST FOR ALL

No Durga Puja is complete without indulging in the food. The food stalls lining the streets and pandals in C.R. Park offer everything from traditional Bengali dishes to popular street food that

everyone loves. You can try the famous Kolkata-style Puchka that bursts with flavour or enjoy classic rolls stuffed with spicy chicken or mutton.

For those who love fish, Bhetki Paturi - fish marinated in mustard and wrapped in banana leaves is a must-try. Fish Kebab and Chicken Shami Kebab are equally popular among non-vegetarians, while vegetarians can indulge in dishes like Hara Bhara Kebab or Channar Paturi (paneer wrapped in banana leaves). And for the main course, Golbari Murgi and Dhakai Mangsho (mutton curry) and Aloo Dum served with soft luchis are pure bliss.

The joy of Durga Puja isn't just in the rituals but also in sharing these meals with family and friends. Sitting down at a table with loved ones, eating delicious food and laughing together under the twinkling lights is a memory that stays in your heart long after the festival is over.

THE STREETS COME ALIVE

The streets of C.R. Park become a celebration in themselves. It's not just about the pandals - it's the whole neighbourhood that transforms. The lanes are filled with people walking from one pandal to another and families taking pictures to capture the beautiful moments. The colourful lights strung across buildings, the sound of Rabindra Sangeet floating through the air and the laughter of people enjoying the festival all come together to create a magical atmosphere. Even if you're not Bengali, it's hard not to get swept up in the energy of Durga Puja in C.R. Park. People from all over Delhi come here to experience the festival and there's a sense of community that goes beyond language and culture. It's a time when everyone comes together to



celebrate the victory of good over evil, the triumph of light over darkness.

THE CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

One of the most beautiful things about Durga Puja is how it brings people together to celebrate not just the goddess, but also the rich cultural heritage of Bengal. During the festival, the pandals host a variety of performances, from Purulia Chou to traditional Bengali folk music. These performances are not just entertaining, they're a way to connect with our roots and pass on our traditions to the next generation. Whether you're watching a soulful song performance or enjoying a dance recital, there's something about the atmosphere during Durga Puja that makes everything feel a little more special. The connection between the audience and the performers, the shared love for the culture and the joy of being part of something bigger than yourself, it's all part of what makes Durga Puja so meaningful.

THE BLESSINGS OF SANDHYA AARTI

As the sun begins to set, one of the most special moments of Durga Puja takes place, the Sandhya Aarti. The rhythmic beating of the drums, the chanting of mantras and the sight of people gathered in devotion create a moment of pure

peace. It's a time when everyone pauses to



reflect and give thanks to Maa Durga. The aarti fills the air with a sense of calm and the glow of the lamps as they're lit adds to the sacredness of the moment. It's in these quiet moments that you feel the true spirit of Durga Puja, the blessings of

the goddess, the love of family and friends and the joy of being part of something so special.

SAYING GOODBYE ON BIJOYA DASHAMI

As the festival comes to an end, there's a bittersweet feeling in the air. It's time to say goodbye to Maa Durga as she returns to her heavenly home. The day is marked with rituals like Sindur Khela, where married women apply vermilion to each other, symbolising the strength and joy of womanhood.

Then comes the Bijoy Yatra, the immersion procession, where the idols of Maa Durga are carried to the river or pond for their final journey. In C.R. Park, this procession is a deeply emotional experience. People gather to bid farewell, throwing flowers into the water and praying for the goddess's return next year. Though there are tears as we say goodbye, there's also a sense of hope. We know that this isn't a permanent goodbye. Maa Durga will return next year, bringing with her the same joy and blessings. And until then, the memories of this Durga Puja will keep our hearts full.

UNTIL NEXT YEAR...

As we celebrate the last day of Durga Puja and look forward to the coming year, let's carry the love, joy and blessings of the festival with us. The laughter, the shared meals, the excitement of pandal hopping, and the spiritual peace of the Sandhya Aarti - these moments are what make Durga Puja so special. So as we say goodbye to Maa Durga on this Bijoya Dashami, let's remember the joy of this festival and look forward to next year when we will once again gather with our loved ones to celebrate. Until then, may Maa Durga's blessings be with you and your family, bringing peace and happiness to your lives. Shubho Bijoya Dashami, Vijaya Dashami or Dussehra to all!

THE MAGIC OF PANDAL HOPPING

For many, Durga Puja is all about pandal hopping, going from one beautifully decorated pandal to another, admiring the stunning idols of Maa Durga. In C.R. Park, the streets come alive with people of all ages, dressed in their finest traditional clothes. The women in sarees, the men in kurtas and kids running around in excitement, it's a sight that fills your heart with joy. You can start your pandal journey at the Kali Mandir, where the peaceful surroundings set the mood for the rest of the day. Then comes the grand Durgotsab in GK II, which attracts thousands of visitors every year. From stunning decorations to cultural performances, the spirit of Durga Puja is alive and thriving here. Another must-visit spot is the Mela Ground, where families gather to enjoy not just the festivities but also the wide variety of food stalls that line the streets. Children dart between pandals, holding their parents' hands, their faces lighting up



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

SAVOUR THE SPIRIT OF NAVRATRI

Celebrate Navratri with AnnaMaya's special thali, offering a delightful mix of traditional fasting dishes with modern twists, perfect for the festive season, says SHARMILA CHAND

Navratri fasting goes in harmony with Satvik food. Feasting on traditional dishes completes the celebrations with joy and happiness. I head to indulge in an authentic experience. As the specially curated thali is placed before me, I am on an immersive culinary journey in the festive spirit. This year's thali at AnnaMaya is a testament to tradition and innovation, crafted by their renowned Maharaj, Mahendra Jakhar, who has been delighting guests with his unique Navratri offerings for the past nine years. Known for infusing modern twists into traditional fasting dishes, the chef continues to elevate the dining experience, ensuring both authenticity and indulgence during the sacred fasts. "The Navratri Thali has been thoughtfully curated to honour the spirit of devotion and celebration of Durga Puja and Dussehra, offering guests a culinary journey that reflects India's rich heritage. Every dish adheres to Navratri's dietary requirements while providing a vibrant and flavourful dining experience," he says.

He explains, "The highlights of the thali are Falahari Shakarkandi Ki Chaat, a refreshing blend of sweet potatoes with creamy yoghurt, 'Kacche Kele Ki Shammi', a delectable mix of raw banana, paired with potato, cardamom and green chilli, 'Pethe Ki Khati Meethi Sabzi', a tangy and sweet pumpkin preparation with tamarind and ghee, 'Makhana Moonghali Ki Kadhi', fox nuts and peanuts simmered in a lightly spiced yellow curry, and 'Samak Chawal', which is Barnyard millet cooked to perfection." The experience doesn't end with the savoury delights - the chefs have also curated divine Satvik desserts that perfectly conclude the meal, such as 'Makhana Kheer' and 'Badam Gulab Ki Barfi', a rich almond barfi infused with rose petals and milk. Each offering in the thali is crafted using high-quality, farm to table



Navratri, Maharaj Jakhar concludes, "For me, every year is a new opportunity to explore the rich diversity of India's rituals while honouring the purity and devotion of the festival. This year's thali brings together flavours and ingredients that not only nourish the body but also celebrate the cultural heritage we hold." Go ahead and celebrate the festival of purity and devotion at AnnaMaya, where each dish tells a story of cultural India and is prepared with the utmost care to nourish the body and soul. Priced at INR 2000 plus taxes per person, this Navratri Thali offers a harmonious blend of culture, nutrition, and indulgence. Available on all days from 3rd October to 12th October 2024, the Thali is served during both lunch and dinner.



RECIPE BY MAHARAJ JAKHAR SAMAK CHAWAL PULAO

Preparation and Cook Time: 25-35 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 60 gm barnyard millet (samak chawal)
- 20gm carrots
- 10gm beans
- 10gm cauliflower
- 15gm potatoes
- 10 gm fresh green peas
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 2 tsp cumin seed

- 1/2 cup yogurt
- 3gm green chilies
- 1 tsp fresh coriander
- 5 gm sendha namak (Himalayan rock salt)

METHOD

- Soak the barnyard millet in double the amount of water for 10 minutes.
- Peel and cut carrots, beans and potatoes into small diagonal pieces.
- Boil water in a pan, add Himalayan salt, and blanch potatoes, carrots, peas, and beans, separately for 2-3 minutes. Once they are boiled, rinse them in cold water.
- Heat sunflower oil in a vessel, add cumin seeds, and sauté.
- Add water and cook for a minute. Add the vegetables and salt. Cook for some time.
- Now add yogurt and cook for 5-10 minutes. Add water and boil it for some time.
- Add green chilies and millet
- Gently stir and reduce the heat. Cover and cook for some time.
- Once the millet is cooked, finish with the ghee. Serve hot.

Sharmila Chand is an Author and Consulting Editor who writes on Food, Travel, Lifestyle, Art & Culture



INDIA EYE SERIES SWEEP, WITH RUNS FROM OPENERS

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Despite its inconsequential nature, India will be eagerly pursuing the twin goals of a series sweep and monitoring the progress of impressive second-line players during the third and final T20 against Bangladesh here on Saturday. India have already bagged the series 2-0 after wins at Gwalior and New Delhi.

This Indian bunch under Gautam Gambhir has shown an insatiable hunger for victory, and doubters can glance back at its result-oriented approach during the rain-marred Kanpur Test against the same opposition a few days ago.

Hence, they are unlikely to show any laxity here too as a 3-0 sweep will sit nicely along with the 2-0 margin in the preceding Test series.

Beyond the obvious, India will also look to add new pieces to their white ball jigsaw puzzle ahead of some important assignments such as the Champions Trophy.

So, in a season teeming with showpiece events globally as well as bilaterally, it's critical for the team to have multiple backup options.

In that context, it's clear that Gambhir and his colleagues in the backroom have set in motion the process of finding able support cast to frontline players keeping in mind the long-term goals such as the ICC event next year.

Be it pacer Mayank Yadav or spinner Varun Chakravarthy, Gambhir wants to take a closer look at them and assess their readiness for the sterner assays ahead.

They haven't been disappointing either in this series. Mayank, who missed a lot of action since IPL 2024 due to an injury, bowled at over 150 clicks while Chakravarthy



returned with a three-wicket haul in his first outing in blue in three years at Gwalior.

The team management will also keep a close eye on the journey of Nitish Kumar Reddy, highly impressive in the Delhi T20 while smashing a 34-ball 74 and returning with a couple of wickets.

Opening woes Among these slivers of positives, the outings of Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma stick out like a sore thumb.

Samson has given a chance to open the innings in this series and it's a godsend in T20s, giving the batter a chance to exploit the six power play overs.

But the Kerala man has two modest outings to show so far - a 19-ball 29, a missed chance to make a fifty in a small chase of 128, and a 7-ball 10.

Samson will have to come up with something special here not to slip away from the eyesight of management, unless they want to give a go to Jitesh Sharma, the second wicketkeeper batter in the squad.

Similarly, the backroom staff would want a substantial outing from Abhishek who too

has produced lukewarm 15 and 16 in the last two matches. The failure of openers has put a bit of strain on the middle-order, as the hosts were 41 for three inside the power play segment before the middle-order bailed them out in the second T20.

Apart from that, the team think-tank will decide whether to hand a match to some other worthy names on the bench like leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi and all-rounder Harshit Rana.

As for Bangladesh, the visitors will strive to taste that elusive victory on this tour. For that, they will need a consistent effort, particularly from seniors like captain Najmul Hossain Shanto, Litton Das and Mustafizur Rahman who all have been disappointing till now.

SQUADS:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Rinku Singh, Hardik Pandya, Riyan Parag, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Ravi

Bishnoi, Varun Chakravarthy, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Mayank Yadav, Tilak Varma.

Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (Captain), Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon, Tawhid Hridoy, Mahmud Ullah, Litton Kumer Das, Jaker Ali Anik, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Shak Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Rakibul Hasan.

Slow start for Shubhankar in French Open golf

PTI ■ PARIS

Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma's patchy form continued as he carded a topsy-turvy one-over 72 in the opening round of the FedEx Open de France that left him tied 77th in the standings here.

Sharma struck four birdies against five bogeys. He was one of the early starters and stumbled to a bogey on the second hole but quickly made amends with two fine birdies on the fourth and the sixth.

On the back nine, he had a good start with a birdie to go to two-under. Then came three bogeys on the trot from 11th to the 13th and he was not able to recover



from that, managing a birdie-bogey finish in the last two holes. The cut looks likely at even par or better and Sharma will need a solid round to make the cut, after missing out last week. Joe Dean, Thorbjorn Olesen and Jesper Svensson shared the first-round lead after carding identical six-under 65s.

The trio made the most of soft

conditions at Le Golf National after almost 80 millimetres of rain fell on Wednesday, causing the ground staff to work through the night to make the course playable.

Englishman Dean, making his first appearance at this venue, posted the early clubhouse lead after carding four birdies and an eagle.

He was then joined at the top of the leaderboard by Olesen, who has fond memories of the Albatross Course as a member of Thomas Bjorn's victorious 2018 Ryder Cup side.

The Dane was one-under after playing the back-nine, but then reeled off four consecutive birdies from the first before adding a seventh gain of the day on the par-four seventh hole.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BARIPADA.
Tel. No.06792-254029, Fax No.06792-259464, E-Mail : eorwss_bpd@rediffmail.com , eorwss_bpd@ori.nic.in
Govt. of Odisha e-procurement Notice.

Bid Identification No. 11 of 2024-25, Date: 01.10.2024.

- Nature of the work:** Construction of Additional 05 nos Office Rooms along with 03 nos toilets in GF & FF of RWS&S Division, Baripada in the District of Mayurbhanj in Percentage rate contract. (01 package).
- Estimated Cost:** 38.77 lakhs
- Period of Completion:** (180) days.
- Date and time of availability of bid document in portal :** From 11 hour of 15.10.2024 to 28.10.2024 upto 17 hours.
- Last Date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal :** Both Technical & Financial Bid for each Package Upto 17 hours of 28.10.2024.
- Name and address of the O.I.T. :** Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Baripada.
- Date & Time for Opening of Tender:** 29.10.2024 at 11.00 A.M.
- Corrigendum and addendum if any shall only be published in the above website <http://www.tenderodisha.gov.in>**
- Further details can be seen from the e-procurement Portal: "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>"**

OIPR-25014/11/0005/2425 Executive Engineer
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