

OPINION 6

NATO'S EASTWARD MARCH
THREATENS ASIAN STABILITY

WORLD 9

DOCKWORKERS' PAUSE
STRIKE UNTIL JAN 15

CHANDIGARH, SATURDAY OCTOBER 5, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹2

Established 1865

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

NO. 1 IGA SWIATEK
PARTS WAYS WITH
COACH TOMASZ
12 SPORTS



Iran's Ali Khamenei adds fuel to West Asia fires



PTI/AP ■ TEHRAN/BEIRUT

Iran's supreme leader on Friday praised the country's recent missile strike on Israel and said it was ready to do it again if necessary, state TV reported. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in his first appearance as leader, in about five years, at Friday prayers, called the missile strike a "shining" job by Iran's armed forces.

On the other hand Israel carried out a series of massive airstrikes overnight, hitting suburbs of Beirut and cutting off the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria for tens of thousands of people fleeing Israeli bombardment.

Peace crucial for global economy: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday made oblique reference to the widening conflicts in the Middle East and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, saying the two regions were crucial for the global economy and energy security. His comments came amid fears of further escalation of conflict in the Middle East if Israel were to retaliate and attack Iran, potentially

its nuclear and oil facilities. "India is more than 85 per cent dependent on the import of crude oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel, and about half of its gas needs. A bulk of these come from the Middle East, and in scenarios of Israel-Iran getting into prolonged conflict, the supplies could be impacted," PM Modi said.



30 Naxalites killed in Bastar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ DANTEWADA/NEW DELHI

In the largest such operation in Chhattisgarh's 24-year history, at least 30 Maoists were gunned down in an encounter with security forces in Abujhmad, Dantewada district, on Friday.

The gunfight broke out at around 1 pm in the forest between Thulthuli and Nendur villages in Abujhmad on the Narayanpur-Dantewada inter-district border, when a joint team of security personnel was out on anti-Naxal operation.

According to the police, the Districts Reserve Guards (DRG) from Dantewada and Narayanpur, acting on specific intelligence inputs on the presence of Maoists in the area, set out on an operation from different police camps. The DRG is a specialised force that includes Maoists who have

surrendered. Along with the 30 bodies, a cache of weapons, including an AK-47 rifle and one SLR (self-loading rifle), were also recovered from the encounter spot.

Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai told the media that around 30 Naxalites were killed in the gun battle. Abujhmad straddles between Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, and is called the 'unknown hill' as the 6,000 sq km thick forest has not been surveyed since the British era.

The jungle is the epicentre of Maoist activities and about a dozen senior cadres of CPI (Maoist) are said to be still camping there.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai hailed the security forces for their operation and said the 'double engine' (BJP government in the state and at the Centre) is determined to eliminate the menace.

In a post on X, CM said, "There is news of 28 Naxalites gunned down in an encounter with security forces in the border area of Narayanpur-Dantewada districts. The great success achieved by the soldiers is commendable. I salute their courage and valour. Our fight to eliminate Naxalism will end only after reaching its conclusion. Our double engine government is determined for this. Eliminating Naxalism from the state is our aim."

According to police, with this latest encounter, 185 Maoists have been gunned down by the security forces in separate gun battles in the Bastar region comprising seven districts, including Dantewada and Narayanpur, so far this year.

The last big encounter from the state was reported on September 3, when nine Maoists, including six women, were killed on the border of Dantewada and Bijapur districts. On April 16, as many as 29 Naxalites, including some higher-ranking cadres, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Kanker district.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during his visit to Chhattisgarh in August had said India will be free from Left Wing Extremism (LWE) by March 2026, and a strong and ruthless strategy was required to launch the final assault against the menace.



Bizarre protest at Mantralaya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

In a dramatic development, tribal leaders, including Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, protesting against the demand to include the Dhangar community in the Scheduled Tribe list, on Friday jumped from the third floor of Maharashtra State secretariat Mantralaya on the safety net just a floor below. The protestors said they did this act for not getting appointment with Chief Minister. No injuries were reported in the incident that saw tense moments unfolding at the six-storey Mantralaya complex. The incident occurred around 12.40 pm.

Zirwal, his fellow Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) legislator Kiran Lahamate and BJP tribal MP Hemant Savara were among those who jumped from the third floor onto the safety net installed on the second floor, a precaution taken in response to previous suicide attempts at the site.

PUNE HORROR College student gangraped

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ PUNE/MUMBAI

A 21-year-old woman was gang-raped by three unidentified men. The accused attacked the woman after tying her male friend to a tree in the desolate Bopdev Ghat area in the outskirts of Pune late on Thursday night.

The victim, said to be a college student hailing from Gujarat, is being treated at the State-run Sassoon General Hospital in Pune.

The attack took place around 11 pm in the poorly lit and secluded area of Bopdev Ghat. The police came to know about the incident around 5 am on Friday.

With the incident having sparked a major public uproar in Pune, the local police swiftly arrested one person, a 36-year-old resident from Pune's Kondhwa area, in connection with the incident and launched a hunt for the two remaining suspects.

The Pune police have formed 10 teams from the Crime and Detection branches to look out for the two remaining suspects.



Friday evening, the police released the sketches of two of the three suspects involved in the alleged gang-rape. The sketches were drawn on the basis of a statement made by the victim girl to the police at the hospital.

Talking to media persons, Pune's Additional Commissioner of Police Ranjan Kumar Sharma said, "As per preliminary details, the woman and her male friend had gone to the Bopdev Ghat area on late Thursday night where three unidentified persons allegedly raped her".

The preliminary investigations have revealed that three suspects, posing as activists, approached the victim and her friend in a car. They asked the couple what they were

doing in that "prohibited" area. They also took photographs of the couple.

After threatening them with dire consequences, one of the suspects forced the girl into a car. They tied the young man to a tree, and took turns to rape the young woman inside the car. The suspects also assaulted the victim's friend before fleeing the crime scene.

The injured young man managed to take the victim to the Sassoon General Hospital for treatment. A complaint was lodged with the Kondhwa police Station at around 5 am on Friday. Happening as it did in the run-up to the State Assembly polls, the incident has snowballed into a political controversy.

Court not to be used as political battleground: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday set up a five-member Special Investigation Team under supervision of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director to probe into the allegations of use of animal fat in making Tirupati laddus. A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) will comprise two officials each from the CBI and the Andhra Pradesh Police besides a senior Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) official.

"We clarify that we will not permit the court to be used as a political battleground. However, in order to assuage the feelings of crores of people, we find that the investigation should be conducted by an independent SIT consisting of representatives of the state police, the CBI and a representative of the FSSAI," the Bench said.

"We don't want this to be



turned into a political drama. There are sentiments of crores of people throughout the world," Judges observed during the hearing. The order was on the PILs filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam Board (TTD) former Chairman YV Subba Reddy asking for a court monitored probe on the allegations by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. The CM had accused the former regime led by Jagan Mohan Reddy for the adulterated ghee used in making of laddus.

WINGS OF GLORY



People watch the final rehearsal of Indian Air Force (IAF) aircrafts ahead of its 92nd anniversary celebrations, in Chennai



Historic Kashmere Gate is now a traffic battlefield

This stretch is notorious for being a bottleneck 24x7

BY RAJESH KUMAR

Situated close to Civil Lines, where residences of the Chief Minister, Lieutenant Governor and Delhi Cabinet ministers are located, Kashmere Gate has heavy traffic congestion daily. This stretch is notorious for being a traffic bottleneck 24x7.

Lala Hardev Marg is the main road in front of Kashmere Gate metro station and the Inter State Bus Terminal (ISBT) where the flyover coming from East Delhi areas, such as Shahdara and Dilshad Garden, merges. Netaji Subhash Marg connecting Kashmere Gate to Chandni Chowk and Daryaganj always choked due to encroachments and narrow lanes.

Another major congestion point on the stretch comes between ISBT Kashmere Gate and the Chandni

Ram Akhara junction. Nityanand Marg stretch connecting Tis Hazari court is another bottleneck here. Interestingly, as the number of vehicles on roads surrounding Kashmere Gate has increased manifold, the condition of roads and traffic management remains the same.

In 2018, Delhi traffic police had identified the area around Kashmere Gate as an 'accident-prone' zone due to heavy pedestrian movement and traffic congestion. The situation has worsened since 2018. The authorities seem to be clueless here. The area has illegal parking lots, which have an unregulated private vehicle flow, huge encroachments, that add chaos to the already heavy volume of traffic on the roads.

Rajni Kant Verma, former Transport Secretary of Delhi



A Traffic Jam Vehicles move on road at isbt kashmiri gate

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

government, said that traffic congestion is the major problem at Kashmere Gate, due to heavy traffic and illegal parking of auto rickshaws and buses. "Besides,

there are also encroachments surrounding the ISBT Kashmere Gate Metro station, leading to traffic jams here", he said. According to Verma, the problem

will be solved if encroachment is removed and regulate the auto rickshaw and private vehicles. According to transport department's officials, the Delhi

government has taken steps to reduce traffic congestion in the vicinity of the ISBTs by implementing new policies. Under it, parking and bus-bay usage fees for private and govt interstate buses will now be the same to discourage private buses from parking illegally on the roadside which congests traffic.

Furthermore, buses will be assigned a fixed parking time slot of 25 minutes at a predetermined rate. If a bus exceeds this allotted time, additional charges will be levied. To ensure compliance, buses without FasTags will not be permitted to enter the terminal. Delhi has three ISBTs - at Kashmere Gate, Anand Vihar and Sarai Kale Khan.

Raj Niwas officials said that traffic congestion outside the ISBTs is visibly lower now, and a report from the traffic police has

also been sought to ascertain the impact of reduced turnaround timings on traffic and pedestrian movement outside the ISBTs. At ISBT Kashmere Gate, the average turnaround time has dropped from 45 minutes in August to 29 minutes after the new order, averaging 19 minutes since then. The number of buses to and from the terminal was 1,373 per day on average in August and is now 1,644 per day. Notably, the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) has proposed several long-term modifications to the traffic diversion plan to decongest the area around Kashmere Gate Interstate Bus Terminus (ISBT). The CRRI has now suggested reducing the width of the footpath under Yudhishir Setu, which will create more space for buses.

PUBLIC NOTICE



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank... A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

Table with 7 columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor (Loan Account Number) & Address, Description of Secured Asset to be enforced, Date of Notice sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice, NPA Date. Contains 46 entries of defaulted borrowers and their secured assets.

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower(s) and/or guarantor(s) (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Date: October 05, 2024. Place: Chandigarh (Punjab)

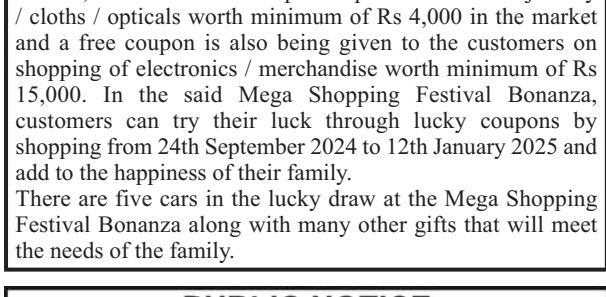
Sincerely, Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.



Tree Plantation Drive and Quality Connect By BIS at M/s Ralson Tyres Ltd, Ludhiana To mark the World Standards Day 2024, Bureau of Indian Standards, Chandigarh Branch Office organised Industry Quality Connect at M/s Ralson Tyres on 1st October 2024...



Rajasthan's Minister of State for Home Affairs, Animal Husbandry, Dairy, and Fisheries, Jawahar Singh Bedham, visited Jan Seva Hospital as part of the 'Seva Pakhwada' being celebrated in honor of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday...



Sector -35 C of Inner Market In Start Happened Mega Shopping Festival Bonanza Shardiya Navratri, the festival of power and meditation, started with full enthusiasm on Thursday in the Inner Market of Sector 35 C for the first time with the Mega Shopping Festival Bonanza...

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Rajinder Pal Singh Village Kallowal, Teh Dasuya, Distt Hoshiarpur Punjab. I completely condemn the discrimination being done by the Government of India and the Government of Punjab against the Sikhs...

Table for Punjab National Bank notice with columns: Sr. locker number, Name of the Locker Holder, Address of the locker holder as per Branch Records. Lists 4 lockers.

This Notice is hereby given to the locker hirers that if all the overdue rent (with arrears and penalty, if any) in above mentioned lockers with us is not received by the bank within three months of this notice, the said locker will be Breake-Open at the risk and cost of the respective locker hirer in accordance with the Clause 3.3 of the Rent Deed and the bank will realize its dues by public or private sale of a part or the whole of the contents of the locker...



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

How secular is India?

As India grapples with internal strife and external criticism, the debate surrounding its commitment to secularism intensifies

India, a nation characterised by its rich tapestry of religious diversity, has long championed the values of secularism and pluralism. However, the landscape of religious freedom in the country has come under scrutiny, particularly with the recent designation by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) of India as a "Country of Particular Concern." This designation has ignited a contentious debate, leading to a sharp rebuke from the Indian government, which labeled the USCIRF a "biased organisation with a political agenda." In its 2024 report, the USCIRF highlighted alarming trends regarding religious freedom in India. The commission reported instances of violence against individuals based on their religious identity, citing cases of killings, beatings and lynchings carried out by vigilante groups. It also noted the arbitrary arrests of religious leaders and the demolition of homes and places of worship, characterising these actions as severe violations of religious freedom. The report further pointed to changes



in India's legal framework that, according to the USCIRF, target and disenfranchise religious minorities. These changes include the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the implementation of a uniform civil code. Such measures, the USCIRF argues, contribute to a climate of fear and marginalisation for non-Hindu communities. In response to the USCIRF's assertions, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs firmly rejected the report. Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the commission's narrative as a "motivated" misrepresentation of facts aimed at maligning India's image on the global stage. The ministry's statement emphasised that the USCIRF's reporting is unscientific and driven by an agenda that fails to reflect the realities of India's democracy.

It is true that no external agency or country has right to give us lessons in religious freedom and tolerance as we have practiced it since ancient times. Moreover, they have skeletons in their own cupboard which they would better take care first. The trigger happy policemen in the US don't think twice before shooting a black guy for not pulling over his car. But having said that it is time for us to reflect and introspect. To be fair, religious freedom has eroded in the recent years. There have been lynching incidents and that is not a made up thing. We may say that they are isolated incidents but they are enough to send a message to the community. Moreover, the attacks on churches and other religious places have been reported from across the country all this while the police looked the other way or just took mild action. It is time to ensure one and all that India is safe as it has been for ages for people of all religions and castes. And India as a State does not discriminate people for the religion they practice or food they eat. The concerns raised by the USCIRF may be exaggerated and they may make isolated incidents look mainstream but the government must maintain zero tolerance for such incidents so that no outside agency dare raise a pointing figure at us.

PICTALK



A child looks at dolls depicting scenes from Ramayana during the Dussehra Doll festival, in Bengaluru

Double-edged sword of social media: Impact on relationships

While it offers the promise of community and instant communication, the allure of curated perfection can lead to unrealistic expectations and strain relationships

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, connecting people from all corners of the globe. While it offers numerous benefits, such as facilitating communication and fostering community, it also poses significant challenges to relationships and mental health.



can create a breeding ground for cyberbullying, harassment and online infidelity. These behaviours can erode trust, damage relationships and have a devastating impact on mental health. Furthermore, the constant pressure to be online and connected can lead to feelings of anxiety and stress. The fear of missing out (FOMO) can drive individuals to spend excessive amounts of time scrolling through social media feeds, neglecting their relationships and other important aspects of their lives. This can lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness and low self-esteem. The impact of social media on mental health can be particularly severe for young people, who are often heavy users of these platforms. Studies have shown that excessive social media use can be linked to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts. This is in part due to the exposure to negative content, such as cyberbullying and hate speech, as well as

NATO's eastward march threatens Asian stability



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

For Asia, aligning with NATO's expansionist policies risks destabilising the region and eroding cultural values of peace and coexistence

NATO's expansion into Asia poses a monumental danger that threatens not only regional stability but also the core values of peace and coexistence that many Asian countries uphold. The recent change in NATO leadership, with Mark Rutte taking the helm, may suggest a potential for new strategies, but the underlying policies and militaristic attitudes of the alliance remain unchanged. The illusion of progress is merely that—an illusion—while NATO's intentions to maintain a prolonged battlefield in Ukraine serve as a reflection of its true objectives. As observed, the US weapons sales surged dramatically in 2023, reaching a record total of \$238 billion as the demand for arms skyrocketed due to the ongoing conflict. Profiting from the sale of weapons on one hand and exploiting the suffering of unarmed civilians across Europe and West Asia is becoming increasingly reprehensible. This reflects a strategic mindset where war is not an unfortunate circumstance but an industry. This is, however, not a new phenomenon. This is how we "civilisations" behave. The history of military alliances has consistently illustrated a paradoxical truth: nations often proclaim peace while simultaneously preparing for war and engaging in it.

The recent rise of Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who has advocated for an 'Asian NATO,' is nothing but a sign of a looming storm ahead. Ishiba's call for deeper ties among Asian nations and the establishment of a NATO-like grouping echoes sentiments that prioritise militarisation over diplomacy. This vision stands in stark contrast to the scepticism expressed by India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who highlighted India's unique historical position and its reluctance to embrace the treaty alliances that such a framework would entail. Ishiba's proposition to station Japanese troops on the US soil and share control of nuclear weapons highlights the extreme lengths to which some leaders are willing to go in the name of security, yet it has not received significant backing from



the US administration, signalling the complexities and limitations of this vision. While NATO presents itself as a bastion of defence, its actions betray a far more sinister agenda.

The alliance has not only prolonged conflicts but has also turned them into battlegrounds for competing ideologies and geopolitical power plays. This relentless devastation not only lays waste to nations but also serves the insatiable appetites of the arms industry, which reaps substantial profits from the chaos of ongoing warfare. Evidence reveals that the US government perceives conflicts as lucrative ventures rather than humanitarian crises. Nations that align themselves with NATO risk becoming collateral damage in a power struggle that has little regard for their sovereignty or cultural identity. The allure of NATO's promises can be enticing, but history teaches us that aligning with powerful military alliances often leads to disastrous outcomes. Karl Marx posited that "history repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce." NATO's past interventions, from the Balkans to Afghanistan, and today's Ukraine showcase a pattern of destruction that is all too familiar. The question remains: will Asia fall into this trap once again, sacrificing its autonomy



THE HISTORY OF MILITARY ALLIANCES HAS CONSISTENTLY ILLUSTRATED A PARADOXICAL TRUTH: NATIONS OFTEN PROCLAIM PEACE WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY PREPARING FOR WAR AND ENGAGING IN IT

for the sake of Western agendas? Moreover, the political discourse surrounding NATO often ignores the implications of its militarisation on social stability and development. This is particularly relevant as Asian nations find themselves increasingly pressured to align with NATO's militaristic strategies. The focus on military expenditure detracts from addressing pressing social issues, economic development, and environmental sustainability. The growing arms race in Asia, driven by NATO's expansion, threatens to spark regional conflict with catastrophic consequences, echoing the historical precedent set before World War I.

The belief that increased military presence fosters stability is fundamentally flawed, often leading to insecurity and competition as nations rush to arm themselves against perceived threats. This environment heightens the risk of miscalculations and unintended escalations, with incalculable costs in human lives and economic stability. Additionally, engagement in militaristic alliances under NATO's banner risks placing Asian nations in a moral quagmire, contradicting the region's philosophies that prioritise peace, harmony, and cooperation, as espoused by Confucianism, Hinduism, Islamism, and Buddhism. The very qualities that were undermined by colonialism, after

years of suffering and the sacrifices of millions, must be protected and promoted, as aligning with NATO may ultimately undermine these cultural values in favour of a destructive path centred on military solutions.

Moreover, the consequences of such an alignment are not limited to immediate military conflicts. Long-term geopolitical ramifications could destabilise the entire region, further entrenching power struggles that lead to conflict. Embracing a militaristic alliance may offer a temporary illusion of security but ultimately leads to self-inflicted wounds—akin to harakiri. The path toward a more peaceful and stable future lies not in militarisation but in diplomacy, cooperation, and mutual respect. Instead of succumbing to the pressures of NATO's warmongering agenda, Asian countries should seek to forge their paths, grounded in their cultural philosophies and values that prioritise harmony and coexistence. The rhetoric of security and defence masks a more insidious agenda—one driven by the military-industrial complex that thrives on conflict and arms sales. For Asian nations, the choice to align with NATO is a perilous one, fraught with the potential for self-destruction.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TEN YEARS OF SWACHH BHARAT

Madam — Swachh Bharat Mission, one of the first programmes announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he took office in 2014, completes 10 years on October 2. The aim was to equip all households with individual toilets, ensure communities have cluster toilets to eradicate the open defecation system followed in villages, and ensure that schools and anganwadi toilets have waste management systems for both solid waste and liquid waste. To achieve this, the government's assistance was increased from Rs 10000 to Rs 12000 under the SBM scheme. Amazingly, over 10 million toilets have been constructed in rural households in 6 lakh villages till date, benefiting 50 million people, and many of these villages have been designated as open-defecation-free, which is essential for a healthy environment. Before launching SBM, unsafe sanitation caused an estimated 199 million cases of diarrhoea annually, with 3 lakh deaths. Also, a UNICEF report indicates that women in Indian villages feel safer after the installation of toilets in rural households. Also in villages declared ODF, the risk of groundwater contamination due to human waste has been reduced a lot. Though villages benefitted a lot due to the Swachh Bharat Mission, a survey has emphasised the urgent need for action against plastic pollution and air pollution in rural and urban lands. Motivating the communities against air pollution and water pollution for adopting a proper sanitation model for a healthy life is the urgent need of the hour.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

LAWRENCE'S FUNERAL CONTROVERSY

Madam—Apropos of the story 'The battle over CPI (M) leader M M Lawrence's final journey', October 3, 2024. The Communists globally are political chameleons with unequal rules for the comrades. Most of the Communists,

Indian PhD system needs revamp



The Indian education system, especially the higher and research-oriented education system, has gone through so many structural changes from the past till now. But the research-oriented PhD programme still lacks somewhere to provide ease to the people vis-à-vis their admission to the doctoral program. There exist some of the undoubted systematic flaws in the UGC-NET examination score as a mandatory requisite

for taking admission in a PhD. The research work and PhD are all about deep understanding instead of memory strength of the very field of students' specialisation and interest area, in which root learning from UGC-NET could merely assist.

Already, the PhD course demands a minimum of a five-year time period for its completion, and mandating a UGC NET score as a prerequisite to taking admission in a PhD only extends the time period for aspirants interested in becoming research scholars. UGC needs to make either systematic changes in its examination pattern or needs to enhance critical thinking and innovative thinking tests for the students interested in doing PhDs from the reputed academic institutions of India. Otherwise, India will continue to bear the cost of losing some fantastic minds to non-Indian universities that offer research ease, especially at the time of admission.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

though they claim to be non-believers in God in public, may be passionate believers in God in private. The unfortunate Lawrence episode points to the chaos the Communist ideology can create in a Communist family by vertically dividing its members into two warring factions. It also shows that even the deceased Communist may not be allowed to rest in peace by the comrades merely to accommodate their political ideology, what may be to the grieving family. Once an individual is bitten by the Communist ideology, there is no escape from it, even if she/he desires to change his ideology after being convinced about the utopian Communist goals. If the die-hard comrades learn a lesson or two from the unfortunate Lawrence episode and the Party's insensitive handling of the entire episode, it would be better for the Comrades.

Bichu Muttathara | Pune

STARVATION AMID GROWTH

Madam — India is the fifth-largest economy in the world. At the same time,

the Global Hunger Index-2023 ranked India 111th out of 125 countries, with the level of hunger falling in the serious category. Though the Union government had rejected this index as erroneous, it cannot be rejected altogether, as evidently West Bengal agricultural migrant labourer Samar Khan, 35, died of starvation in Chennai as he reportedly did not have money to buy food. He was admitted to Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital after he collapsed owing to starvation. He had not eaten for six days.

His colleague, another agricultural labourer, Satya Pundit is still in the hospital. Even having a buffer stock; people dying of starvation is a slur on the country, especially when we are talking of the fifth largest economy in the world. Besides, hollow slogans of the government that nobody will be allowed to die of starvation are belied.

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF INTELLIGENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

The human mind should be open to positivity and confidence, to harness intelligence and knowledge



RAVI VALLURI

Two thousand five hundred years ago, a prince from the formidable Sakya dynasty, in the quest for reality and truth, discarded his monarchical apparel to adorn ochre robes and went on to become Gautama the monk. He and his mind incessantly wandered till the attainment of truth and insight. Upon attaining enlightenment after performing arduous tapas, Gautama the monk became Buddha the Enlightened and Compassionate One. The mind of the prince turned Bhikkhu had become hollow and empty from within and without realise the pristine verisimilitude. There is also the story of Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. Once a young evangelist who cast away the traditions and rituals of the Catholic order, only to serve the poor and infirm (particularly those afflicted by leprosy), she was first to become a sister, then Mother Teresa, after rendering selfless yeoman service to the populace of Kolkata (then Calcutta) and humanity at large. She was the fourth Indian to be canonised on September 4, 2016, and was set in stone as St Teresa of Calcutta by Pope Francis for the phenomenal work and the miracles that have taken place. Buddha and St Teresa were not confined to monasteries and convents respectively to live their lives as ascetics in contemplation, meditation, chastity and poverty. Both were prototypical individuals who transcended boundaries to carve a niche for themselves by providing an alternative ideology.

Meanwhile, way back in the year 1943 a young Swedish national, Ingvar Kampard set up a company called IKEA. IKEA is an acronym for Ingvar Kampard Elmtaryd at Agunnaryd. Today it is one of the largest ready-to-assemble furniture companies in the world. These are individuals, who with their mettlesome moves hold the ordinary traveller's gaze in askance. What differentiates them from the rest of the pack? It is not the opaci-



ty of their thought process, but looking for out-of-the-box solutions. While IKEA sets up furniture in our households, and Jio and WhatsApp provide the necessary seamless connectivity in communication, it is intriguing to decipher the letters of the acronym IKW.

I stand for Intelligence, K signifies Knowledge and W represents Wisdom. Intelligence, Knowledge, and Wisdom need to be harnessed by humans in ample measure to metamorphose our minds and lives to become true achievers. In the wired world today, we are girdled with far superior technology in comparison to a few decades ago and are surrounded by a plethora of gizmos at our disposal. The product and service should necessarily be flexible, adaptable, and positively meant for the public good. Only in such a scenario will the longevity of the article in question be ensured and assured.

Siddhartha with his superior intelligence grasped that he was encumbered by misery and suffering; he gained knowledge through the various techniques of pranayama and meditation and ultimately wisdom dawned on him in the form of enlightenment. Today a seeker without living in the monastic order, living like any ordinary individual could attain and experience bliss and enlightenment by practising the technique of Vipassana.

Similarly, in the Art of Living, through the regular practice of the Sudarshan Kriya, a seeker can live in the present moment by banishing antipathetic thoughts. St. Teresa of Kolkata too possessed enormous intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom to establish the order of the Missionaries of Charity to serve the distressed sections of humanity. The human mind should be developed into a sacred place, which is malleable to embrace positivity and confidence to harness the skills of intelligence and knowledge so that the Gods bestow us with a bounty of wisdom.

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

Bangladesh's interim Govt's crackdown on secularists



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Shahriar Kabir's arrest, amid controversial charges linked to his long-standing fight for secularism reflects Bangladesh fundamentalists working behind the interim government



It is important to examine in some detail Shahriar Kabir's arrest in Dhaka on September 17, 2024, and the subsequent related developments, to understand the forces driving Bangladesh's interim government and direction in which it is taking the country. To start with, one must briefly look at who Kabir is. Author, journalist, film-maker and an internationally respected champion of human rights, secularism and democracy, he has also been at the forefront of the struggle to bring to justice those who had collaborated with the Pakistanis during Bangladesh's liberation war of 1971 and were their accomplices in the perpetration of crimes against humanity including mass murder and rape. He played an important role in the formation of the Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee (Committee for the Uprootment of the Killers and Collaborators of Seventy-One) under the leadership of Jahanara Imam whose husband and one of whose sons were savagely killed by the Pakistanis in 1971. Kabir, who subsequently became the organisation's president, was, at the time of his arrest, president of its advisory committee. Second, one needs to look at the circumstances of his arrest, the charges against him and his accusers and their ties with the interim government. According to a report in The Dhaka Tribune, datelined September 17, 2024 and carried under the heading "Shahriar Kabir arrested in Dhaka," Mufti Harun Izhar Chowdhury, joint secretary of the Hefazat-e-Islam (Hefazat), filed, on August 20, 2024, a complaint with the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Dhaka, against Sheikh Hasina and 23 others—one of them being Kabir—accusing them of crimes against humanity and mass murder in connection with a rally by Hefazat on May 5, 2013. Further, according to a report in The Daily Star, datelined September 18, 2024, and carried under the heading "Shahriar Kabir placed on 7-day remand", Kabir, along with Mozammel Babu, was produced before the court with a 10-day remand plea by the police, in a case concerning the death of a domestic help, Liza Akter, during the quota



TO START WITH, ONE MUST BRIEFLY LOOK AT WHO KABIR IS. AUTHOR, JOURNALIST, FILM-MAKER AND AN INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED CHAMPION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SECULARISM AND DEMOCRACY

reform protests. The report cited a sub-inspector of police present in the court as saying that Dhaka's Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Md Sanaullah, passed the orders remanding him custody for seven days.

A report datelined September 17, 2024, and published in *Prothom Alo* English under the heading, "Shahriar Kabir, Nurul Islam arrested," cited sources as saying that Kabir was an accused in several murder cases filed with Jatrabari and other police stations in Dhaka. According to information available with this writer, seven murder cases have so far been levelled against him besides the one the ICT. The levelling of murder charges against a person of Kabir's stature is not only laughable but suggests, as in a number of other cases, planned and coordinated behind-the-scenes effort.

As seen, the case before the ICT has been filed by Mufti Harun Izhar Chowdhury, joint secretary of the Hefazat-e-Islam (Hefazat) accusing Sheikh Hasina and 23 others, including Kabir, of crimes against humanity and mass murder in connection with a rally by Hefazat on May 5, 2013.

According to a report in The Dhaka Tribune (August 19, 2024) under the heading "Hefazat rally in Shapla Chattar: Odhikar publishes list of killed people," Odhikar, a human rights organisation, published on Monday (August 19) a list of people allegedly killed during the Awami League-led government's crackdown on the Hefazat's rally on May 5-6, 2013, at Shapla Chattar in Dhaka. The list, originally published in 2013, had led to action against the organisation by the Awami League government.

Citing persecution by the latter government, Odhikar, according to the

report, urged the interim government to immediately form an independent inquiry commission headed by a Supreme Court judge and conduct an impartial investigation into the extrajudicial killings committed on May 5 and 6 of 2013 and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The *Dhaka Tribune* report did not mention whether Odhikar had named the perpetrators. As seen above, Hefazat's complaint was filed on August 20, 2024, the day after Odhikar's post. Three questions arise here. What was the number of people killed? Was the rally peaceful?

What was the context in which it was held and what were the Hefazat's demands? Against the Odhikar's figures, a BBC report, datelined May 6, 2024, stated that at least 27 persons had been killed and dozens hurt in the clashes. It also said that at least two of the dead were policemen. Also, the fact that the police, according to the report, "used stun grenades and rubber bullets" to disperse the protestors indicates an effort to keep the casualties to minimum.

The rally was extremely violent. The report cites one witness as saying that the demonstrators "were very aggressive, some people were throwing stones and the situation quickly become violent... the police had no option but to respond". The witness further told the BBC, "Rioters vandalised markets and set fire to bookshops where the Holy Koran is sold. Thousands of Koran and religious books burned. They also attacked the ruling party's political office and national mosque."

The Hefazat's 13-point programme includes the enactment of an anti-blasphemy law with provision for death penalty, exemplary punishment to all bloggers and others who "insult Islam," cancellation of

Bangladesh's policy for women's development, bans on the erection of sculptures in public places, the mixing of men and women in public, candlelight vigils, and "shameless behaviour and dresses," besides declaring Ahmadiyas as "non-Muslims." Nadia Sarmin, covering its rally for ETV, was mercilessly beaten for daring to be a woman "in a men only" event. Grievously injured, she was rescued by other journalists.

It is not surprising if all this reminds one of the Taliban's agenda, a DW report (May 9, 2013) by Graham Lucas under the heading "Bangladesh Chaos," cited Maulana Habibur Rahman, one of the Hefazat leaders, as boasting of his role in the 1980s Afghan war and his support to the former al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

The interim government has close and warm relations with the Hefazat. It has lifted the ban on the organisation. The advisor for religious affairs, AFM Khalid Hossain, is the latter's Nayeb-e-Amir. Chief Advisor Mohammad Yunus had a long and cordial meeting on August 31, 2024, with Mamunul Haque, the organisations head. The Hefazat is holding rallies and processions all over the country.

It is in this context that one has to see Shahriar Kabir's arrest and continued detention, in the teeth of demands for his release by international human rights activists and organisations.

The idea is to send a clear message to people in Bangladesh: do not champion secular democracy and humanism and oppose Islamic fundamentalism. If we can send Shahriar Kabir to jail, we can also send you there.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer; views expressed are personal)

Legal tussles over EWS quota violations undermine RTE Act in Delhi

The violation of the Economically Weaker Section quota under the Right to Education Act continues to plague India's education system

The consistent violation of the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota under the Right to Education (RTE) Act has become a troubling issue across India, particularly in major cities like Delhi. Despite clear legal mandates, several private schools continue to deny admissions to children who rightfully qualify under this provision, creating a barrier to equal educational opportunities for underprivileged communities.

Recent legal proceedings in the Delhi High Court have once again brought this issue to the forefront, highlighting the need for stricter enforcement of the law to safeguard the rights of EWS students. A case in point is Master Ayan



B K JHA

Saifi, a 4-year-old son of Shahid who had been allotted a seat through a computerised draw of lots conducted by Delhi's Directorate of Education (DoE) for the academic year 2024-25. But, a leading private Senior Secondary School in Rohini denied the admission and that ensued a legal tussle. Shahid approached to Delhi

High Court with his plight and sought justice. It is misconception that lawyers are reluctant to take up such cases especially for people coming from lower strata of society. Credit goes to a young Delhi lawyer Aman Sharma who took up the case for the kid and secured provisional admission for Ayan Saifi to the school. The Delhi High Court, under the guidance of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma, acknowledged the violation of the RTE Act and in an interim order granted provisional admission to the child, emphasising the school's legal obligation to comply with the EWS quota. The RTE Act 2009 is a landmark legislation that ensures free and compulso-

ry education for all children aged 6 to 14. One of its key provisions mandates that 25 per cent of seats in private unaided schools be reserved for children from EWS and disadvantaged groups (DG). This quota is intended to promote inclusive education and bridge the gap between socio-economic disparities. However, despite the importance of this provision, its implementation has been met with resistance from many private schools, not only in Delhi but schools across the country. The refusal of admission highlights the ongoing challenge in enforcing this law. It violates a child's fundamental right to education under Article 21-A of the Constitution. "Denying chil-



den from economically weaker sections the education they are entitled to, despite a confirmed allotment, not only goes against the spirit of the Right to Education Act but also creates unnecessary hurdles for families already facing socio-economic challenges," argues advocate Sharma. A pattern of non-compliance

can easily be seen and unfortunately, it has become pervasive across private educational institutions. Ayan's case is not an isolated incident. Private schools in Delhi have repeatedly been found guilty of disregarding the EWS quota, prompting legal battles that seek to restore the rightful educational opportunities for

underprivileged children. In March 2024, the Delhi High Court revised the income threshold for EWS admissions, reinforced eligibility criteria and offered clearer guidance. However, schools have continued to evade their responsibilities. A similar ruling in 2022 in the case of Rameshwar Jha v. Principal Richmond Global School set a precedent for punitive action against schools that refuse EWS admissions.

The Delhi High Court had then warned that schools could face severe consequences under the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, for non-compliance with the RTE Act. Yet, schools still engage in tactics that delay or deny admission to EWS

students, forcing families to take the matter to court. The larger issue at hand is the erosion of trust in educational institutions and the judiciary's role in upholding constitutional rights. Advocate Sharma urges the Directorate of Education (DoE) and the Judiciary to take stringent actions against schools that defy the RTE Act, calling for penalties and stricter enforcement measures.

It becomes imperative for policymakers, educators, and civil society to collaborate in upholding the principles of the RTE Act and to work towards a more inclusive education system.

(Author is a senior journalist; Views expressed are personal)

PUBLIC NOTICE



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005

The following borrower(s) has/has defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/has been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA).

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address, Description of Secured Asset to be enforced, Date of Notice sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice, NPA Date. Rows 1-35.

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address, Description of Secured Asset to be enforced, Date of Notice sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice, NPA Date. Rows 36-68.

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower/s and/or guarantor/s (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Sincerely, Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

Dockworkers' pause strike until Jan 15

Detroit (AP): Some 45,000 dockworkers at East and Gulf coast ports are returning to work after their union reached a deal to suspend a strike that could have caused shortages and higher prices if it had dragged on.

Shortages could have driven up prices and reignited inflation. The union went on strike early Tuesday after its contract expired in a dispute over pay and the automation of tasks at 36 ports stretching from Maine to Texas.

Boston College, said the agreement to halt the strike means that the two sides are close to a final deal. "I'm sure that if they weren't going anywhere they wouldn't have suspended (the strike)," he said.

Melania says she supports abortion rights, putting her at odds with GOP

Melania Trump revealed her support for abortion rights on Thursday, ahead of the release of her upcoming memoir, exposing a stark contrast with her husband, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, on the crucial election issue.

individual freedom. What does 'my body, my choice' really mean? The video appears to confirm excerpts of her self-titled memoir reported by The Guardian on Wednesday.

Nobel Prizes to be announced next week

Wars, a refugee crisis, famine and artificial intelligence could all be recognised when Nobel Prize announcements begin next week under a shroud of violence.

Perhaps it would be right to draw attention to that by withholding the peace prize this year." Withholding the Nobel

Peace is not new. It has been suspended 19 times in the past, including during the world wars. The last time it was not awarded was in 1972.

UJJAIN SMART CITY LIMITED
Mela Office, Kothi Road, Ujjain (M.P.) 456001 Ph. 0734-2525856
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
No. USCL/352 Tender ID: 2024_UAD_374105_1 Dated 04.10.2024

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
LOST & FOUND
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Vinod Kumar Vats S/o Sh R.D. Sharma, H no. 235, Nimri Colony, Ashok Vihar, Delhi-52, hereby declare that my original documents Diploma of A. Pharma including its mark sheet having Roll No. 5276 and original high school certificate including mark sheet having Roll No. 36160 and Original intermediate certificate including mark sheet having Roll No 262779 has been lost.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
MARINE DEPARTMENT
No. MD/ACCTS/ENR/08/2024/1217 Date: 27.09.2024
E-TENDER CALL NOTICE (E-TCN)
Name of the Work: Hiring of 01 no. Mooring Launch along with operational crew for daily one shift operation for a period of 07 (Seven) years.

MECHANISED CLEANING OF NEW JALPAIGURI RAILWAY STATION
GeM Bid Number: GEM/2024/B/5416689, Dated: 01-10-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work.

CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Registered Office: Aggarwal Corporate Tower, Plot No. 23, 5th Floor, Govind Lal Sikka Marg, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008
POSSESSION NOTICE (Appendix IV) Rule 8(3)

SRF LIMITED
Regd. Office: The Galleria, DLF Mayur Vihar, Unit No. 236 & 237, 2nd Floor Mayur Vihar Phase, Noida Link Road, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi-110091
No. (Regd office) : (+91-11) 49482870; Fax : (+91-11) 49482900
E-mail: cs@srf.com, Website: www.srf.com; CIN: L18101DL1970PLC005197
Corporate Office: Block-C, Sector 45, Gurugram, Haryana- 122 003

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Sadhji Road, Faridkot - 151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-tender is invited for the following Service upto 28.10.2024
1) Opening of Canteen/catereria in the campus of GSGM/H, Faridkot

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL
PROTECTING INVESTING FINANCING ADVISING
ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE LIMITED
Registered Office: Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat-362266
Branch Office: Plot No-17, Vijaya Building, 2nd Floor, Barakhamba Road, New-Delhi-110001

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX No. 0172-50412168
Notice Inviting Tender
e-Tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून
पत्रांक-61/मू-3-2024-25
सार्वजनिक निविदा सूचना दिनांक- 04.10.2024
नगर निगम क्षेत्रान्तर्गत विभिन्न स्थलों पर यूनिपोल / होर्डिंग के माध्यम से विज्ञापन प्रदर्शित करने हेतु अनुबंध की तिथि से कुल 02 बजे हेतु निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि से दिनांक 22.10.2024 की अपराह्न 2.00 बजे तक ई-0 निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

A NIGHT OF MUSICAL TRIBUTE

CELEBRATING JAGJIT SINGH'S GHAZALS

The timeless melodies of Jagjit Singh continue to resonate with audiences, and the recent concert, *Salaam-e-Jagjit*, featuring Nisschal Zaveri at the Siri Fort Auditorium in Delhi, celebrated his enduring legacy. Fans united to honour the ghazal maestro, reliving the magic of his songs in a heartfelt evening of nostalgia, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

How often we hear, "Mera geet amar kar do" - these beautiful lyrics by Jagjit Singh capture the heart of his music, expressing deep love and emotion. As a master of ghazals, he transformed Indian music with his soulful voice and meaningful lyrics, creating a legacy that continues to touch people today. His songs are anthems of love and nostalgia, connecting listeners across generations. During *Salaam-e-Jagjit*, the excitement in the auditorium was visible, reminding everyone that they were celebrating a beloved artist whose music resonates with their own stories. The recent concert, *Salaam-e-Jagjit*, held at the Siri Fort Auditorium in Delhi, was a powerful tribute to the legendary Jagjit Singh. From the moment the audience entered, there was a noticeable excitement in the air, a sense of collective anticipation that hinted at the emotional journey they were about to embark on. It was clear that everyone present had come not just to enjoy music but to celebrate the legacy of an artist who had touched their hearts.

As Nisschal Zaveri took to the stage, the auditorium erupted with applause, a heartfelt welcome from fans eager to honour Jagjit Singh's memory. Dressed impeccably, Zaveri carried an aura of confidence and reverence, and the love for Singh's music shone through every performance. With his first notes of "Pyaar Ka Pehla Khat," he immediately captivated the audience. They sang along, creating a beautiful chorus that filled the auditorium, merging their voices with his in a shared



ONE PARTICULARLY TOUCHING MOMENT WAS WHEN ZAVERI PAID TRIBUTE TO LATA MANGESHKAR BY SINGING "LAG JA GALE" IN HONOUR OF HER BIRTHDAY. THE AUDIENCE RESPONDED WITH ENTHUSIASM, MANY SINGING ALONG AND CLAPPING TO THE RHYTHM, AS IF THEY WERE AT A CLOSE FRIEND'S GATHERING RATHER THAN A CONCERT

celebration of the beloved ghazal. When Zaveri transitioned into "Aahista Aahista," the mood shifted. The audience fell silent, completely absorbed in the haunting melodies and poignant lyrics that had defined Jagjit Singh's music. At that moment, time seemed to stand still. Each word resonated, and the emotional weight of the song was felt throughout the hall. It was a moment that bridged generations, as listeners, young and old, connected with the timeless themes of love and longing that Jagjit Singh so eloquently expressed.

The presence of notable figures like Ustaaad Amjad Ali Khan and his wife, Mrs. Subhalaxmi Khan, added to the

significance of the evening. Their appreciation for Zaveri's performances was unmistakable. Ustaaad Khan stood in support, leading the audience in a standing ovation as the final notes echoed through the auditorium. This act of respect and admiration encapsulated the spirit of the night, a powerful acknowledgment of Jagjit Singh's enduring impact on music and culture.

One particularly touching moment was when Zaveri paid tribute to Lata Mangeshkar by singing "Lag Ja Gale" in honour of her birthday. The audience responded with enthusiasm, many singing along and clapping to the rhythm, as if they were at a close friend's gathering rather than a concert. This gesture highlighted the interconnectedness of these legendary artists, demonstrating the deep respect they had for one another and how their legacies intertwine.

As the evening progressed, it became clear that *Salaam-e-Jagjit* was more than just a concert; it was a heartfelt tribute to Jagjit Singh's contributions to Indian music. The audience's engagement, singing along, applauding and responding to the music, highlighted how deeply Singh's work resonates with people across generations. It was touching to see how music can bring everyone together in celebration of a shared love, creating a sense of community among fans.

The concert concluded with a wave of applause and appreciation, with the audience clearly moved by the performances. Zaveri's heartfelt connection to Jagjit Singh's music was evident as he expressed, "Performing Jagjit Saheb's music is always a deeply moving experience for me." The crowd's reactions showed that they weren't just passive listeners; they were engaged participants, each clapping and cheering as a tribute to their love for Singh's work.

As the concert drew to a close, the audience remained in the moment, enveloped in a sense of nostalgia and gratitude. The evening served as a reminder of how music can touch our lives in profound ways. *Salaam-e-Jagjit* was a fitting celebration of not just the songs of Jagjit Singh but also the very spirit of an artist whose influence remains ever-present. The shared claps, cheers and emotional responses from the audience spoke volumes about the lasting legacy of Jagjit Singh, reminding everyone that music has the power to unite and heal. It was an unforgettable evening that will continue to inspire all who were fortunate enough to be part of it.

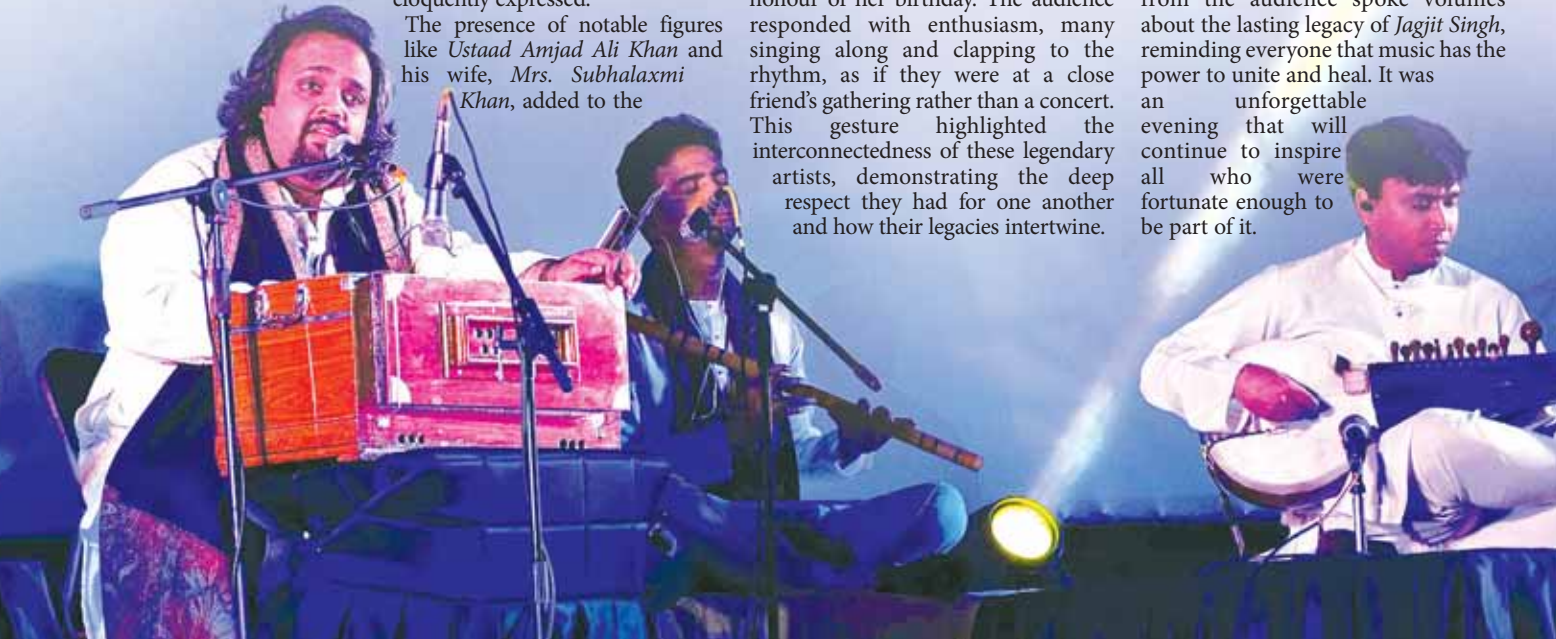


Photo: Pankaj Kumar



Taiwan and India Unite Through Music

BY TEAM VIVA

The India Habitat Centre was alive with the sounds of both East and West in a concert that crossed cultural boundaries. The Taipei Philharmonic Chamber Choir and The Neemrana Music Foundation came together for an evening titled "Eastern & Western Music Treasures", filling the Stein Auditorium with music that connected continents and traditions. More than 50 singers from Taiwan and India performed a stunning blend of Western classical pieces alongside Indian and Taiwanese musical traditions. It wasn't just a concert, it was a celebration of shared human experience, showing how music can unite us, no matter our origins. This extraordinary event was made possible with the support of the Taiwan Electrical and Electronic Manufacturer's Association and the India Habitat Centre. Their collaboration ensured the evening was an unforgettable success. Ferdinand Ta-Ming Ting, Executive

Director of the Taipei Philharmonic Foundation, captured the spirit of the event perfectly, saying, "Music transcends borders and through this collaboration, we hope to deepen the cultural bond between Taiwan and India." Since its founding in 1988, the Taipei Philharmonic Foundation has represented Taiwanese music on the global stage, performing in over 30 countries. Meanwhile, The Neemrana Music Foundation has been pivotal in promoting Western classical music in India, nurturing young talent and bridging cultures through the arts. Aude Priya Wacziarg, Managing Trustee of The Neemrana Music Foundation, reflected on the collaboration, "This concert is a beautiful testament to the longstanding friendship between Taiwan and India. It's an honour to bring our musicians together in this celebration of unity." The evening was not just about music, it was a celebration of how art unites people, breaking down borders and creating connections beyond words.

MYSTIC MINIATURES

A Journey of Introspection

BY TEAM VIVA

Anuj Prasad's solo exhibition, *Mystic Miniatures*, is an evocative dive into the realms of spiritual reflection, displayed at the India Habitat Centre's Visual Art Gallery. With intricate precision and an ethereal touch, Prasad offers viewers a chance to encounter mysticism in a way that feels personal rather than grandiose. As visitors enter the gallery, they are immediately transported into the artist's inner world, where the 150 artworks in ink, watercolour and oil invite a deeper exploration of self. Each piece, though small in scale, possesses a monumental capacity to provoke thought and contemplation. The exhibition showcases Prasad's ability to distill complex ideas into minute details, encouraging the viewer to engage intimately with each artwork.

At first glance, the intricate lines and vibrant colours create a sense of overwhelming complexity. However, as one spends time with the pieces, the seemingly chaotic forms begin to reveal hidden patterns and meanings. This slow unfolding mirrors the process of self-reflection, where confusion gradually gives way to clarity. The exhibition invites viewers to embark on a journey of discovery, probing the hidden meanings and symbolism work into each piece. The tactile nature of Prasad's work enhances this experience, allowing visitors to connect with the depth and intricacy of his artistry on a personal level. Prasad's connection to mysticism is evident in his exploration of spiritual themes through art. He describes mysticism as a natural instinct and each piece reflects this



things. This appreciation for the natural world is evident in every stroke, as Prasad captures the minutiae of life with a deft hand. The handmade textures of his paintings further emphasise this connection, inviting viewers to consider the beauty in the smallest details.

The titles of Prasad's artworks add another layer of meaning, prompting viewers to engage with the themes presented. Names such as "Soul Gateway," "Duality," and "3 Layer Orbit" hint at deeper spiritual explorations, while "Treasure Hunt" and "Balloon Above the Sky" evoke a sense of adventure and freedom. Other titles like "Net Zero," "Moving Goals," and "Boundary-less" challenge viewers to contemplate concepts of balance, change and the fluidity of existence. Each title serves as an invitation to interpret the work through one's own experiences, making the exhibition a deeply personal journey.

Mystic Miniatures go beyond the traditional art exhibition; it serves as an invitation to slow down and reflect on the often-overlooked details of life. In a world that constantly demands our attention, Prasad's work acts as an antidote to the fast pace of modern living. His unique artistic vision encourages audiences to immerse themselves in the spiritual and meditative verses present within each piece. By doing so, he reminds us that profound discoveries often lie in the intricate details we may overlook if we do not take the time to look closely. Through *Mystic Miniatures*, Prasad invites viewers not only to appreciate art but also to engage in a transformative exploration of their inner selves.

belief. The artworks exude a quiet spirituality, inviting viewers into a dialogue rather than demanding their attention. The miniature scale of the works compels intimacy, urging visitors to lean in and engage, promoting a sense of stillness that feels almost radical in today's fast-paced world. Nature serves as a significant influence in Prasad's artistic practice. His use of organic shapes and textures reveals a deep reverence for the environment, reflecting an understanding of the interconnectedness of all living

Photos: Pankaj Kumar

WE CAN SENSE EACH OTHER'S FEELINGS JUST BY OUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS: SHAFALI ON MANDHANA

PTI ■ DUBAI
Shafali Verma, the significant other of the blockbuster Indian opening pair, says her no-holds-barred approach goes well with Smriti Mandhana's elegance and both can "sense each other's feelings just by our facial expressions" while batting. One of the factors behind the Indian women's cricket team's dominance in recent times has been the success of its openers, and Shafali admits they know how "important" they are to the team's fortunes. "I've been opening with Smriti for the past two-three years, and now we can sense each other's feelings just by our facial expressions while batting. We know each other's strengths and weaknesses, and we give each other positive vibes," Shafali told Star Sports when asked about her on-field



relationship with Mandhana. "We understand how important we both are to the team, especially during the powerplay, so we try to perform well for ourselves, our teammates, and the country," The younger partner added, "Smriti di is an exceptional timer of the ball, and she knows how to build an innings. These are the two

things I admire most about her batting -- her timing and her ability to construct a big innings." India will begin their campaign in the ongoing Women's T20 World Cup with a game against New Zealand on Friday, and Shafali said it has been a dream of skipper Harmanpreet Kaur to win the tournament, in which they finished runners-up in the 2020 edition. "Harmanpreet di is very passionate about the game. Winning the World Cup has always been a dream for her, and I hope we can make that dream come true. She's a great player, a great teammate, and a fantastic captain who inspires and motivates us all the time," Shafali said of the skipper. Shafali made her World Cup debut as a 16-year-old and having missed the trophy by a whisker then, she is hoping to change that this time around. "It was a big deal for me to debut at 16, and I loved being in Australia. It wasn't just the cricket; I also enjoyed exploring the country. "The tournament was special, and I performed well for the team. Thinking back to that World Cup always brings a smile to my face. We were so close to winning, but hopefully, we can change that this time around." Playing the final against home team Australia, in front of a packed crowd at the iconic MCG, is an experience that has helped her in learning to handle pressure better. "I couldn't hear anything because of the massive crowd. It was a completely new experience for me to play in front of such a big audience. "I was lost in the atmosphere and the noise, but I've learned to focus more now. I wouldn't feel the same pressure if I were in that situation again."



No. 1 Iga Swiatek parts ways with coach Tomasz Wiktorowski

AP ■ WARSAW
Top-ranked Iga Swiatek is separating from her coach Tomasz Wiktorowski. The Polish tennis player announced the split Friday, saying the decision was taken together. During the three years Swiatek worked with Wiktorowski, the Polish player won four of her five Grand Slam titles and rose to the top of the women's rankings. "After 3 years of the greatest achievements in my career, together with my coach Tomasz Wiktorowski we decided to part way," Swiatek wrote in a post on Instagram. "I want to start with a big thank you and appreciating our work together." Swiatek appointed Wiktorowski as coach at the end of the 2021 season. He helped her capture 19 of her 22 career titles and an Olympic bronze medal in Paris in August. "Coach Wiktorowski joined my team for three seasons, when I strongly needed changes and a fresh approach to my game," Swiatek continued. "His experience, analytical and strategic attitude and enormous knowledge about tennis helped us to achieve things I've never dreamed of only a few months after we started working together. "Our main goal was to become No. 1 player in the world and coach Wiktorowski was the one who said it first." Swiatek hasn't competed since losing to Jessica Pegula in the quarterfinals of the U.S. Open. She withdrew from this week's China Open in Beijing - where she would have been defending champion - citing personal reasons. The 23-year-old Swiatek also pulled out of the recent Korea Open in Seoul, citing fatigue. "Due to this important change on my team, I give myself a couple of weeks to start a cooperation with a new coach," Swiatek wrote. "I'm in the middle of first talks with coaches from abroad (non-Polish) because I'm ready to take the next step of my career. I will let you know when I make a decision." Wiktorowski was voted the WTA's Coach of the Year by his peers last year. "Coach, THANK YOU, I wish you all the best," Swiatek wrote. "I know that you would like to rest after these 3 years of hard work and traveling a lot and spending some well deserved time with your loved ones and I hope you'll get what you need."

Buoyant Mohammedan Sporting gear up for Mohun Bagan challenge



PTI ■ KOLKATA
Fresh off their maiden ISL victory in an away match against Chennaiyin FC, debutants Mohammedan Sporting will aim to carry the same momentum when they square off with heavyweights Mohun Bagan in a lesser known 'Kolkata Derby' this Saturday. With bragging rights as well as points on the line, Mohammedan Sporting will be eager to prove themselves against one of Indian football's most dominant forces and resume their rivalry in the ISL. The black and white brigade secured their maiden win in the ISL by defeating Chennaiyin FC 1-0 last week with Lalremnunga Fanai scoring the decisive goal. Despite Chennaiyin's attempts to fight back in the second-half, Mohammedan's defence led by Joseph Adjei and Vanlalzuidika Chhakhuak remained resolute to take home full three points that has kept them ahead of the city rivals on goal difference. Mohun Bagan, who are the League Shield Winners, on the other hand are coming on the back of a 0-3 loss to Bengaluru FC as they will be looking to regroup and infuse fresh energy to their attacking duo of Dimitri Petratos and Jason Cummings. Petratos is on the brink of his 50th ISL appearance for the Mariners, and his experience will be vital in guiding the team through in pressure cooker scenario. The key for the midfield marshalled by Greg Stewart and Manvir Singh will be to dominate possession, pressing high up the pitch and using their full-backs to provide width. Lalengmawia Ralte has been flawless defensively, winning all 14 of his attempted tackles this season, which will be crucial in stopping Mohammedan's attacks. Despite their attacking prowess, Mohun Bagan head coach Jose Molina has expressed concern about his team's defensive frailties. The Mariners have conceded seven goals in their three matches so far, which has put pressure on their ability to secure results. Molina has identified that many of their defensive issues stem from mistakes in attack, emphasising that improving their offensive play will help tighten the defense. "We're conceding too many goals, and some of them are due to mistakes at the back, but most are because of errors in attack. To improve defensively, we need to attack better," Molina said. Mohammedan Sporting, however, may opt for a more cautious approach as they are likely to sit back, absorb pressure, and hit on the counter using the pace of Alexis Gomez and Franca up front.

Retired IPS Sharad Kumar appointed new head of BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Retired IPS officer Sharad Kumar, who headed anti-terror organisation NIA for four years, has been appointed as the new chief of the BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit, bringing extensive experience to the role. Hailing from Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, the appointment of 68-year-old Kumar was done on October 1 in the cricketing body. BCCI's ACU head is appointed for a three-year term. His name was finalised in the BCCI's Annual General Meeting on September 29, a Board source told PTI. He is a 1979 batch IPS officer from the Haryana cadre and has had a distinguished career especially as the chief of the National Investigation Agency from 2013 to 2017. He will take over from KK Mishra, also a former Haryana cadre IPS officer, who was appointed last year but did not complete his term due to unspecified



reasons. After serving in the NIA, Kumar was appointed as the Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission from June 2018 to April 2020, where he

also held the interim position of Central Vigilance Commissioner. In his new role, Kumar will play a crucial part in addressing corruption issues, including match-fixing and betting scandals, thereby reinforcing the BCCI's commitment to maintaining integrity of the game. During his tenure as NIA Director General, Kumar oversaw several high-profile investigations and operations. Kumar played a pivotal role in enhancing the NIA's capabilities and infrastructure. During his tenure, the NIA investigated several major terror attacks in India, including the Pathankot airbase attack by terrorists of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed. Kumar's efforts were instrumental in disrupting terror financing networks. His contribution to law enforcement has been recognised with the President's Police Medal for Meritorious Services in 1996 and the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Services in 2004.



Bopanna-Dodig pair advances to second round of Shanghai Masters

PTI ■ SHANGHAI
India's Rohan Bopanna and his Croatian partner Ivan Dodig cherished their first win after joining forces, moving to the second round of the ATP Shanghai Masters with a straight-set victory over Pablo Carreno Busta and Pedro Martinez, here Friday. The fifth-seed Indo-Croatian pair won 6-4 6-3 in the opening round match that lasted 63 minutes. Bopanna and Dodig fired five aces to none of their rivals, and converted three of the eight break points they faced. They also saved four break chances on their service games, dropping serve only once in the match. India's singles challenge has already ended with both Sumit Nagal and Ramkumar Ramanathan making first round exits. Ramkumar had made it to the main draw through qualifying round while Nagal had earned a direct entry.

EU's top court says some FIFA rules on international transfers are contrary to the bloc's law

AP ■ WASHINGTON
The European Union's top court said Friday that some FIFA rules on player transfers are contrary to European Union legislation relating to competition and freedom of movement, in a ruling that will likely lead to a shakeup of the soccer market's regulations and change the sport's economy. The court's ruling came after former France international Lassana Diarra legally challenged FIFA rules following a dispute with a club dating back to a decade ago. Diarra argued that FIFA's restrictions meant he was unable to find a new club after his contract with Russian club Lokomotiv Moscow was terminated in 2014. FIFA's rules state that if a player terminates his contract without "just cause," the player and any club wishing to sign him are jointly liable for paying compensation to the previous club. "Those rules hinder the free movement of players and competition between clubs," the court said in a statement. "The rules in question are such as to impede the free movement of professional footballers wishing to develop their activity by going to work for a new club." The court added that current rules "impose considerable legal risks, unforeseeable and potentially very high financial risks as well as major sporting risks on those players and clubs wishing to employ them which, taken together, are such as to impede international transfers of those players." Diarra had signed a four-year contract with Lokomotiv Moscow in 2013. The deal was terminated a year later after Diarra was unhappy with alleged pay cuts. Lokomotiv Moscow applied to the FIFA dispute resolution chamber for compensation and the player submitted a counterclaim seeking compensation for unpaid wages. The Court of Arbitration for Sport found the Russian club terminated



the contract with Diarra "with just cause" and the player was ordered to pay 10.5 million euros (\$11.2 million). Diarra claimed his search for a new club was hampered by FIFA's rules stipulating that any new side would be jointly responsible with him for paying compensation to Lokomotiv. The former Real Madrid player also argued that a potential deal with Belgian club Charleroi fell through because of the FIFA rules, and sued FIFA and the Belgian federation at a Belgian court for damages and loss of earnings of six million euros (\$7 million). With the lawsuit still going through Belgian courts, the case was referred to the European Court of Justice for a ruling. Although the court said FIFA transfer regulations can help maintain a form of stability within professional squads and help guarantee the regularity of competitions, it insisted that in Diarra's case "the rules in question nevertheless seem, subject to verification (by the Belgian court) in a number of respects, to go beyond what is necessary to pursue that objective." The Diarra case, which is supported by the global players' union FIFPro, went through FIFA judicial bodies before the 2016 election of FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who has made it a priority to modernize transfer market rules. Concerning competition rules, the court slammed FIFA's rulings for restricting and preventing cross-border competition between European clubs. "The Court recalls that the possibility of competing by recruiting trained players plays an essential role in the professional football sector and that rules which place a general restriction on that form of competition, by immutably fixing the distribution of workers between the employers and in cloistering the markets, are similar to a no-poach agreement," it said.

Man United has been revamped by Ratcliffe but it's the same old story for Ten Hag

AP ■ MANCHESTER (ENGLAND)
It feels like Groundhog Day for Manchester United and Erik ten Hag. Another season has hit crisis point after only a few games. Perhaps that's why the United manager was so dismissive of the renewed pressure on him after last week's humbling 3-0 loss to Tottenham. "Nothing is easy, but this is nothing for me to panic about because I experienced it so often with my teams during seasons that you are facing those problems," he said this week. He is right. United's record of three losses after six English Premier League games is in keeping with his two previous campaigns at Old Trafford. In 2022, he lost his opening two and three of the first seven. In 2023 it was even worse, as United lost three of five at the start. Both of those seasons ended with a trophy, but the feel-good factor provided by the most recent silverware - May's FA



Cup triumph against Manchester City - has long evaporated in the face of the likelihood that United's 11-year wait for the league title is set to go on. There is little sign of progress in the league despite spending around \$750 million on transfers. On Sunday, United travels to Aston Villa, which has been transformed by manager Unai Emery, who has worked on a fraction of that budget. The Spaniard has spent around \$270 million to turn Villa from a team that was battling relegation when he took over in October 2022 to one that beat Bayern Munich in the Champions League on Wednesday. In contrast United needed a stoppage time goal from Harry Maguire to salvage a 3-3 draw with Porto in the Europa League on Thursday, having led 2-0 after 20 minutes.

Defeat against Villa would intensify questions about Ten Hag's position ahead of the October international break, which has traditionally been a time when clubs look to make managerial changes. Emery's success at Villa is evidence of what can be achieved in a short period of time. Villa was three points above the relegation zone when he was hired. In his first full season, he led the Midlands club to fourth, eight points ahead of United and qualified for the Champions League. He is yet to deliver silverware, but the trajectory is clearly upward. United is 13th heading into the weekend, having finished last season in eighth and the previous year third. Ten Hag kept his job only after an extensive review by United's new hierarchy put in place by minority owner Jim Ratcliffe. But even if he was given a vote of confidence and a one-year extension to his contract, he remains a legacy of a failing operation that Ratcliffe is trying to overhaul since buying a 27.7% stake in the club in February. What's more, the decision to keep Ten Hag was made before new CEO Omar Berrada and sporting director Dan Ashworth officially took up their positions in the offseason. Both insisted in September the Dutchman had their full backing, but managers are ultimately judged by results on the field and the sight of United fans leaving early and some booing at the end of the Tottenham game highlighted growing dissatisfaction again around the club. Ten Hag has a new coaching staff, including former United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy, but familiar problems are evident. United has previously sacked managers David Moyes, Jose Mourinho and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer in mid-season, but never one before November in the modern era. That might provide Ten Hag with some comfort as he tries, once again, to turn United's season around.