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MESSI SCORES  
THREE GOALS AS  
ARGENTINA WINS  
11 SPORTS

## BOMB HOAXES A RED HERRING?

Multiple airlines get 19 bomb threats in 48 hours, eight FIRs filed, three arrests



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Multiple bomb threats continued to disrupt airline operations in the country for the third consecutive day. Eight flights, four of IndiGo, two of SpiceJet and one of Akasa Air, received bomb threats on Wednesday, leading to long delays and diversions. All the threats turned out to be hoaxes. However, there was panic amongst air passengers. It is not clear what triggered the sudden surge in hoax bomb threats since Monday. The threat message to IndiGo was the 19th confirmed instance of a bomb threat to an Indian carrier's flight over the past 48 hours. Worried over a trend of surge in hoax bomb threat messages, Delhi Police has registered seven FIRs at Indira Gandhi International Airport, in connection with bomb threats to several domestic and international flights in the last two days and launched a probe into the matter.

According to sources, top officials of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) on Wednesday met to discuss the bomb threats received by airlines. The authorities are also planning putting the hoax callers on 'no-fly list' and increasing the number of air marshals on flights. A unit of National Security Guard (NSG) commandos is deployed as air marshals mainly on international routes and some sensitive domestic routes. Sky marshals are armed plain clothes security officers who travel on passenger planes. Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu on Wednesday said the government is closely monitoring the situation due to bomb threats to flights and asserted that all necessary

"The aircraft has been isolated, and all passengers have been safely disembarked," an airline spokesperson said in a statement. Another flight 6E 1011 from Mumbai to Singapore received a security-related alert and the flight landed at Singapore. Also, IndiGo's flight 6E 515, operating from Chennai to Lucknow, received a security-related alert. After landing at Lucknow, the aircraft was positioned at an isolated bay and all passengers have been safely disembarked. Meanwhile, late on Tuesday, a Mumbai-bound IndiGo flight from the national capital was diverted to Ahmedabad after a bomb threat. An Akasa Air flight enroute to Bengaluru returned to Delhi on Wednesday afternoon following a bomb threat. Earlier, three international flights, one of Air India and two of IndiGo, had received bomb threats on Monday, while another nine flights spanning across all major carriers had received threats on Tuesday. All the threats came via social media platforms, and eventually turned out to be fake. This prompted Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to seek a report from Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) on bomb threats that have been received recently, disrupting services.

## SC slams Punjab, Haryana for inaction on stubble burning



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Coming down heavily on Punjab and Haryana Governments over non-prosecution of stubble burning, the Supreme Court on Wednesday summoned the Chief Secretaries on October 23 for explanation of no action against the violators. A Bench of Justices Abhay S Oka, Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Augustine



George Maish pointed out "complete insensitivity" on the part of both States, directing the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to take penal action against both the Government officials for the failure to take action against the violators. The Supreme Court called CAQM a toothless tiger that only passed directions without any implementation. "This is not a political

matter. If the Chief Secretary is acting at somebody's behest, we will issue summons against them as well. Next Wednesday (October 23) we are going to physically call for the chief secretary and explain everything. Nothing has been done, same is with the Punjab government. The attitude is of complete defiance," the Bench remarked, pointing out that both States have not taken any steps to implement the directions issued by the CAQM, in the national capital region (NCR) in June 2021, to stop stubble burning. Slamming the Punjab Government, the SC said not even a single prosecution has been carried out in the past three years and it was only tolerating breaches.



## AQI was 999 at Anand Vihar!

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The air of the national Capital has turned extremely hazardous for the public as data by the AQICN revealed that the Anand Vihar recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 999 at 8 pm on Wednesday. Across the city, alarming AQI levels were reported, Sector 8, Dwarka recorded an index of 876, Munda ka was 465, R.K. Puram was 334, Rohini was 322 and Narela was at 305. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the National Capital recorded an average AQI of 230.

## Omar Abdullah back in the hot seat

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with Lok Sabha LoP Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, and party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during the swearing-in ceremony of the Union Territory's new government, in Srinagar



PTI



## Gold, silver soar to a new high

NEW DELHI: Ahead of Diwali, Gold prices on Wednesday touched a new all-time high of ₹78,900 per 10 grams in the national Capital, gaining ₹250 due to sustained buying by jewellers. The precious metal had closed at ₹78,650 per 10 grams in the previous session on Tuesday. Silver also followed the suit and surged ₹1,000 to ₹93,500 per kg due to fresh buying from industrial units and coin makers. On Tuesday, it had finished at ₹92,500 per kg. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped ₹250 to hit a fresh record high of ₹78,500 per 10 grams against the previous close of ₹78,250 per 10 grams. The All India Sarafa Association attributed the rise in gold prices due to strong demand by local jewellers. Besides, the decline in equity markets also aided the rally in the yellow metal as investors moved towards the safe haven assets like gold. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery climbed ₹268 or 0.35 per cent to ₹76,628 per 10 grams. Silver contracts for December delivery zoomed by ₹580 or 0.63 per cent to ₹92,203 per kg on the exchange. In the international markets, Comex gold futures rose 0.51 per cent to USD 2,692.50 per ounce. The yellow metal remains strongly supported by elevated geopolitical tensions and uncertainty surrounding the United States' Presidential elections. PNS

## Jharkhand list leak stuns BJP



DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In a major goof up that has not gone down well with the Bharatiya Janata Party's top leadership, a list of 35 probable candidates for the 81 member Jharkhand Assembly circulated on social media, and several news platforms, prompting the party to defer its 'official' announcement for declaration of the contestants. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top BJP leaders were present in the party's Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting for Jharkhand held late on Wednesday evening. Sources said the meeting continued till late night but the PM left midway. Sources also said the PM told the members to reconsider some of the Assembly pockets since the party is banking high on the winnability of the

candidates to wrest power from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress led government in the mineral rich state. Soon after the announcement of Assembly and By-Poll elections schedule, BJP's CEC convened a two-day marathon meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday evening at the party's Headquarters in national Capital to deliberate on the names of candidates for the upcoming Jharkhand and Maharashtra Assembly polls, as well as candidates for Assembly and Lok Sabha By-Polls. The meeting for Maharashtra on Wednesday was attended by several high-profile BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP National President JP Nadda, Union Home Ministers Amit Shah, Piyush Goel Bhupender Yadav, Ashwini Vaishnaw and Maharashtra deputy chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and respective state and CEC members. The meeting continued till the time of going to press. A day earlier CEC held a crucial meeting and discussed the names of candidates for the Jharkhand Assembly Elections. Sources said the PM left the meeting earlier and asked the CEC members to rethink on certain seats.

## Must talk about lack of trust: EAM



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other leaders during the 23rd meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, in Islamabad, Pakistan, Wednesday

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

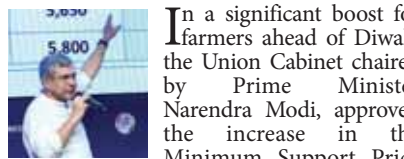
Delivering a thinly veiled message to Pakistan from its soil, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said activities across borders characterised by the "three evils" of terrorism, extremism and separatism are unlikely to encourage trade, energy flows and connectivity. In his address at a conclave of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) chaired by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Jaishankar asserted that trade and connectivity initiatives must recognise territorial integrity and sovereignty and it is essential to have an "honest conversation" on the lack of trust. Jaishankar spoke immediately after Sharif's inaugural address

at the 23rd meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government (CHG) of the Member States of the SCO attended among others by Chinese Premier Li Qiang. His remarks came amid the lingering military standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh and concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the Indian Ocean and other strategic waters. "If activities across borders are characterised by terrorism, extremism and separatism, they are hardly likely to encourage trade, energy flows, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges in parallel," the external affairs minister said without naming Pakistan. Jaishankar arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday, becoming the first Indian foreign minister to visit

Pakistan in nearly a decade. He led the Indian delegation at the SCO-CHG summit in the Pakistani capital city. Ahead of the deliberations, PM Sharif shook hands with Jaishankar and warmly received him and other leaders of the SCO member nations at the Jinnah Convention Centre, the venue of the summit. In his remarks, the external affairs minister said cooperation must be based on mutual respect and sovereign equality and that the SCO member nations can benefit immensely if the grouping moves ahead collectively with mutual trust. He, especially stressed on adhering to SCO charter, highlighting its underlying essence of strengthening mutual trust, friendship and good neighbourliness. "It should recognise territorial integrity and sovereignty. It must be built on genuine partnerships, not unilateral agendas. It cannot progress if we cherry-pick global practices, especially of trade and transit," he said, in remarks seen as an indirect reference to China's assertive behaviour on several critical issues such as trade and connectivity. "But most of all, our endeavours will progress only when our commitment to the Charter remains firm. It is axiomatic that development and growth requires peace and stability.

## Cabinet increases MSP of six Rabi crops for 2025-26

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI



In a significant boost for farmers ahead of Diwali, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of six mandated Rabi crops for 2025-26 marketing season in the range of ₹130-300 per quintal. The hike in MSP is significant ahead of elections in states like Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi. Rabi marketing season begins from April 2025. The decision was announced by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The MSP for wheat has been raised by ₹150 per quintal, moving from ₹2,275 to ₹2,425 for the 2025-26 Rabi marketing season. The ₹150 per quintal hike in wheat support price is significant ahead of elections in states like Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi. Rabi marketing season begins from April 2025. Mustard saw a hike of ₹300, bringing its MSP to ₹5,950 per quintal, while the MSP for Gram/Chana was increased by ₹210 bringing the new rate to ₹5,650 per quintal. The higher MSP for mustard and chana is expected to provide farmers with better returns and encourage more cultivation of this oilseed, which is crucial for India's pulses and edible oil supply. Mustard is widely grown in states like Rajasthan, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh while chana is widely consumed by a larger part of the population.



## Traffic jams on the Ring Road go round and round...

Severe congestions on routes along, Ashram, Sarai Kale Khan, Majnu Ka Tila, Hanuman Setu, Rajghat

BY SANJAY RAI

The traffic on Ring Road is anything but a smooth circle, if anything it resembles a 'jalebi' with two wheelers, autos and even rickshaws crossing lanes in a bid to get ahead in the bumper-to-bumper traffic on the circular road. From Majnu Ka Tila to Hanuman Temple these jams are making the drivers sweat in their vehicles. There is a severe traffic jam on both sides of this route from Majnu Ka Tila to Hanuman Setu. This adds to the problems of the drivers coming to Majnu Ka Tila from Rajghat side, and those coming to Hanuman Setu from Majnu Ka Tila side.

On Tuesdays, there is a severe traffic jam on both sides in front of Hanuman temple. All efforts to reduce this jam have failed. Recently, traffic signals have been installed at the end of Hanuman Mandir Setu by Delhi Traffic Police. But this has not resulted in much improvement right now. After the inauguration of Ashram Flyover, and Ashram Flyover Extension, people were expecting some relief from the jam, but due to the bottleneck near Sarai Kale Khan on the Ring Road, the mess remains. As soon as one descends from the Ashram flyover to the Ring Road, the traffic jams begin, due to which it takes more than half-an-hour for people to cover the



Ranjani Dimri/Pioneer

distance of about half a kilometre to Sarai Kale Khan. This is due to the ongoing construction work of the rapid rail at Sarai Kale Khan. Meanwhile, traffic jams continue on six roads of outer Delhi. Even emergency vehicles, ambulances and fire engines also get stuck in this jam. At the same time, due to the bottle neck near Haiderpur Badli Mod on Outer Ring Road, the traffic of six-lanes gets reduced to four lanes. The jam here is due to the narrow railway bridge. Vehicles coming without stopping from the elevated road from Pitampura get stuck in traffic as soon as they reach here. Several meetings have also been

held between the Public Works Department (PWD) and Railways. According to PWD sources the width of this bridge can be increased soon if mutual consent is reached. Due to the construction work of Outer Ring Road Metro, there are traffic jams from Prashant Vihar to Rohini Jail Mod. It takes about 30 to 40 minutes to cover three kilometres in, whereas earlier it used to take five to seven minutes. Vehicles coming from KN Katju route are stuck in traffic jams as soon as they reach the outer ring road. E-rickshaws and other vehicles parked haphazardly below Rithala metro station, add to the mess.

# Nayab Saini elected BJP legislature party leader, to take oath as Haryana Chief Minister today

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

Incumbent Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini was unanimously elected as the leader of the BJP legislature party at a meeting held at its Party headquarters - Panch Kamal in Panchkula on Wednesday, clearing the decks for his second innings as Chief Minister.

The Haryana BJP legislature party meeting lasted less than an hour at the party office under the supervision of Central Party Observers- Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. Union Power Minister and former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, BJP Haryana election in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan, party affairs in-charge Satish Poonia and other senior BJP leaders also attended the legislature party meeting.

Saini will take the oath of office for the second time along with Cabinet colleagues on Thursday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Shah, Ministers and Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States.

## Bedi proposed Saini's name, Vij endorsed

BJP's 48 MLAs elected Other Backward Class (OBC) leader Saini, 54, as their leader to head the Party's record third consecutive Government in Haryana. Narwana legislator Krishan Kumar Bedi proposed Saini's name after which Ambala Cantt MLA Anil Vij endorsed it and all MLAs unanimously backed the choice.

"There was only one proposal moved by MLA Krishan Bedi and it was seconded by Anil Vij in favour of Saini," Amit Shah said, declaring Saini as the BJP legislature party leader in

Haryana. "I am very happy that you all have again chosen Nayab Singh Saini as your leader," the Home Minister said at the meeting.

Addressing the legislators, Shah said that Haryana has created history by proving the political pundits of the country wrong and forming the BJP government for the third consecutive time. "Nayab Singh Saini has been elected as leader of the legislative party. We will again form the government in Haryana, the double-engine government will be here for 15 years. Under the leadership of Manohar Lal Khattar, many development works were carried out in Haryana," he said.

After being chosen as leader of the BJP legislative party, Saini said: "The people of Haryana have placed their faith in the policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and formed the BJP government for the third time and the people have resolved to carry forward the vision of Prime Minister Modi to make India developed by 2047."

Saini said, "I had announced that the results of the recruitment exam of 24,000 youths will be declared first and after that, I will take oath. Fulfilling that promise, the results will be declared tomorrow. The BJP does what it says."

The party's seven-time lawmaker, Anil Vij, the seniormost in the party, said that all the MLAs have unanimously elected Saini as the leader of the BJP legislative Party. "I have fulfilled all the responsibilities entrusted to me by the party," Vij told the media.

Saini, the OBC face of the saffron party, who was declared as the party's Chief Ministerial candidate in the run-up to the October 5 Assembly elections, was elected as the leader in view



Union Home Minister Amit Shah greets newly elected BJP legislative party leader Nayab Singh Saini after his unanimous election to become state's Chief Minister on Wednesday.  
Photo by Akhilesh K Mishra

the non-Jats, especially the OBCs, consolidating in BJP's favour in the polls. Saini took over as the State Chief Minister from Manohar Lal Khattar on March 12, 2024, and the entire assembly poll campaign was centred around him with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah showcasing him as the CM face.

In the 2024 Assembly election, Saini not only won the Ladwa assembly constituency by defeating Mewa Singh of the Congress by over 16,000 votes but also led the BJP to a stunning victory barely six months after he took charge as Chief Minister. He was also elected as an MLA from Naraingarh in the 2014 Assembly polls and inducted into the Cabinet in 2016. Saini had replaced BJP veteran Khattar as the Chief Minister in March, just two months before the Lok Sabha elections. Eight out of 10 Ministers in the outgoing Saini Cabinet faced defeat in the just concluded Assembly

polls. Independent candidates who got three seats, extended unconditional support to the BJP.

## Saini meets Governor, stakes claim to form BJP Govt in State

Hours after being unanimously elected as the leader of the BJP legislature party leader, outgoing Haryana Chief Minister Saini, accompanied by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, on Wednesday called on Governor Bandaru Dattatreya at Raj Bhawan here in Chandigarh and staked claim to form the government in the State.

For the second time, Panchkula will be hosting the swearing-in ceremony of the BJP government. The ceremony will be held at the Dussehra ground at 11 am in Sector 5. Earlier, the swearing-in ceremony was planned for October 15, but owing to PM Modi's availability on October 17, it



Union Home Minister and party observer Amit Shah, Dharmendra Pradhan, Manohar Lal Khattar and newly elected Haryana BJP legislative party leader Nayab Singh Saini in the BJP Legislature Party meeting at Panchkula on Wednesday.  
Photo by Akhilesh K Mishra

was rescheduled, party leaders said.

In 2014, Panchkula was the venue for the swearing-in of Manohar Lal Khattar, the BJP's first Chief Minister in the state, after the party won a majority with 47 seats in the 90-member Assembly. At that time also, PM Modi had attended the ceremony. The party won 40 seats in 2019, but came back to power with the support of Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP).

In the 2024 elections, the BJP won 48 seats. The Congress was the second-largest party with 37 seats, while the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) got only two seats. Independent candidates who got three seats, extended unconditional support to the BJP, whereas the JJP and Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) drew a blank.

## Saini's political success

Born on January 25, 1970, at Mirzapur Majra village in Ambala district, Saini, a low-profile leader from a backward class, began his association with both the BJP and its ideological parent, the RSS, in 1996. An arts graduate from BR Ambedkar Bihar University in

Muzaffarpur, he pursued an L.L.B from Chaudhary Charan Singh University in Meerut. He was first appointed the general secretary of the BJP's Yuva Morcha in 2002 and became the

president of the unit by 2005.

After facing defeat from his home constituency of Naraingarh in 2009, five years later, as the BJP rode to power in Haryana, Saini turned the tide, winning

## Security beefed up ahead of Hry CM's swearing-in ceremony: PM Modi to attend

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Ahead of the swearing-in ceremony of the new State Chief Minister, which will be held on Thursday, security has been beefed up in Panchkula. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP President JP Nadda, and other top BJP leaders will attend the oath-taking ceremony of the new Haryana government at Dussehra ground in Sector 5 in Panchkula.

BJP wants the swearing-in to be a grand affair to gear up the party cadre for crucial Maharashtra and Jharkhand assembly polls in November and Delhi polls early next year.

A senior Police officer said that tight security arrangements have been made at the venue, with 500 VVIPs from across the country, including 14 chief min-

isters, Union Ministers and BJP central leadership, expected to attend the event. A traffic diversion plan has been drafted in the district.

"The PM is coming for the oath-taking ceremony. So we have made all the necessary security arrangements. The Special Protection Group team has already arrived. We have deployed a sufficient number of forces. We are expecting many VIPs, CMs, Deputy CMs, MoS and other VIP to attend the function. So accordingly, we have made security arrangements," the Police officer added. Some leaders are expected to come by charter planes, while others will land at the Panchkula helipad in Sector 5 and the Chandigarh airport. Arrangements are being made to receive them.

Meanwhile, a huge stage has been set up at Dussehra ground

to accommodate several leaders. A special pathway with paving stones is being constructed to ensure easy movement in the middle of the ground.

The date for the oath-taking was finalised after outgoing Chief Minister Saini met Home Minister Shah and other senior leaders in Delhi last week after confirmation of PM Modi's availability from the Prime Minister's Office.

For the second time, Panchkula, near the state capital Chandigarh, will be hosting the swearing-in ceremony of the BJP government. The ceremony of the Council of Ministers will be held at the Dussehra ground. Earlier, the swearing-in ceremony was planned for October 15, but owing to PM Modi's availability on October 17 it was rescheduled, party leaders said.

## Geological experts to be roped in for revitalizing Dal and Khajjiar lakes in Himachal

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Adequate measures will be taken to rejuvenate the pristine glory of the famous Dal Lake at Naddi Lake in Dharamshala stated Deputy Chief Whip Kewal Singh Pathania, while chairing a marathon meeting with the officers of Tourism and Forest Departments on Wednesday.

He said that it is proposed to reach out to the world renowned conservationists and geological experts for conducting the study of the Lake which was fast depleting affecting the aquatic life and beauty of the place.

He said that so far since 2004, a sum of Rs. 31 lakh has

been spent on the beautification of Dal Lake by both the forest and the IPH department till date. Efforts were made to find the fault of water seepage which has a huge catchment area. Besides affecting the economy of the locals it now was giving a deserted look, he stated. The local activists have also stepped in to save aquatic life by shifting them to other water bodies nearby.

He stated that even the Kangra Deputy Commissioner was in touch with Lake Man of India Anand Malligav to find a permanent and long lasting solution to prevent the lake from drying. Apart from this, few other experts will be

reached out to find the reason behind its drying, said Pathania.

Sincere efforts will be made to revitalise both the Dal Lake and the famous Khajjiar Lake in Chamba situated at an altitude of 1951 meters. The experts will be asked to conduct a scientific study of Khajjiar Lake as well, which is named after the local deity Khajji Nag.

Both the lakes apart from being the tourists' attractions hold religious prominence as well as both domestic and International tourists arrive in numbers. The locals even worship these lakes and have religious sentiments attached with these water bodies.

## Bhupinder Hooda calls meeting of his 'loyalist-MLAs' ahead of CLP meeting

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a show of strength, former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Wednesday evening called a meeting of his 'loyalist-MLAs' ahead of the Congress legislature party meeting at his Delhi residence.

The MLAs were called to discuss the issue of the Leader of Opposition in the Haryana Vidhan Sabha. Sources said that with nearly 28 legislators on his side, the MLAs would, most likely, propose that status quo be maintained and Hooda be chosen to continue as the Leader of Opposition in the House. This is the first meeting being called by Hooda

since the assembly election results were declared and the Congress, hoping to make a comeback in government, lost to the Bharatiya Janata Party which is all set to form a government in the state for the third time.

Sources in Congress said that during the meeting, several MLAs were present, including Nirmal Singh, Pooja, Ram Karan, Ashok Arora, Mandeep Singh Chatha, Devender Hans, Vikash Saharan, Indu Raj Singh Narwal, Vinesh Phogat, Balwan Singh Doulatpuria, Jarnail Singh, Shishpal Keharwala, Gokul Seta, Bharat Singh Beniwal, Chander Parkash, Naresh Selwal, Jasvir Singh, Rajbir Singh Fartia, Balram

Dangi, Bharat Bhushan Batra, Shakuntala Khatak, Kuldeep Vats, Geeta Bhukal, Raghbir Singh Kadian, Manju Chaudhary, Aftab Ahmad, Mamman Khan, Mohd. Ilyas, Mohd. Israil, and Raghbir Singh Tewatia.

The MLAs who did not attend the meeting held at Hooda's house are Chandrmohan Bishnoi, Sally Chaudhary, Akram Khanna, Renu Bala, Aditya Surjewala and Naresh Selwal.

The BJP secured a third term in the assembly polls in Haryana, results of which were declared on October 8. It won 48 seats against the Congress' 37 in the 90-member assembly in Haryana.

## ECI disqualifies 5 candidates contested 2022 Punjab assembly polls

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday announced the disqualification of five candidates, who contested the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections for not submitting details of their election expenditure.

"These candidates have not submitted their election expenses as per section 78 of Representation of the People Act, 1951, to the Commission within the specified time frame, thus rendering them ineligible to contest elections for the next three years under Section 10 A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951," said Punjab's Chief Electoral Officer Sibin C.

He said that these five candidates — three from Sangrur

district while one candidate each from Mansa and Faridkot districts — have been disqualified by an order issued by the Election Commission of India. Shakti Kumar Gupta and Jaswinder Singh, who contested from Dhuri assembly constituency, and Sanmukh Singh Mokha, who contested from Sunam Assembly constituency have been disqualified.

Similarly, Gurucharan Singh Sangha who contested from Faridkot Assembly constituency has also been declared disqualified, additionally Harbhagwan Sharma Bikhri, a resident of Mansa district who contested from Sunam assembly seat, have also been disqualified for the next three years by the Election Commission of India.

## Gram Panchayat Elections in Pb records 77 pc voter turnout

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab witnessed a significant 77 percent voter turnout in the 2024 Gram Panchayat elections, held on Sunday, showcasing a strong participation from rural voters despite incidents of violence in certain districts. According to the data provided by the State Election Commissioner Raj Kamal Chaudhuri, the election process saw enthusiastic voter engagement across the state, with Mansa leading at an impressive 83.27 percent polling percentage, while Tarn Taran remained at the bottom with 64.40 percent.

Chaudhuri highlighted that the polling percentages across various districts reflected a wide range of participation, with districts like Bathinda (79.43 percent), Fatehgarh Sahib (78.47 percent), and Fazilka (82.31 percent) also recording high voter turnout. However, in urban centers like Jalandhar (66.30 percent) and Ludhiana (67.1 percent), participation was relatively lower. Despite these variations, the overall voter engagement was considered a success, as the election ensured the selection of 9,398 Panchayat leaders across the State.

The day was not without its challenges, as pockets of violence and disturbances were reported. In Tarn Taran and Patiala, incidents of firing left

two individuals injured, while clashes involving stone-pelting were reported, resulting in injuries to a sub-inspector and several voters. In Barnala, a police officer tragically lost his life while on duty, and in Jalandhar, a teacher passed away during the election process.

Despite these setbacks, the elections proceeded smoothly in most areas, reflecting the strength of grassroots democracy in the State. Punjab's rural electorate turned up in large numbers, defying fears and asserting their democratic rights. Notably, AAP-backed candidates reportedly made significant gains, winning in more than half of the Panchayats, indicating a shift in local political dynamics.

With districts like Sangrur (79.45 percent), Pathankot (79.20 percent), and Ropar (77 percent) registering robust turnouts, the elections were marked by intense competition, but largely peaceful voting was observed in the majority of the constituencies.

The election outcome is expected to shape the governance of rural areas in Punjab, bringing new faces and renewed energy to the state's grassroots administration.

## Warring Claims Cong Victory in Panchayat Polls, Claims 50-60% Seats

Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) has

claimed a decisive victory in the Gram Panchayat elections, with Congress-backed candidates securing 50-60% of the seats across Punjab. PPCC president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring expressed his pride in the Congress's performance while condemning the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for alleged attempts to manipulate the election process.

Warring criticized the AAP government, led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, accusing them of using desperate tactics to sway the results in their favour. However, he emphasized that these attempts failed as the people of Punjab stood firm, electing Congress-backed candidates in a majority of the state's villages. "The people of Punjab have sent a powerful message today," said Warring. "Despite AAP's relentless manipulation and misuse of power, Congress has emerged victorious, winning the confidence of the people in over half the villages."

Warring pointed out that the results reflect not only Congress's hard work but also the public's disillusionment with AAP's governance. "For the past two and a half years, AAP has deceived the people of Punjab with hollow promises and poor administration," he remarked. "Their attempt to interfere in these elections shows their lack of respect for

democracy, but the people have made it clear: they reject AAP's failed governance and have placed their trust in Congress."

He further underscored that the Panchayat elections are a preview of the upcoming by-elections and the 2027 Vidhan Sabha elections, predicting that this trend of Congress victories will continue. "The Panchayat elections are just the beginning. This success, combined with our achievements in the Lok Sabha elections, proves that the people of Punjab recognize the Congress party as the true representative of their aspirations."

Highlighting the Congress's role in addressing key issues like farmer protests, unemployment, and healthcare, Warring added, "The Congress party has stood with the people, raising our voice against the injustices of this government. The overwhelming support we've received in these elections is a testament to that."

Warring vowed to safeguard Punjab's democracy from any further interference by AAP. "Bhagwant Mann's government has been shown the door. Congress will continue to work for the progress and prosperity of Punjab, ensuring that the democratic rights of the people are protected. This victory is only the start of a brighter future for our state."

## Punjab mandis to Shut Indefinitely: Arhtiyas Protest Slow Lifting

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab's mandis (grain markets) have been shut down indefinitely as the state's arhtiyas (commission agents) on Wednesday expressed their mounting anger towards the government. The decision to close the markets comes amid growing frustration over the slow lifting of paddy, shortage of gunny bags (bardana), and the alleged mistreatment and arrest of Federation of Arhtiyas Association Punjab's president Vijay Kalra by the police.

The protest is being led by commission agents across the state, with major grain markets, including Asia's largest grain market in Khanna, joining the strike.

The protest has drawn attention to the ongoing challenges faced by Punjab's arhtiyas in the midst of the paddy procurement season. Harbans Singh Roshia, president of the Arhtiya Association at Khanna Grain Market, voiced deep dissatisfaction with the current situation, highlighting the difficulties caused by the Central Government's policies.

Roshia pointed out that the Central Government has set a moisture limit of 17 percent for paddy procurement. However, due to the widespread use of combine harvesters, which often increase the moisture content by two to three percent, the paddy moisture level generally ranges from 19 to 22 percent.

In the past, when paddy was hand-harvested, moisture levels were more controlled, but the use of modern machinery and variable weather conditions have contributed to this challenge. "Despite repeated requests to relax the moisture norms, the Government has turned a deaf ear to our concerns. This, combined with a shortage of storage space, has exacerbated the situation, leading to delays in lifting the paddy from markets," said Roshia. He emphasized that the arhtiyas will not reopen the grain markets until the pace of lifting improves. The protest has gained momentum with arhtiyas from various districts joining the cause.

In Sirhind, a crucial meeting of the commission agents was held, where Federation of Arhtiyas Association Punjab vice president Sadhu Ram Bhattamajra condemned the actions of the police in Makkhu.

Bhattamajra said that their Union president Vijay Kalra was subjected to harassment and misbehaviour by the police, which led to his arrest. Bhattamajra warned that unless strict action is taken against the responsible police officers, the grain markets in Punjab will remain closed indefinitely.

"The entire arhtiya community stands united in protest," said Bhattamajra. "We are not just fighting for better procurement terms but also demanding justice for the way our leader was treated." He further stated that a delegation of the state federation would head to Makkhu for a

meeting to decide the next course of action.

In addition to the slow pace of lifting, the shortage of gunny bags has added to the troubles faced by the arhtiyas. Commission agents in Samrala, led by Union president Alamdeep Singh Malmajra, voiced their frustration over this issue, stating that the inefficiencies in the system have left them with no option but to protest. "We are grappling with both the lifting issues and the bardana shortage. Additionally, we stand firmly against the unjust arrest of our state president," he said.

The protest by Punjab's commission agents has put the government under significant pressure, as the indefinite closure of grain markets is expected to severely impact the procurement process during the crucial paddy season.

## Farmers to Make All Toll Plazas in Punjab Free on today

In a bold escalation of their protests, the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ekta-Ugrahan) on Wednesday announced that all toll plazas across Punjab will be made free on Thursday (October 17). The decision comes as part of the ongoing agitation against the failure of the State and Central Governments to ensure smooth procurement of paddy on Minimum Support Price (MSP).

Furthermore, on October 18, farmers plan to stage sit-ins outside the homes of prominent

leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), including BJP leader Arvind Khanna, former Union Minister Preet Kaur, and all AAP Ministers and legislators. The protests have been sparked by what farmers see as the mishandling of the paddy procurement process, with leaders accusing both the Central and Punjab Governments of failing to address their grievances. The farmers have vowed to keep the protests running day and night until their demands are met, marking another wave of farmer-led movements in the state that has been at the forefront of agricultural protests.

Farmer leader and BKU Ekta-Ugrahan president Joginder Singh Ugrahan and general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan said that the five-member state leadership team of the BKU Ugrahan has taken the decision to intensify the protests. "The agitation will continue non-stop, day and night, with our farmer brothers and labourers leading the charge. We will not rest until our demands are taken seriously by the authorities," said Ugrahan.

The farmers' key demand is the uninterrupted procurement of paddy at MSP, a critical issue given the state's reliance on agriculture. However, they have also raised several other demands related to farmer welfare and agricultural policies, which they argue have been ignored by both the BJP-led central government and the AAP-led Punjab government.



Govt. of Haryana

“ मुझे विश्वास है कि विकसित भारत के संकल्प में हरियाणा की भूमिका और महत्वपूर्ण होने जा रही है। ”  
- नरेन्द्र मोदी



In the August Presence of  
Prime Minister

**Sh. Narendra Modi**

You are warmly invited to the

**Oath-Taking Ceremony**

of the Government built on your trust and support



On this occasion

**Sh. Bandaru Dattatraya**

Governor, Haryana

to administer the oath to  
the nominated

Chief Minister of Haryana

**Sh. Nayab Singh Saini**

and Members of the Cabinet

Date: October 17, 2024 | Time: 11 am

Venue: Dussehra Ground, Sector-5, Panchkula

Scan QR Code  
to join the  
programme



**फिर एक बार, डबल इंजन सरकार**

# Classifieds

## BEDAKHLI NOTICE

**I, Swran Kaur** Aadhar card number 9690 25898919 w/o Ajaib Singh R/o Ramgarh 232 tehsil and district Panchkula had disowned my son Amrajjeet Singh and his wife Neha alias Rajni on 04.12.2023. now, my son and his wife improved themselves and behaving in a good manner with me. So, I withdraw my earlier ill will and accept them as son and daughter in law. Concerned note.

**I, Harinder Kaur** w/o Sandeep Singh Narang R/o 95 Phase-6, Mohali, declare that I have no relation from several years with my brother Rajinder Singh, his wife Paramjit kaur and son Harjot Singh, R/o 475 Krishan Nagar, Jalandhar. Anybody deals with them at their own risk. I will not be responsible for their any kind of act.

**I, Lila Wati Devi** W/o Hare Ram Yadav and Hare Ram Yadav S/o Vishwa Nath Yadav R/o House No. 906, Sector 56, Palsora, Chandigarh inform that our son Suraj Kumar Yadav is out of our control. We disown him from our moveable and Immovable Properties. Anybody deal with them at their own Risk.

**I, Pardeep Kumar** S/o Sh. Ishan R/o House No. 553/2, Sector 38-A, Chandigarh inform that my son Akash Alias Noni and his wife Manisha are out of my control. I disown them from my all moveable and Immovable Properties. Anybody deal with them at their own Risk.

**I, Narinder Singh** S/o Sh. Baldev Singh R/o House No. 1196, Sector 45, Buraill Chandigarh inform that my daughter Rajni out of my control. I disown her from my all moveable and Immovable Properties. Anybody deal with her at their own Risk.

**I, Mamta** W/o Sh. Rakesh Kumar R/o Old D C Road, Kacche Quarter, Sonipat has disowned my son Vishal & his wife Aarti from my all movable-immovable property as they are out of our control. In future, if anybody deals with them, he/she will do at their own risk.

**I, Raj Rani** w/o Surjit Singh resident of Ward No. 26, Krishna colony Mansa, District Mansa hereby declare that her son Lovdeep Sharma, daughter in law Shalu Sharma and their daughters are disinherited from her property as her son and daughter in law are indulged in bad activities and are out of my words. Any person, who will make any dealing with them in any manner, will responsible for this. I will not responsible for any act of my son and my daughter in law.

**I, Surjit Singh** s/o Dev Raj resident of Ward No. 26, Krishna colony Mansa, District Mansa hereby declare that her son Lovdeep Sharma, daughter in law Shalu Sharma and their daughters are disinherited from her property as her son and daughter in law are indulged in bad activities and are out of my words. Any person, who will make any dealing with them in any manner, will responsible for this. I will not responsible for any act of my son and my daughter in law.

**I, Praveen Kumar** S/o Sh. Chote Lal R/o 248, Ganesh Vihar, Ambala Cantt declare that my Son Mehul Kumar is out of my Control.So i Disown him from my all Movable Immovable Properties.

**I, Santosh** W/o Keval Singh R/o H. No. 53, Ram Kishan colony, Near Milap Bakery, Ambala Cantt, Distt. Ambala declare that my Son Harvinder is out of my Control.So i Disown him from my all Movable Immovable Properties.

**I, Lata** W/o Late Sh. Sukhdev R/o 215A, Defence Colony, Ambala Cantt declare that my Son Kamal Kishor and his wife Navneet Kaur are out of my Control.So i Disown them from my all Movable Immovable Properties.

**मैं, कृष्णा सिहाग** पत्नी स्व. श्री रामधारी सिहाग निवासी मकान नं. 04ई, गली नंबर 9, जवाहर नगर हिसार तहसील व जिला हिसार अपने पुत्र प्रशान्त व पुत्रवधु सोनिका को कहने चुनने से बाहर होने के कारण अपनी विल अचल संपत्ति से बेदखल करती हूं। उनके किसी कार्य, लेनदेन या वादविवाद के लिए मैं या मेरा परिवार जिम्मेदार नहीं है। जो करेगा अपनी जिम्मेदारी पर करेगा।

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**I, Parabh Dial** S/o Shri Diwan Chand R/o Mamun, Tehsil & Distt. Pathankot declare that in my daughter's school record my name is wrongly entered as Parabh Dial instead of Parabh Daryl.

**I Lado Rani** D/o Ram Naresh R/o Mandir Kedarnath, Rajpura Road, Patiala (Pb.) have changed my name to Roopa Devi, after marriage with Om Parkash R/o #114, Jawahar Nagar, Jagadhri, Yamuna Nagar, Jagadhri Workshop, Haryana.

## CHANGE OF NAME

**I Bhagwan Dass** Mehta S/o Kalam Singh R/O H. No. 3376, Sector 15-D, Chandigarh have changed my name from Bhagwan Dass Mehta to B.D. Mehta.

**I, Kamajit S.** Banwait S/O. Surinder Singh R/O. House No. 6, Sector 16-A, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name To Kamajit Singh.

**I, Khushboo** D/o Tarsem Lal r/o VPO Andora, Tehsil Amb, Distt Una (HP) have changed my name from Kushbu Choudhary to Khushboo Choudhary.

**I, Joginder** S/O: Murat Singh, Village Targli, Beraseli (127), Kansakoti, Shimla, Rohru(t), Himachal Pradesh, 171207 declare that I have changed my name from Joginder (Previous Name) to Joginder Singh (New Name) all concerned please may note.

**I, Binta** W/O: Joginder Singh, Village Targli, Beraseli (127), Kansakoti, Shimla, Rohru(t), Himachal Pradesh, 171207 declare that I have changed my name from Binta (Previous Name) to Binta Devi (New Name) all concerned please may note.

**I, Sukhbir Singh** S/o Sh. Bhoop Singh R/O Village Khanda Kheri, Distt Hisar have changed my name from Sukhbir Singh to Sukhbir for all future purposes.

**I, Krishna Devi** W/o Sh. Sukhbir R/o Village Khanda Kheri, Distt Hisar have changed my name from Krishna Devi to Krishna for all future purposes.

**I, Sanjeev Kumar** Aggarwal S/o Shirochand Aggarwal R/o # 405, HUDA, Sector - 15, Near Dimple Cinema, Jagadhri, District Yamuna Nagar - 135003 (Haryana) declares that I have changed my name from Sanjeev Kumar Aggarwal to Sanjeev Aggarwal.

**I, Arjan Dev Setia** S/o Late Ram Chand R/o 71, Jawahar Nagar, Jagadhri Workshop, Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Arjan Dev Setia to Arjun Dev Setia.

**I, Laveena Bakshi** W/O Dev Rishi Bakshi, R/O- Flat-1005/10 Amayra Greens 2, Aujala, T C Kharar, SAS NAGAR (Mohali) Punjab-140301. Inform That Laveena And Laveena Bakshi Are Same And One Person.

**I, Dev Rishi** Bakshi S/O Yash Paul Bakshi, R/O- Flat-1005/10 Amayra Greens 2, Aujala, T C Kharar SAS NAGAR (Mohali) Punjab-140301. inform that Dev Rishi Sagan Bakshi and Dev Rishi Bakshi are same and one person.

**We Hardeep Singh** S/O Mohan Lal And Shweta Kathuria W/O Hardeep Singh Both R/O House Number 1068, Sector 25 Panchkula Have Changed Our Minor Daughter's Name From Manya To Manya Singh. Manya And Manya Singh Is One And The Same Person . Concerned Note.

**We Hardeep Singh** S/O Mohan Lal And Shweta Kathuria W/O Hardeep Singh Both R/O House Number 1068, Sector 25 Panchkula Have Changed Our Minor Daughter's Name From Ruhani To Ruhani Singh. Ruhani And Ruhani Singh Is One And The Same Person. Concerned Note.

**I, Jansvinder** Kaur W/o Late. Sh. Satnam Singh, R/O H.No. 28/278, Saidan Mohalla, Teh. Shahabad (M.) Distt. Kurukshetra, I declare that I have changed my name Kulwinder Kaur to Jansvinder Kaur. All Concerned please note.

**I, Savita** W/o Harender Singh R/o H.No.153, Gandhi Nagar, Panchi Road, ward no.15. Ganaur, Distt. Panipat declare that I have changed my name from Savita to Savita Raperia, for all future purposes

**I, Rajat Bansal** S/o Sh. Shyam Arya R/o H.No.88, ward no.15, Sector 11/12, Huda, Panipat declare that I have change my daughter's name from Kairavi Bansal to Kairavi, In future my daughter should be known by the name Kairavi.

**I, Sandhya Kumari** Sister of Gaurav Shrivastava R/o #472, Sector 47-A, Chandigarh have changed my name from Sandhya Kumari to Sandhya Shrivastav vide Affidavit No - IN-CH52700987310312W Dated 16-10-2024 before Notary, Distt. Court at Chandigarh.

**I, Aanchal Kathpal** W/O. Rahul Kathpal R/O. House No. 193/9, Sbp Homes, Chajumajra, Sohana, Po: Sohana, District SAS Nagar Mohali, Punjab. I Have Changed My Name From Aanchal Kapoor To Aanchal Kathpal.

**I, Sneha Lata** W/o Sh. Sanjay Garg R/o #1177, Urban Estate, Jind have changed my name from Sneh Lata to Sneh Garg for all future purposes.

**I, Pawan Kumar** S/o Sunder Lal R/O 1084/A, Dwarika Puri, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Pawan Kumar to Pawan Kumar Sharma.

**I, Minakshi** w/o Bhojraj Chawla r/o Near Geeta Dawar, Dhobi Mohalla, Pipli, Distt. Kurukshetra have changed my name from Minakshi to Minakshi Chawla. In future I should be known as Minakshi Chawla.

**I, Ram Gopal** s/o Rameshwar Dayal r/o #174, Geeta Colony, Noorwala, Panipat have changed my name from Ram Gopal Sharma to Ram Gopal. In future I should be known as Ram Gopal.

**I, Sheela** w/o Mahavir r/o 118, Satarpur Majra, Sonipat Haryana have changed my name from Sushila to Sheela for all future purposes.

**I, Rakesh** S/o Late Sh. Jug Pal R/o H. No. 180, Gali No. 7, Ward No. 6, Near Saint Gyaneshwar School, Tibba Danasher, Hisar (Haryana) have changed my father's name from Late Sh. Jagpal Singh to Late Sh. Jug Pal for all purposes in future.

**I, Suman** Spouse of 16015179Y Rank Sepoy Surender Singh R/o VPO Gulkani Tehsil Jind District Jind Haryana have changed my name in my husband service record from Suman Devi to Suman.

**I, 16015179Y** Rank Sepoy Surender Singh R/o VPO Gulkani Tehsil Jind District Jind Haryana have changed my daughter name in my service record from Tanisha Kumari to Tanisha.

**I, Kartik Chopra** S/o Sh. Basant Chopra Resident of House No 22, Sector-31, Friends Colony, Panipat-132103 have declared that I have change my minor son's name from Daivik to Daivik Chopra.

**I, Kartik Chopra** S/o Sh. Basant Chopra Resident of House No 22, Sector-31, Friends Colony, Panipat-132103 have declared that I have change my minor son's name from Devyaan to Devyaan Chopra.

**I, Shashi Arora** w/o Krishan Kumar Arora r/o h.no.542-R model town panipat declare change my name from Shashi Bala to Shashi Arora and in future my name is Shashi Arora.

**I, T Chandra Sekhar,** S/O Koteswara Rao R/O #1405, Sector-47-B, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name To Tirumalasetty Chandra Sekhar.

**I, T Swarnalatha** W/O T Chandra Sekhar R/O #1405, Sector 47-B, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name To Tirumalasetty Swarnalatha.

**I Satwinder** Kaur W/o Jagtar Singh R/o Haveli Tehsil Billospur Distt Yamunanagar have changed my name from Satvinder Kaur to Satwinder Kaur. In future I will be known as Satwinder Kaur.

**I Mahesh Kumari** Sushma W/o Late Sh. Sardari Lal R/o Village Binjalpur Tehsil barara Distt Ambala in my husband Sh. Sardari Lal, service no 14328545NK, service record's my name wrongly mentioned as Sushma & DOB 06-12-1965. But my correct name is Mahesh Kumari Sushma & Correct DOB is 17-12-1962

**I Nitin Sharma** S/o Baljeet Kumar R/o H.No- 982-D Housing Board Colony Near Shani Mandir, Sec-8 Ambala City have changed my name from Nitin to Nitin Sharma.

**I Rambir Gill** S/o Sh. Bhale Ram R/o Samain, Tehsil Tohana, District Fatehabad (Haryana) have declared that my name be changed from Rambir Gill to Rambir Gill in the Matriculation certificate of my son.

**I, Nirmal Singh** S/O Malkiat Ram R/O Shahabad Kurukshetra Haryana I Have changed My Name From Nirmal Singh To Nirmal

**I, Geeta Rani** W/O Nirmal R/O Shahabad Kurukshetra Haryana I Have Changed My Name From Geeta Rani To Geeta.

**I, Khushi** W/o Sh. Satyawalan Lohan r/o H.No 3366, Chandigarh Police housing society Sector 51D, Chandigarh have changed my name from Khushi Dalal to Khushi.

**I, Ram Kumar** Prajapati s/o Shri Ram Prajapati #226, Indira Colony, Sec-17, Panchkula, Haryana declared that I have changed my name from Ram Kumar Prajapati to Ram Kumar Prajapati. Please Note.

**I, Joginder Singh** Alias Joginder Singh Malhi S/O Mangal Singh Malhi R/O House No. 201, Sector-15a, Hisar, Haryana-125001 have changed my name to Joginder Singh Malhi.

**I, Rashmi** Batra W/O D V Batra R/O House Number 2/391, Hira Mahal, Nabha, Patiala, Punjab-147201 have changed my name to Krishna Batra.

**I, Beena** W/O Ghan Shyam R/O Village Garhi Alawalpur, Garhi Alawalpur (294), Maheshwari, Rewari, Haryana-123106 have changed my name to Bina Devi.

**I, Jackie Hooda** S/O Bijender Singh R/O 596, Rurki(54), Rohtak, Haryana-124401 have changed name of my minor daughter Aarya aged 08 months to Aarya Hooda Flores.

**I, Balwant Kaur** W/O Saravjeet Singh R/O Vpo- Kheri Dab Dalan, Tehsil-Ladwa, Distt-Kurukshetra (Haryana) Declared That After Marriage I Have Changed My Name From Balwant Kaur To Amandeep Kaur In Future All Purpose.

**I, Amritpal Singh** Brar S/O Teja Singh R/O Doda, Tehsil Gidderbaha, District Sri Muktsar Sahib. I Have Change My Name Amritpal Singh Brar To Amritpal Singh.

**I, Lakhbir Kaur** W/O Amritpal Singh R/O Doda, Tehsil Gidderbaha, District Sri Muktsar Sahib. I Have Change Of My Name Lakhbir Kaur To Lakhveer Kaur.

**I Poonam** W/O Dinesh Kumar R/O Near Patwar Khana Barara Tehsil Barara (Ambala) Haryana India Have Changed My Name Poonam To Poonam Chauhan.

**I Radha** W/O Amar Singh R/O #56, Karanpur, Distt Badau (Up) Have Changed My Name From Radha To Rajvati

**I Pawan Kumar** S/O Hans Raj R/O H.No 314, Sector 17, Panchkula, P.O. Sector 8, Panchkula Haryana, Have Changed My Name From Pawan Kumar Bansal.

**I, Dhamam Singh** Hira S/O Khalaul Ram R/O House No.976, Sector-26 Panchkula Have Changed My Name From Dharam Singh Hira To Dharam Singh.

**I Dinesh** S/O Udeyraj Singh R/O Near Patwar Khana Barara Tehsil Barara (Ambala) Haryana India Have Changed My Name Dinesh To Dinesh Kumar.

**I Ajay** Alias Ajay M Paul S/O Mohinder Paul R/O H.No 102 Shivakli Enclave Chanimajra Chandigarh, Have Changed My Name From Ajay Alias Ajay M Paul To Ajay Goswami.

**I Harvinder** Kaur W/O Kanwaljeet Singh Bawa Resident Of # Lig 2638 Sector 66 Sas Nagar Mohali Have Changed My Name To Harvinder Kaur Bawa

**I Kanwaljeet Singh** S/O Santokh Singh Bawa Resident Of # Lig 2638 Sector 66 Sas Nagar Mohali Have Changed My Name To Kanwaljeet Singh Bawa

**I Am Ex No-3392092-W,** Rank-Hav, Name-Ajmer Singh, Residence Of Vill- Badhal, Po-Paharpur, Tehsil-Anandpur Sahib, District-Rupnagar, State-Punjab-140116, Declare That I Change My Wife's Name (Himmit Kaur To Himmt Kaur)

**I Vijay Khanna** S/O Late Sh. Shyam Nath Khanna, R/O H.No 1081 Sector 37 B Chandigarh, Have Changed My Name From Vijay Khanna To Vijay Kumar Khanna.

**I Chaudhary Inder Singh** Naradram S/O Narad Ram, R/O H.No 258/4 Opposite Sbi Chatrokhari Po Bhojpur Teh Sunder Nagar, Salah Mandi Himachal Pradesh 175002, Have Changed My Name From Chaudhary Inder Singh Narandram To Inder Singh.

**I, Army No. 18021353H** Rank SPR, Rajnish Singh son of Rajkumar Singh, resident of village Ambli, Tehsil Jagadhri, District Yamunanagar Haryana, declare that the date of birth of my Father Rajkumar Singh is 03/02/1962 in my army documents while other documents are Aadhar Card and PAN card has 07/09/1962. Now I want to get my Father's date of birth changed to 07/09/1962 in the army documents also. Concerned Please may note the related information.

**I, Army No. 18021353H** Rank-Spr Rajnish Singh son of Rajkumar Singh, resident of village Ambli, Tehsil Jagadhri, District Yamunanagar Haryana, declare that the date of birth of my mother Anguri is 02/03/1961 in my army documents while other documents are Aadhar Card and PAN card has 12/11/1960. Now I want to get my mother's date of birth changed to 12/11/1960 in the army documents also. Concerned Please may note the related information.

**I, Geerja Devi** is real Mother of No 17010095X Rank Nk Shyam Thakur, unit 11CSR, Declare that in my son service record my name is wrongly mentioned as Geerja Devi. My correct name is Girja Devi.

**I Remya Chandran** is legally wife of No. JC 780525F, Rank NB/SUB, Arunjith VS R/O Villyanil, Kanthippara, PO Vitappara (ubc), Distt. Idukki, State Kerala, Pin-685619, Declare that in My husband Army Record My Name is wrongly Recorded As Remya Arunjith My Correct Name is Remya Chandran

**I Poonam Rani** wd/o Jashmer (No.3197570P) Hav. VPO Hatt, Teh. Safidon Distt. Jind declare that I have changed my daughter's name from Kumari Arju to Aarju & her date of birth from 08.06.2008 to 08.04.2008. For all future purposes her correct name is Aarju & date of birth is 08.04.2008.

**Army no 15346336K** Hav/D F V Damodar Biswas of 64 Assault engineer regiment declare that in my army record. My father and mother name and date of birth wrongly record as. Father Joyoed Biswas Date of birth 12/08/1958 and his correct name is Joydeb Biswas DOB 01/01/1965. Mother Rita Rani Biswas date of birth 30/01/1966 and her correct name is Rita Biswas DOB 15/03/1970.

**I, Maninder Kaur** w/o Pawanjit Singh r/o Mehandidpur tehsil Mukerian Distt Hoshiarpur changed my name from Maninder Kaur to Maninder Kaur.

**I, Ramesh Lal** S/o Yunus Masih R/o Village Dullanangal (Gurdaspur) have changed my name to Ramesh Pal. Concerned note.

**I, Balwinder Singh** S/o Balwant Singh R/o Village Ahmedabad PO Dhariwal Distt Gurdaspur have changed my name from Balwinder Singh to Singh Balwinder. Concerned note.

**I, Ashadujaman** Mondal S/o Arman Ali Mondal, R/O Manikkole P.O- Shimulia & P.S. Gopal Nagar, District North 24 Parganas, West Bengal-743262, and Presently R/o at SMQ 249/04, GE(P) No 2 (AF) Chabua, Dibrugarh, Assam declare that in my service record my son name was wrongly recorded as Javed Akther. My son correct name is Javed Akhtar Mondal. Please change my son name from Javed Akther to Javed Akhtar Mondal in my service document vide Affidavited dated 26 July 2024 Sworn in before Notary Dibrugarh, Assam.

**I, No. 15344252X** Ex Spr Bhupinder Singh S/O Shri Surinder Singh R/O Vill. Chadial PO Lachowal Tehsil & Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed the date of birth of my father Surinder Singh from 13-12-1960 to 01-04-1955.

**I, No. 15344252X** Ex Spr Bhupinder Singh S/O Shri Surinder Singh R/O Vill. Chadial PO Lachowal Tehsil & Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed the date of birth of my mother Paramjit Kaur from 20-06-1962 to 28-04-1958.

I hitherto known as Deeksha Sharma D/o Omkar Nath Sharma, R/O Sahdevpur, Shahwazpur, District Haridwar 249402 (Uttarakhand), India have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Deeksha Dutt.

**I, Liliu Ram** S/o Manohar Lal, Vpo Sadalpur, Tehsil Adampur, District Hisar (Haryana), declare that I have changed my name from Liliu Ram to Lokesh Rathor in place of Liliu Ram in all the documents for the future.

**I, Aryan** s/o Rajesh Sharma R/O H.No. 128, Defence Colony, Hisar -125001 (Haryana) have changed my name from Aryan to Aryan Sharma for all future purposes.

**I, Dimple Kaur** W/o No.15580672M Hav Sukhwinder Singh Unit 439 (I) Engr Sqn C/o 56 Apo have changed my name from Dimpal Kaur to Dimple Kaur Vide Affidavit No.IN-PB704028789412W Dt.14.10.2024 before Notary Public Amritsar

**I, Sangeeta Ben** Spouse of No.14940952P L/Nk Chaudhary Jayesh Kumar Bhagwan Bhai R/O Karen Vas Punasna, Mahesana Gujarat-382710 now at 15 Mech Inf C/o 56 Apo have changed my name from Sangeeta Ben to Chaudhary Sangeeta Ben vide Affidavit No.IN-PB50632292708594W Dt.29.08.2024 Before Notary Public Amritsar

I, hitherto Known as Akshay Jain Son of Sanjeev Jain residing at H.No.87 G, Block-G, Bhai Randhir Singh Nagar, District Ludhiana-14012 Punjab have changed my name and Shall hereafter be known as Shalvey R Jain

I, hitherto Known as Seema Rani Wife of Ravt Kani residing at H.No.112, Ward No.12, Tehsil and District Gurdaspur-143521 Punjab have changed my name and Shall hereafter be known as Seema Sharma

I, hitherto Known as Neelam Wife of Harinder Sharma residing at H.No.88, Ward No.5, Street No.L5, Guru Teg Bahadur Nagar, Khanna, Khanna, District Ludhiana-141401 Punjab have changed my name and Shall hereafter be known as Reetu Sharma

**I, Rajni Kumar** Wife of Vikas Kumar residing at H.No.5875, Gali No.12, Nawwan Kot, District Amritsar-143001 Punjab have changed the name of my minor Son Ayaan AGED 14 Years and he Shall hereafter be known as Ayaan Kumar

**I, Rajni Kumar** Wife of Vikas Kumar residing at H.No.5875, Gali No.12, Nawwan Kot, District Amritsar-143001 Punjab have changed the name of my minor Daughter Amayra AGED 03 YEARS and he Shall hereafter be known as Amayra Kumar

**I, Manpreet Singh** S/o Nirmal Singh R/O H.No.E-10/319, Gali Mangal Puri, Khandwala, Amritsar have changed my name from Manpreet Singh to Manpreet Singh Riar

**I, Nirmal Singh** S/o Pyara Singh R/o H. No.E-10/319, Gali Mangal Puri, Khandwala, Amritsar have changed my name from Nirmal Singh to Nirmal Singh Riar

**I, Rakesh Kumar** Aggarwal S/o Jugal Kishore Resident of 52, New Golden Avenue, Amritsar. I have changed my name from Rakesh Kumar Aggarwal to Rakesh Kumar.

**I, Vinod Kumar** Bhatia S/o Sh. Tilak Raj Resident of H.No. 275 , Tilak Nagar ,Amritsar have changed my name from Vinod Kumar Bhatia to Vinod Bhatia

**I, Bandita Das** W/o Akshyen Das R/o Anchali, District Barpeta, Assam have changed my name from Bandita Kallia to Bandita Das

**I, Mulani Khaju** Buddhan S/O Buddhan Mulani R/o Village Gonenwadi, Nandeshwar Solapur, Maharashtra have changed my son's name from Mohammadhusen to Mohammadhusen Khaju Mulani

**I, Mulani Khaju** Buddhan S/O Buddhan Mulani R/o Village Gonenwadi, Nandeshwar Solapur, Maharashtra have changed my son's name from Aahamdali to Aahamdali Khaju Mulani

**I, Surjit Singh** Pannu S/O Sucha Singh R/o H.No.M33, Bhalla Colony Chheharta, Amritsar have changed my name from Surjit Singh Pannu to Surjit Singh

**I, Iman Lal** S/O Ramji Lal R/O Village Binjal, Tehsil Dudhan Sadan, District Patiala, Punjab, have changed my name from Iman Lal to Krishan Lal.

**I, Sukhbir Kaur** S/o Jasbir Singh R/o Ramnagar 112, Tehsil Thanesar District Kurukshetra, declare that my name is wrongly mentioned Sukhbir Singh in my son Ankit's passport. While my actual name is Sukhbir Kaur.

**I, Lalita Taneja** W/o Ajay Taneja R/o H.No. 699, Sector-3, Urban Estate, Kurukshetra, have changed my name from Lalita Taneja to Lalita Rani.

**I Jayshree Patil** Ashok is legally Wedded Spouse of No. 15676450P Rank Hav Patil Ashok B Rao Presently Residing at 2 CSR (A) C/o 56 APO.have changed my Name from Jayshree Patil Ashok To Jayshree Ashok Patil.

**I Savita** W/o Pardeep Kumar, Near Gurudwara, Kardhan, Ambala.have changed my Name from Savita Devi To Savita.

**I Poonam** W/o Service No. JC 473770H Rank Nb/Sub, Malkhan R/o Anand Nagar B, Boh Road, Luxmi Nagar, Boh (27), Ambala. have changed my Son Name from Lakshit Kumer To Lakshit Kumer

**I Sarita Devi** W/o Service No. 15346379Y Rank Nk Name Jitendra Chauhan R/O Maleri Kot, Pawani, Mau, Uttar Pradesh 275307. have changed my Name from Sarita To Sarita Devi.

**I Service No. 14670626H** Rank Hav Niranjan Kumar S/O Manilal Prasad Yadav R/O Vill Araria, P.O Balha, Distt. Khagaria,Bihar 851203 & Unit 148 Fd WKSP Coy (640 EME BNJ)/CO 56 APO.have changed my Wife (Laxmi Devi) DOB from 25.12.1988 To 25.12.1989.

**I Nirmal Singh** R/o 297, Kalarehri, Ambala Cantt.have changed my Name from Narmail Singh To Nirmal Singh.

**I Dheeraj Goel** S/o Shri Chander Shekhar Gupta R/o 75, Ashirwad Cottage, Pooja Vihar, P.O Industrial Estate, Ambala Cantt.have changed my Father Name from Chander Shekhar Goel To Chander Shekhar Gupta.In future my father should be known as Chander Shekhar Gupta.

**I, Bindu Jaspal** D/o Shri Babu Ram Jaspal & wife of Shri Rajesh Kumar resident of House No. 14-A Sector-A, Bandh Road, Near Manku Wood Works, Defence Colony, Ambala Cantt, Haryana have changed my name from Bindu Jaspal to Bindu Verma.

**I, Krishan Kumar** alias Krishan S/o Roshan R/O Kalayatt, Distt. Kaithal (Haryana) declares that I am known by two names Krishan Kumar and Krishan. My both names are correct and used for the same one person. All concerned please note.

**I, Shelly** W/o Gaurav Walia R/O





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Election time

The elections in the two states, along with by-elections, will provide a clear snapshot of the public sentiment

It is election time once again. The last round of elections in 2024 would be held in November. The Election Commission has announced that Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand will begin on November 13. Jharkhand will go to the polls in two phases, on November 13 and 20, while Maharashtra will hold a single-phase election on November 20. The votes for both states will be counted on November 23. Additionally, dates for several Lok Sabha by-elections, including in Wayanad, Kerala, where a bypoll is needed after Rahul Gandhi vacated the seat, have been announced. The Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand are critical for both the ruling and the Opposition parties, as they serve as key battlegrounds to gauge their standing. In Maharashtra, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faces a formidable challenge from the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress.



The MVA aims to capitalise on public dissatisfaction over issues like economic distress and governance failures while projecting a united front despite internal tensions.

In Jharkhand, the contest is equally poised, with the incumbent Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-Congress alliance seeking to fend off the BJP's challenge. The ruling coalition is banking on Chief Minister Hemant Soren's popularity and social welfare schemes to retain power. However, the BJP is expected to emphasise issues like law and order and tribal rights to swing the vote in its favour. Apart from the Assembly polls, by-elections will be conducted on November 13 for four Assembly seats in Punjab—Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbawal (SC), Gidderbaha, and Barnala. These bypolls are seen as indicators of the prevailing political sentiment in the regions, potentially setting the tone for broader electoral battles. In addition, the by-election for the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat in Kerala presents another crucial contest. Speculation is rife that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra may make her electoral debut from this constituency, adding a significant dimension to the Congress's campaign strategy. Elections in India are not only a period of heightened activity for political parties but also a monumental task for the Election Commission and government machinery. Conducting elections in the country is no small feat, as ensuring a peaceful, free and fair process presents significant challenge. The upcoming assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, along with the bypolls, will serve as critical indicators of India's evolving political dynamics. As the states prepare for high-stakes battles, various political scenarios could unfold, influenced by factors like coalition strategies, regional issues and leadership challenges. But ultimately it would be the unpredictable and elusive voters who would decide the fate of the political parties.

On the contrary, Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav's statement a day after the defeat indicated that the alliance with Congress would continue. Akhilesh said, "I want to say that the INDIA bloc will be there. The UP and Congress alliance will remain intact..." The Aam Admi Party has said it will go solo in the Delhi Assembly poll, while it allied with the Congress in the Lok Sabha polls three months ago. Congress won no seat. The other allies criticise Congress for its overconfidence and rigid attitude toward seat sharing. The resurgent Congress, which had doubled its tally in the Lok Sabha polls, weakened after its Haryana shocker. Most exit polls suggested an astounding win for Congress in Haryana because the BJP faced a 10-year anti-incumbency and dealt with a section of disgruntled people. However, the BJP sprung a surprise and registered its most impressive victory in Haryana. No party has ever won a third term in the rural state. Discussions occur between the Congress, the Shiv Sena

## PICTALK



A vendor arranges earthen lamps (Diya) for sale, in Bikaner

PTI

## Why Indian women deserve support, not judgement

We must start questioning the unrealistic expectations placed on women and inculcate a culture that promotes shared responsibilities and duties

Indian women are increasingly taking on obligations that exceed 55 hours per week. They manage to pursue their professional careers while also managing a household—what one may refer to as the "second job." It reveals an unsettling fact about the intimidating pressure on women to perform above their capabilities. Although this problem between job and private life affects women all over the world, it is especially difficult for Indian women due to cultural expectations, societal standards and the long-held conviction that they "must do it all."

The question arises: why is there so much pressure on Indian women to push themselves beyond their breaking point? The answer lies in deeply ingrained gender roles and societal expectations. While strides have been made in women's empowerment, the onus of managing the household and caring for children continues to largely fall on their shoulders, even as they excel in their careers. As more women enter the workforce and pursue professional goals, the expectation



to continue fulfilling traditional roles has not diminished. Instead, it has expanded, creating an unsustainable juggling act. Are women taken for granted? In many ways, yes. The concept that women are born to balance this act manifests itself in the belief that they can easily handle a high-demanding profession while also serving as primary carers, homemakers, and support for the rest of the extended family. However, such an assumption ignores the impact on their physical and mental well-being. Each woman's drive is influenced by the societally imposed "superwoman" image, which puts undue pressure on them. And when

they falter, they are unfairly judged. But why should society judge women for trying to manage the impossible? The expectations placed on women often come with little recognition or appreciation for the sacrifices they make. Instead, when women struggle or choose to prioritise one aspect of their life over another, they are met with criticism rather than compassion. This is especially true for those who lack a strong support system. If a woman does not have family members willing to share the load of child-rearing or household management, she is left to carry an even heavier burden. Should she be judged for

this? Absolutely not. Let us not forget that many Indian women are also teachers, a profession that requires nurturing, patience and a relentless dedication to the betterment of future generations.

These women are shaping young minds in the classroom while simultaneously caring for their own families at home. The least society can do is give them the space and freedom they deserve, without the weight of judgement. It's time we, as a society, recognise that women's worth is not measured by their ability to "do it all." We must start questioning the unrealistic expectations placed on them and, instead, advocate for a culture that promotes shared responsibilities. Supporting women in their endeavors—whether in their careers or at home—by giving them the freedom to make choices without judgement is essential. Only then can we begin to alleviate the unnecessary pressures that have, for too long, weighed on the shoulders of Indian women. (The author is a motivational speaker and a freelance writer; views are personal)



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

## Haryana setback exposes cracks in INDIA Bloc

The Congress defeat has not only dampened the party's resurgence narrative but also underscored the need for a recalibrated approach to coalition politics



KALYANI SHANKAR

The Grand Old Congress Party faces criticism from its INDIA coalition partners for mishandling the recent Haryana Assembly polls, allowing the BJP to win for a third time despite ten years of anti-incumbency. Most exit polls had predicted a clear win for the Congress, but the BJP secured 48 out of 90 seats, a victory even the BJP itself was surprised by. A win in Haryana would have boosted the Congress resurgence story. However, Congress lost this fifth Assembly election recently due to internal conflicts, adding to its previous losses in Punjab, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. It is uncertain whether the partners will be united in fighting against the BJP. Questions like whether an alliance with AAP would have favoured Congress to win in the Haryana polls are being debated. Secondly, the defeat would impact the upcoming elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The immediate impact of the Haryana result is likely in seat sharing in the forthcoming Assembly elections in Delhi, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Thirdly, it is uncertain whether the Congress and AAP will have an alliance. The AAP has already said it will go solo. The INDIA bloc performed well in the 2004 Lok Sabha polls due to its adaptability and compromise. The main aim of the Coalition was to give a one-to-one fight with the BJP and not split the anti-BJP votes. The Coalition put irritable issues on the back burner and managed to work well. They functioned with the sole aim of defeating the BJP and, to a certain extent, succeeded. The BJP majority was reduced, and the government had to be formed with the help of JD (U) and TDP. The Haryana defeat has altered the situation within the Coalition, with the INDIA bloc getting an edge over the Congress. The partners would probably deal with a slightly more restrained and sobered Congress. No one has said so far that the INDIA bloc is finished.



On the contrary, Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav's statement a day after the defeat indicated that the alliance with Congress would continue. Akhilesh said, "I want to say that the INDIA bloc will be there. The UP and Congress alliance will remain intact..." The Aam Admi Party has said it will go solo in the Delhi Assembly poll, while it allied with the Congress in the Lok Sabha polls three months ago. Congress won no seat. The other allies criticise Congress for its overconfidence and rigid attitude toward seat sharing. The resurgent Congress, which had doubled its tally in the Lok Sabha polls, weakened after its Haryana shocker. Most exit polls suggested an astounding win for Congress in Haryana because the BJP faced a 10-year anti-incumbency and dealt with a section of disgruntled people. However, the BJP sprung a surprise and registered its most impressive victory in Haryana. No party has ever won a third term in the rural state. Discussions occur between the Congress, the Shiv Sena



THE MAIN AIM OF THE COALITION WAS TO GIVE A ONE-TO-ONE FIGHT WITH THE BJP AND NOT SPLIT THE ANTI-BJP VOTES. THE COALITION PUT IRRITABLE ISSUES ON THE BACK BURNER AND MANAGED TO WORK WELL

(Uddhav) and the Nationalist Congress Party in Maharashtra. Congress needs to be more responsive to the seat-sharing formula and Sena's demand for Thackeray to be projected as the CM's face even before the polls. The AAP won no seat in the Haryana election but got roughly 1.78 per cent of the votes.

It would have undoubtedly added to the INDIA bloc's kitty if Congress had allied with AAP. According to Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, the Congress ignored the smaller parties and their offers for collaboration. Leaders from the Trinamool Congress, AAP, Shiv Sena (Uddhav), National Conference, RJD, Nationalist Congress Party, and others were critical of the Congress for messing up the Haryana polls. Shiv Sena mouthpiece Saamna said, "No one thought the BJP government would be elected in Haryana again. It seems Congress's overconfidence and arrogance of local Congress leaders led to the party's defeat," the Marathi paper said in its editorial on Wednesday. Repeating the formula adopted during the

Lok Sabha polls for seat sharing is crucial, at least in the Maharashtra and Jharkhand polls. The subdued Congress will not have the upper hand in seat sharing with most of its allies. The present mood in the INDIA coalition must impact Congress's relations with its partners.

The Opposition may not be able to withstand any more shocks. Congress must focus on the 286 seats in a direct fight with the BJP. The 2024 polls proved the Congress' strike rate against the BJP rose to 29 per cent from 8 per cent in 2019. Significantly, the number of seats in which the Congress fought with the BJP was 286, down from 370 in 2014. Congress came to power in 2004 and 2009 because of its cordial relationships with the partners. The onus for keeping the alliance is broadly on the Congress. It must realise that every partner, small or big, is essential. Congress has had introspection sessions, and Panchmadi and Shimla are good examples. It is time for one more such session.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## INDIA-CANADA DIPLOMATIC CRISIS

Madam — Apropos to the article "Souring relations," on October 16, India is withdrawing its High Commissioner from Canada after Canadian PM Justin Trudeau again accused India of masterminding the June 18, 2023, killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar outside the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia. Trudeau's accusation and mischaracterisation of India is based on the American intelligence's raw data supplied to Canada. But, Sikh militants in both Canada and California are deeply involved in organised crime and gang violence. Perhaps, Trudeau believed the volume and frequency of the accusation could trump the truth. He also may believe that doubling down on Sikh militants might win him votes in key districts. On both points, he is wrong. After Khalistani terrorists blew up Air India Flight 182, ignorance can be no excuse about the movement's lethality. Left unchecked, the Khalistani extremists Trudeau's government shelters can be as lethal as Al Qaeda. The movement would be impotent without funding, however. Here, Canadian banks are as complicit as the Arab and Somali hawala agents who ultimately helped move money around prior to Al Qaeda's 1998 East Africa embassy bombings and the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in New York and Washington. Hence, Canada is guilty of abetting terrorism.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

## END COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Madam — It is indeed a matter of concern that communal clashes are again showing their ugly faces. No religion can recommend violent reactions for any reason. But every religion suggests being patient even under utter provocation. Therefore, clash in the name of God and religion is only an organised attempt to disturb peace and take undue advantage of it. But the history is clear with its messages that such chauvinists can

## Firecracker ban insufficient



This refers to the news, "Delhi government imposes ban on firecrackers to combat air pollution" (October 15). Besides the increasing population density, the air in Delhi remains polluted and it is being inhaled by the majority of the populace and people commuting there. Recently, the AQI level is showing

alarming conditions.

Apparently the decision of the Delhi government to ban the production, storage, sale and use of firecrackers till January 25 seems to help in reducing the worsening pollution condition, but it will irritate the majority of Hindus in view of the upcoming Chhath puja and Diwali festivals.

The State BJP President Virendra Sachdeva has raised a valid question to the Delhi government that the main reasons for pollution are the burning of stubble in the neighbouring state of Punjab and dust is flying on many broken roads. Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President Devendra Yadav has argued the bitter truth that the arrangements made to control pollution have been inadequate. It would be better to discourage the use of firecrackers in social and religious events.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

attract some people for sometime but not all for all the times. People have their basic livelihood issues and any group interested in relieving them of their plights should come out with constructive ideas and suggestions.

But sharpening the frictions and promoting clashes should be understood by the people as anti-social acts that aim at reaping advantages for the self or the group. If any group plans to promote its cause by promoting differences and violent reactions, it should remember that the results of such activities will be only negative in the long run and the gains, if any, will be purely ephemeral. However, it is for the people to identify such persons and groups and keep them at a distance without falling prey to their deceptive traps.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

## LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Madam — In our daily lives, mindless scrolling on social media has turned into an addiction fuelled by the constant overflow of news and information.

People often find themselves endlessly scrolling through content without any specific purpose. We must try to acknowledge that this scrolling addiction can lead to a decrease in cognitive ability leading to various psychological disorders, or sometimes it may also hamper the mental well-being of an individual, resulting in a reduction and a lack of focus and attention while doing any job or specific task. Scrolling might give us temporary pleasure, but at what cost?

We are just making ourselves more vulnerable and slowly becoming a puppet of social media and mobile phones. Setting a limit on scrolling, planning a digital free period, and bringing offline leisure activities into our daily routine can help an individual to alleviate this dangerous addiction. So, don't lose yourself for some momentary pleasure because ultimately health is wealth.

Neha Tomar | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## REVIVING FAMILY BONDS

A family can transform a person into an achiever by right encouragement and support



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJI

Small family, Happy family (Chhota Parivar-Sukhi Pariwar) & 'Hum Do Hamare', these two jingles coined by the administration had changed the family planning scenario in India over the years. But it's so ironic that despite becoming the first country to adopt a national policy for limiting a great Indian proclivity, India is expected to overtake China in 2034. At the time of independence, there were 345 million Indians. The world took 454 years to go from 345 million in 1310 AD to a billion, but India took just 52 years. Looking at the above facts and figures one wonders as to what would be the societal structure in a country that takes the burden of a population of a billion people. Sadly, the situation is quite grim, because today we see fewer families and more individuals living their lives on their terms with an 'I care a damn attitude' which is quite common in the metropolis. Our forefathers were brought up with strong family values, but with passing time and ever-changing scenarios, today those core values have been left behind to adopt new so-called modern values. It's so unfortunate that today very few of us know the importance of living or growing up in a family. One must understand the fact that a family is the first school where the literate and the illiterate have got their first lessons in the art of living and values, traditions, customs and conventions. Also in a family, everyone feels secure and protected. Everyone feels strong because of the strength of the family. Everyone feels that others welcome him or her. Everyone feels a kind of support, sustenance and encourage-



ment. It is, therefore, essential to help and facilitate the growth of good supportive families for foundation as a family tradition rather than promoting an individualistic lifestyle for the sake of the next Gen & future to come.

There is some kind of magnetic force that holds the members of a family together. In other words, it is a feeling of closeness and belongingness in the mind of every person and the feeling of acceptance on the part of the whole group that gives it the nomenclature of a family. This feeling of acceptance is always based on the feeling of mutual love, loyalty and trust and also understanding and accommodation. Today we see that families are splitting up.

Certain values like mutual affection, love & genuine caring that make a family work are vanishing because everyone wants to live an independent life without any kind of family interference. However, if the younger ones continue to give regard to the elders and the elders continue to give love to the younger ones, then the family life will continue to be undisturbed and everyone will act responsibly. But, if each one gives up their responsibility and the feeling of concern for others, then cracks would appear and get deeper. Hence to preserve the family structure & tradition, one needs to have tolerance, sobriety & humility because family is very essential to civilised life, be it a spiritual family or the society as a family or of nations. Hence we should consider family as a place where we can work for physical, mental, moral and spiritual growth and can create an environment where others also can grow. A family can change a person into a great leader, disciplinarian, soldier, criminal or scholar by encouraging or discouraging, supporting or condemning certain positive or negative traits in him.

We must, therefore, pay attention to the transformation of families because families are the breeding grounds for good or bad human beings. So, let us awaken people to observe family values such as mutual love, trust, acceptance, accommodation, consideration and care for the wellbeing of others, the spirit of adjustment, tolerance, responsibility and cooperation because if these family values flourish, the nation and the whole humankind will flourish too.

(Writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

# Stubble burning crisis needs practical solutions

Without swift and sustained efforts, northern India would face yet another year of deteriorating air quality, leaving millions to grapple with bad air quality



BISWAJEET BANARJEE



The Supreme Court has taken a strong stance against the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) for its failure to control stubble burning, a major contributor to air pollution in Delhi-NCR. The court's rebuke, delivered during a hearing on October 3, emphasised the need for effective ground-level interventions and questioned why the Commission had not implemented any provisions of the relevant Act to curb pollution from crop residue burning. Stubble burning, especially in the northern states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, has been a major environmental challenge for years. Farmers often resort to burning crop residue after harvesting paddy and wheat due to the increasing mechanisation of farming, the use of combined harvesters, a shortage of labour, and rising labour costs. This practice, prevalent in October and November following the paddy harvest, results in the release of large amounts of particulate matter into the atmosphere, contributing to the hazardous air quality in Delhi-NCR.

The Supreme Court's criticism of the CAQM reflects a broader frustration over the Commission's inability to effectively tackle this issue. Despite being set up three years ago to address pollution in the National Capital Region and surrounding areas, the CAQM has been criticised for its slow pace and lack of tangible outcomes. The court particularly highlighted that the Commission meets only once every three months, a frequency deemed inadequate for addressing a recurring crisis like stubble burning. Moreover, the Commission has issued only 82 directives since its inception, a number that the court described as insufficient to deal with the scale of the problem. A significant concern raised by the Supreme Court is the lack of adequate staffing within the pollution control boards of Delhi-NCR and other affected states, including Uttar Pradesh. The



FARMERS OFTEN RESORT TO BURNING CROP RESIDUE AFTER HARVESTING PADDY AND WHEAT DUE TO THE INCREASING MECHANISATION OF FARMING, THE USE OF COMBINED HARVESTERS, A SHORTAGE OF LABOUR, AND RISING LABOUR COSTS

court ordered that these vacant posts be filled by April 30, 2025, to improve monitoring and enforcement capabilities. Effective staffing is critical for implementing measures on the ground, particularly when dealing with farmers who rely on burning crop residue as a quick and cost-effective way to clear their fields.

Despite repeated interventions from both the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Supreme Court, stubble burning incidents continue to surge. Last year alone, more than 33,000 incidents of stubble burning were recorded in Punjab, even after explicit instructions to engage with farmers to explore alternatives. The lack of a coordinated effort between the state governments and the CAQM has only exacerbated the pollution crisis during the winter months.

**Turning Stubble into a Resource:** While the focus remains on the failures of the CAQM and the continued challenges in states like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a notable example of how stubble can be managed more sustainably. The state has successfully implemented initiatives that transform stubble into an energy resource and natural fertiliser, benefiting both the environment and the agricultural community.

The key to this transformation has been the establishment of Compressed Biogas (CBG) plants that convert crop residue into energy and high-quality compost. This approach has not only addressed environmental concerns but has also created an additional income stream for farmers, who sell stubble as raw

material for the CBG process. In this way, stubble has shifted from being a burden to becoming a valuable asset in Uttar Pradesh's rural economy. As of last year, Uttar Pradesh led the country in CBG production, with ten operational plants. Currently, 24 CBG units are active, and another 93 are under construction. The state aims to have more than 100 CBG plants operational soon, a goal endorsed by Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. During a March 2024 announcement, he highlighted the state's plan to double its bio-coal and biodiesel production by 2025. The success of CBG production in Uttar Pradesh has been bolstered by the Uttar Pradesh State Bio-Energy Policy 2022, which offers various incentives for establishing bio-CNG and CBG units using agricultural waste.

The policy aims to set up CBG plants in every district, providing local solutions for managing stubble while promoting energy self-sufficiency. A significant milestone in this journey was the inauguration of a CBG plant in Dhuriyapar, Gorakhpur, on March 8, 2023, by Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The plant, built for Rs 165 crore, processes 200 metric tonnes of straw, 20 metric tonnes of press mud, and 10 metric tonnes of cattle dung daily. It produces 20 metric tonnes of biogas and 125 metric tonnes of organic manure, contributing to higher agricultural yields while reducing dependency on chemical fertilisers. This initiative allows farmers to diversify their income sources and play

a crucial role in the energy sector. By reducing the practice of stubble burning, the state is making strides in environmental protection. The Yogi Adityanath government has expressed confidence that the enhanced production of bio-coal and biodiesel will help reduce air pollution in the region over the next five years.

The Supreme Court's critique of the CAQM underscores the urgency of finding a balanced approach to stubble burning that respects both environmental concerns and the practical challenges faced by farmers. Uttar Pradesh's model of converting stubble into a resource could serve as a blueprint for other states grappling with similar issues. However, the broader challenge remains: implementing such solutions at scale requires consistent policy support, adequate resources, and a willingness to engage with farmers directly. The court's directive for the CAQM to improve its approach and for state governments to fill vacant posts by 2025 is a step towards accountability.

Yet, the real test will lie in translating these directives into action before another winter brings the familiar, suffocating haze back to the skies of Delhi-NCR. The question remains whether the CAQM, in partnership with state governments, can adapt and adopt innovative solutions like those seen in UP. Without swift and sustained efforts, the region risks facing another year of deteriorating air quality, leaving millions to grapple with the health consequences of inaction.

(The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer; views expressed are personal)

# Urbanisation and youth: Building a healthier future amid rapid growth

By 2050, with 70 per cent of the global population expected to live in cities, engaging youth in shaping sustainable urban future is more crucial than ever

Urbanisation, an engine for economic prosperity and resources, sits at the centre of modernity and impacts health outcomes. With rapid urbanisation, the UN projects that by 2050, 7 of 10 people will live in cities, and the youth will likely be the most dominant population. The future will be forged by the ever-increasing global youth, who are integral to playing a dynamic and revolutionary role in creating and building strong, prosperous, sustainable, and vibrant societies. In recent years, international organisations have emphasised the meaningful involvement of youth as vital to accelerating progress towards the SDGs while development continues to grow globally. The approach also coincides



ASHWAJIT SINGH

with this year's message of World Habitat Day, which focuses on "engaging youth to create a better urban future." However, while we work towards engaging the new generation in planning their urban present and future through participatory processes and local leadership opportunities, ensuring their healthy livelihood is imperative. Urbanisation's positive attributes also mask the inequalities

that exist within it. Not all city residents experience or can access these benefits equally. For instance, 40 per cent of India's population will reside in the urban setup by 2030, with 24 per cent being the youth (15-29), making it a relatively young country. Although rapid urbanisation will continue to improve India's average household socio-economic condition and child health status, it is expected to disproportionately affect the health of urban youth, who are likely to become more vulnerable to health challenges. Urbanisation without accounting for the primary healthcare amenities results in significant health disparities. As gentrification grows with urbanisation, a large chunk of the youth is likely to reside in

urban slums and low-income areas. These areas carry distinct health challenges that are influenced by broader socio-economic determinants such as poverty, education and employment. Youth from low-income families and areas are more likely to face barriers to accessing education, which in turn limits job opportunities and perpetuates a cycle of poor health outcomes. These informal settlements may sit adjacent to an affluent neighbourhood. Still, the people living there lack access to safe water and sanitation infrastructure, becoming hotspots for waterborne and vector-borne diseases due to flooding, open sewers, and overcrowding. With such poor hygiene, increased rates of malnutrition



among children and young adults worsen the burden of diseases. In addition to infectious diseases, urban youth in lower-income areas are increasingly exposed to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, which are often exacerbated by poor diet, stress, and lack of access to early diagnosis or regular health checkups. These substantial regional disparities affecting urban youths

living and health conditions are also caused by the inequitable distribution of clinics and healthcare centres, which limits care options. According to NFHS-3, only 39.9 per cent of urban poor children get full immunisation compared to 65.4 per cent of urban non-poor children. Lower vaccination rates and a lack of awareness of ongoing health issues negatively impact school attendance and cognitive development. The National Urban Health Mission (NUHM), launched in 2013, has been instrumental in meeting the regulatory, reformatory, and developmental public health priorities for urban settings. Over the years, NUHM has improved access to health-care, allowing the urban poor

to choose public over costly private services. Among the other initiatives to focus on urban youth health, the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2021 outlines a 10-year vision for youth development by 2030, aligning with the United Nations' SDGs. The NYP prioritises youth health as essential for India's holistic growth and progress by addressing critical health components of urban youth and acknowledging mental health. Further, India's pioneering step towards building inclusive health that benefits all and focuses on the youth also found prominence in the recent G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration in 2023. The report encompasses ways to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and advance with

more health collaborations, especially when facing challenging mental health. While policies like NUHM and NYP have made strides in addressing urban youth health, more needs to be done and implemented to improve primary healthcare. Many urban healthcare centres still struggle with understaffing, lack of resources, and accessibility issues for slum-dwelling youth. To ensure that India's urban youth thrive, it is crucial to increase investments in health services, prioritise mental health care, and continue engaging youth in the decision-making process for urban development.

(The writer is the Founder and Managing Director of IPE Global; views expressed are personal)

# Israel strikes southern suburbs of Beirut for the first time in nearly a week

AP ■ BEIRUT

Israeli jets struck the southern suburbs of Beirut early Wednesday for the first time in six days, Lebanese state media reported. The casualty count was not yet clear.

The attack comes just one day after caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said the United States government gave him some assurances of Israel easing its strikes in the Lebanese capital.

Israel says it is striking Hezbollah assets in the suburbs, where the militant group has a strong presence, but it is also a busy residential and commercial area. The Israeli military said the Wednesday strike hit a weapons warehouse under a residential building.

The Israeli military posted an evacuation warning on the X platform saying it is targeting a building in the Haret Hreik neighborhood. An Associated Press photographer who witnessed the strikes said there were three in the area. The first strike was documented less than an hour after the notice.



Smoke rise from destroyed buildings that were hit by Israeli airstrikes in Qana village, south Lebanon on Wednesday. AP/PTI

Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel on Oct. 8 in solidarity with the Palestinian militant group Hamas, following their surprise attack on southern Israel. A year of low-level fighting escalated

into all-out war last month, and has displaced some 1.2 million people in Lebanon. Elsewhere, Israeli strikes late Tuesday in the southern town of Qana killed at least 15

people, according to Lebanon's Civil Defense. Nuhad Bustanji, a spokesperson for the first responders, said rescue efforts were still underway and the toll could rise. Videos

shared on social media showed the smoking ruins of a building targeted in the strike with surrounding structures damaged as well. Local media said there were several

strikes in the southern town Tuesday night. Qana was the site of an Israeli artillery strike on a United Nations compound that killed dozens of civilians in 1996.

# Zelenskyy's 'victory plan' includes big hurdle for West 'NATO membership for Ukraine'

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday his plan to win his country's fight against Russia's invasion could bring peace next year, but it contains a step that some crucial Western allies have so far refused to countenance: inviting Ukraine to join NATO before the war ends.

"If we start moving according to this victory plan now, it may be possible to end the war no later than next year," Zelenskyy told his country's parliament.

He has recently been trying to win approval for the plan from Western partners, who so far have stopped short of publicly voicing their support for it.

The first point in Zelenskyy's five-point plan that was presented in a speech to the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, is perhaps the most ambitious and the most likely to make Western allies balk: letting Ukraine into NATO while the fighting continues.

Zelenskyy said granting Ukraine membership in the alliance would be a "testament of (allies') determination" to support Ukraine. It may, however, be too ambitious a step.

NATO's collective security guarantee — Article 5 of the military alliance's treaty — is the pillar on which its credibility is based. It is a political commitment by all member countries to come to the aid of any member whose sov-

eighty or territory might be under attack.

NATO makes its decisions by consensus, and many allies — including the United States and Germany — refuse to allow Ukraine in while fighting continues because they fear being dragged into a wider war with Russia.

At their summit in Washington in July, NATO's 32 members declared Ukraine on an "irreversible" path to membership in the Western military alliance. Any decision on offering to start membership talks is probably not likely before the next summit in the Netherlands in June.

Ukraine's troops are having trouble holding back Russia's military might, especially in the eastern Donetsk region where they are gradually being pushed backward. Though Russia's gains have been incremental, its steady forward movement is slowly adding up and Ukraine keenly feels the need for more large-scale Western help.

But there are signs that Western support may be waning, diminished by a focus on the Middle East wars and domestic political concerns. The US elections next month could bring a major shift in Ukraine's fortunes, as Washington has been the biggest provider of military aid.

Zelenskyy publicly acknowledged for the first time that in private talks with Ukraine its Western partners are increasing-

ly talking about "negotiations" with Russia and much less frequently use the word "justice" in conversations about the war.

He also dialled up the stakes in Ukraine, repeating his recent claims that North Korea is now sending military personnel to help Russia's war effort, as well as delivering ammunition, and that Iran and China are also aiding Moscow.

Zelenskyy's "victory plan" contains confidential sections which he didn't mention in Parliament, officials said.

Other aspects of the plan include continued striking of targets on Russian soil, including the incursion into Russia's Kursk border region that began in August and more long-range drone strikes on Russian infrastructure.

Ukraine, he said, also needs more air defence systems and access to a broader range of intelligence from allies.

Zelenskyy noted that Ukraine is rich in natural resources, including critically important metals "worth trillions of US dollars," such as uranium, titanium, lithium, graphite and others.

Those Ukrainian assets, as well as the country's agricultural production, are among Russia's key targets in the war, he said, but could be shared in postwar times with partners.

Also in a postwar period, battle-hardened Ukrainian troops would be an asset for NATO efforts to keep Russia at bay.

# At least 100 killed as gasoline tanker explodes in Nigeria

AP ■ ABUJA

More than 100 people have been killed and 50 others injured after a gasoline tanker overturned in Nigeria and sparked an explosion as dozens of people rushed to the vehicle to scoop up the fuel, police said Wednesday.

The explosion occurred past midnight in Jigawa state's Maijya town after the tanker driver lost control of the vehicle while travelling on a highway close to a university, police spokesperson Lawan Adam said.

Deadly tanker accidents are common in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, where traffic regulations are not strictly enforced in many places and there is a lack of alternatives such as an efficient railway system to transport cargo.

It is also common for people to salvage fuel after such accidents, especially with Nigeria's soaring fuel prices.

Residents who heard about the latest accident rushed to the scene and were scooping up fuel, "sparking a massive inferno that killed 94 people on the spot," Adam said.

Videos that appeared to be from the scene showed a massive fire stretching across the entire area, with what appeared to be bodies littered at the scene.



# Jinping's rare visit to province facing Taiwan

AP ■ TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

China's President Xi Jinping made a rare visit to a province facing Taiwan following military exercises that mobilised China's navy, air force, missile force and land troops to simulate a blockade of the self-governing island democracy that Beijing claims as its own territory and threatens to annex by force.

Xi did not comment on the military exercises during his visit to Fujian province, according to the official Xinhua News Agency, but his visit came on the heels of China's dispatch of a record 125 aircraft, as well as its Liaoning aircraft carrier and ships, in large-scale military exercises surrounding Taiwan and its outlying islands on Monday.

Xi has largely avoided public appearances and foreign travel over the past year, but bringing Taiwan under Beijing's control remains a priority for his administration as head of the ruling Communist Party and its military, the People's Liberation Army.

Taiwan's newly elected president Lai Ching-te has been vociferously criticized by Beijing for rejecting its position that Taiwan is a part of China.

The drills came four days after Taiwan celebrated the founding of its government on its National Day, when Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said in a speech that China has no right to represent Taiwan and declared his commitment to "resist annexation or encroachment".

# Don't look at China's BRI through 'narrow political prism': Pak

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday rooted for Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative at the SCO summit here, saying such connectivity projects should not be viewed through a "narrow political prism" — an apparent reference to India's reluctance to endorse it.

In his opening remarks at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, he said efforts like China's Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is a part of the larger project, should be expanded.

India has shown little enthusiasm for the China's "unilateral" initiative. And it has repeatedly criticised the China-Pakistan corridor for violating its territorial integrity as it involves building infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Indirectly challenging India's position, Sharif said, "Let us not look at such projects through the narrow political prism, and invest in our collective connectivity capacities which are crucial to advancing the shared vision of an economically integrated region."

In his speech later, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said trade and connectivity initiatives must recognise territorial integrity and sovereignty and it is essential to have an "honest conversation" on lack of trust, a remark seen as an indirect reference to China.

The SCO comprises China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. Sixteen more countries are affiliated as observers or "dialogue partners".



Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (centre), China's Premier Li Qiang, Belarus Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Olzhas Bektenov, Tajikistan's Prime Minister Kokhir Rasulzoda, and other leaders pose for group photo at the opening session of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting in Islamabad, on Wednesday. AP/PTI

In his closing address, the Pakistan leader condemned the Israeli attacks in Gaza.

"We cannot ignore the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the international community bears the responsibility to ensure an immediate and unconditional ceasefire leading to the establishment of state of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds as its capital," he said.

The Pakistan prime minister urged member states to strengthen the SCO framework to tackle regional challenges. "We are at a historic moment of transition where sweeping transformations are reshaping the global, social, political, economic, and security landscape," he said.

He affirmed Pakistan's "commitment to regional peace, stability and enhanced connectivity and sustainable socio-economic development".

He said the SCO embodies the "collec-

tive voice and wishes of over 40 per cent of the global population anchored in the Shanghai spirit".

"Together, we have the potential to drive socio-economic progress, enhance regional peace and stability, and to improve the quality of life for our citizens," he said.

Sharif urged the leaders to use the SCO meeting to "exchange ideas, share best practices and forge concrete action plans that will benefit our economies and societies". He expressed hope that "wonderful outcomes that will emerge from our in-depth deliberations".

"Our collaboration, joint teamwork expands academic and tourism linkages, poverty alleviation, empowerment of women and youth across the SCO region are reflection and commitment of our determination to promote prosperity through unity," he said.

Sharif said Afghanistan provides oppor-

tunities for trade and transit, while also asking the Taliban government in that country to ensure that its territory is not used for terrorism against its neighbours. He called for collective efforts to eradicate poverty. "Poverty is not just a social issue but a moral imperative," he said. He said it is time to tackle the threat of the climate change sweeping across the region.

"Climate change is an existential crisis that transcends our borders and its impacts are felt universally," the Pakistani leader said.

He said Pakistan was on the frontline of disasters linked with climate change, as shown by 2022 floods that affected millions of people and caused losses worth USD30 billion.

There was no direct reference in his speech to bilateral issues with India. Pakistan became a full member of the SCO at its 2017 summit in Kazakhstan.

# Mexican president acknowledges killings of 3 civilians by military

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

Mexico's new president acknowledged Tuesday that three civilians including a child died in two shootouts involving the military last week in a violent border city.

President Claudia Sheinbaum said a soldier was killed in one of the shootouts, as well as two adults and an 8-year-old girl. She said the events on Friday and Saturday are under investigation. But Sheinbaum gave no sign of backing away from the outsized role that she and her predecessor have given to the armed forces.

The events in Nuevo Laredo, across the border from Laredo, Texas, started Friday when a nurse, her husband and son found themselves on a road where soldiers were pursuing suspects' vehicles. The husband, Víctor Carrillo Martínez, told local media there was a confrontation and his wife died in the crossfire.

Sheinbaum said the soldier was apparently killed in an exchange of gunfire.

"It had to do with criminals who

opened fire on an army vehicle," she said. "It is very important to say that Nuevo Laredo is where criminal groups have carried out the most attacks on the army and the National Guard." The city has long been in the grip of the Northeast Cartel, an offshoot of the old Zetas gang.

The second incident in Nuevo Laredo happened Saturday, when the 8-year-old and her grandmother were driving to a store and were caught in the middle of a pursuit by soldiers or National Guard officers.

The grandmother told reporters that a military vehicle was pursuing an SUV and her car got stuck between them and the military opened fire.

The Human Rights Commission of Nuevo Laredo said a young man's tortured body was found nearby in a truck that the army and National Guard had been pursuing. Sheinbaum confirmed the two deaths, saying the shootings had involved the militarized National Guard.

"In case there has been any misbehavior by any member of the guard or the army, or any official,

it will be punished," she said. The Defense Department, which controls the National Guard, said it had no immediate comment on the shootings.

Last week, the army was involved in another shooting that killed six migrants and wounded 10. In the incident near Tapachula, close to the border with Guatemala, soldiers claimed they heard "detonations" and opened fire on a truck carrying migrants from Egypt, Nepal, Cuba, India, Pakistan and El Salvador.

The dead included an 11-year-old Egyptian girl. The area is often used by migrant smugglers, but warring drug cartels also operate in the region.

Former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who left office Sept. 30, gave the military an unprecedentedly wide role in public life and law enforcement. He created the militarized Guard and used the combined forces as the country's main law enforcement agencies, supplanting police.

But critics say the military is not trained to do civilian law enforcement work.

# Bodies of 5 Russian climbers who died on Nepal peak have been retrieved

AP ■ KATHMANDU

The bodies of five Russian mountaineers who died on the world's seventh-highest peak were retrieved from the mountain on Wednesday and flown to Kathmandu.

The bodies were picked up by rescue helicopters from base camp on Wednesday. They were then transported from the airport in Kathmandu to the morgue at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital.

The Russians were climbing the 8,167-metre (26,788-foot) high Mount Dhaulagiri during Nepal's autumn climbing season.

The climbers were reported missing on Oct. 6 and a rescue helicopter spotted their bodies two days later. Bad weather and the location of the bodies made it difficult for rescuers to retrieve the bodies.

Two of the climbers reached the summit, the while other three had turned around without reaching the top before teammates at base camp lost radio contact with them.

# Hong Kong cuts liquor tax in effort to reignite its nightlife industry

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong's leader announced a cut to liquor tax Wednesday as the Asian financial hub hopes to revive its reputation as a travel destination with a vibrant nightlife and dining scene.

After fulfilling Beijing's long-standing imperative to enact a homegrown national security law, Chief Executive John Lee now faces challenges with economic competitiveness against regional rivals like Singapore, Japan, and mainland Chinese metropolises.

Changes in residents' lifestyles and a wave of middle-class emigration during the COVID-19 pandemic have dampened local demand. Many residents now prefer to spend their weekends in mainland China, attracted by its lower prices and a wider variety of entertainment options. Visitors from the mainland are also spending less in the city than before.

Vacant shops are commonly seen in the city's most popular shopping districts, and rev-



due at the city's bars were down about 28% in the first half of 2024 from the same period in 2019, preliminary official data showed.

In his annual policy address, Lee said the duty rate for liquor with an import price of more than 200 Hong Kong dollars (about \$26) would be slashed from 100% to 10% for the portion above that price starting Wednesday. He hoped the policy would foster the logistics, storage, tourism and high-end

dining industries.

The government previously told lawmakers that after wine duties were abolished in 2008, imports jumped 80% in a year and the city welcomed hundreds of new wine-related businesses.

Lee, a former security chief handpicked by Beijing to lead Hong Kong, pushed through the new security law in March. Critics fear the law will further curtail the civil liberties promised to the former British

colony when it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

That law follows similar national legislation Beijing imposed in 2020 to quell huge anti-government protests. Since that law took effect, many of the city's leading activists have been prosecuted, forced into self-exile or silenced. The Hong Kong government said the security laws are necessary for the city's stability.

But in the wake of these dramatic political changes, many middle-class families and young professionals have emigrated to Britain, Canada, Taiwan and the United States.

To attract more wealthy migrants, Lee also revised a scheme that awards residency to applicants who invest a minimum of 30 million Hong Kong dollars (\$3.9 million) in certain types of assets. Starting Wednesday, purchases of homes valued at 50 million Hong Kong dollars (\$6.4 million) or more can be counted for up to a third of the requirement, he said.





# TRAI chief highlights balanced satcom spectrum consultation

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

As battlelines are being drawn over the modalities of allocating satcom spectrum, TRAI Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti on Wednesday said consultation process is currently on and that the telecom regulator will consider all inputs put before taking a considered view.

The regulator's comments came as Starlink CEO Elon Musk and Indian tycoons are locked in a standoff over satellite spectrum.

Jio recently sought a revision of a consultation paper on recommending norms for "terms and conditions for the assignment of spectrum for certain satellite based commercial Communications services".

"We have received reference from the Telecom Department and we have initiated consultation process in response to reference that has been received from DoT and it covers issue that have been referred to TRAI by the DoT... The consultation process is on, we will consider all inputs and views that are received during consultation process and we will come out

with our considered recommendations," TRAI Chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti told reporters on the sidelines of ILC.

Asked about the demand by Reliance Jio that the TRAI consultation paper be revised to ensure a level playing field between terrestrial and satellite players, TRAI chairman said, "different stakeholders raise different demands on the consultation process, and we consider all these viewpoints and inputs and take a considered view.

World's richest man Elon Musk has taken on Indian billionaires Mukesh Ambani and Sunil Bharti Mittal over the allocation of spectrum used in wireless communication using satellites, calling their demand for the auction of such airwaves "unprecedented".

While Ambani's Reliance Jio has been vocal about the need to allocate such spectrum through an auction to give a level-playing field to legacy operators who buy airwaves and set up infrastructure like telecom towers, Mittal on Tuesday articulated the need for satellite companies harboring any urban



ambitions to buy spectrum as telecom companies do. Musk-led Starlink is demanding administrative allotment of licences in line with the global trend, as it looks to tap into the world's fastest-growing mobile telephony and internet market. This has found some backing in Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who said on Tuesday that such airwaves will be given out through administrative allocation and not auctioned.

Scindia said the Telecom Act of 2023 passed in December has put the matter in 'Schedule 1', which means that for satcom spectrum will be allocated administratively.

"... Spectrum does not come without a cost. What that cost is and what the formula of that cost is going to be, will not be decided by you or me... It will be decided by Trai... And there is a paper that has already been circulated by

Trai, and we have a regulatory authority for telecom, and that regulatory authority has been empowered by the constitution to decide what that administrative pricing is going to be," he had said. The minister had said that he is very confident that Trai will come up with the best pricing that should be adopted, provided that it is being given in an administrative manner. "Satellite spectrum across the world is allocated administratively. So, India is not doing anything different from the rest of the world. Conversely, if you do decide to auction it then you would be doing something, which is different from the rest of the world," the minister said. Pointing out that satellite spectrum is shared airwaves, Scindia said, "If the spectrum is shared then how can you price it individually". Musk first termed the demand made by Jio last week for shunning sector regulator Trai's consultation paper on satellite broadband being allocated and not auctioned as "unprecedented", and then asked if it was "too much trouble" to allow Starlink to provide internet services in India.

# India reiterates opposition to China's Belt and Road Initiative

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

India on Wednesday once again refused to endorse China's ambitious 'One Belt One Road' initiative, becoming the only country in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) not to support the controversial connectivity project.

A joint communique unveiled at the end of the SCO's Council of Heads of Government conclave hosted by Islamabad said Russia, Belarus, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan reaffirmed their support for the Chinese connectivity initiative.

It said the countries noted ongoing work on the implementation of the project, including efforts to link the Eurasian Economic Union with the One Road One Initiative (OBOR).

India has been refusing to endorse OBOR in previous SCO conclaves as well. India has been severely critical of the OBOR, previously known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as the project includes the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

There has been growing global criticism against the OBOR as a number of countries are reeling under the burden of debt while implementing projects relating to the initiative.



In his address at the SCO conclave, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, "debt is a serious concern" but did not elaborate further. "Collaborative connectivity can create new efficiencies," he said.

The joint communique said the heads of delegations noted the proposal to create a 'Greater Eurasian Partnership' with the participation of the SCO, Eurasian Economic Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations as well as other interested states and multilateral associations.

"The heads of delegations, reaffirming their desire to ensure stable economic and social development in the SCO region, noted the importance of implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy for the period up to 2030 and the programme of multilateral trade and economic cooperation of the SCO member states," it said.

"They stressed the need for coordinated efforts through the mechanisms of relevant cooperation in order to implement the respective action plans," it added.

The SCO conclave was chaired by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Besides Jaishankar, the conclave was attended by Chi-n-ese Premier Li Qiang, Belarus Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, Kaza-kh PM Olzhas Bektenov, Russian PM Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik PM Kohir Rasulzoda, Uzbek PM Abdullariqov, Kyrgyzstan's Cha-i-rman of Ministers Cabinet Zharapov Akylybek and Iran's First Vice Pres-ident Mohammad Reza Aref.

# Piyush Goyal urges industry to prioritise quality over subsidies

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday asked the industry to focus on making high quality products to tap global markets as export competitiveness will not come from government subsidies or support.

He also said that the government is putting its effort to nudge industry to get into the manufacturing of high quality products as it is a "tough" task to get industry to accept that they should be making quality goods.

Initially, the government faced a huge amount of opposition from the industry on quality control orders. "Our export competitiveness is not going to come from subsidies or government support. It is not going to come from our closing the doors to the rest of the world. If we are looking at self-reliant India, it can only happen when India will be self-confident and that confidence will only come when we all decide that quality is not our job, it is our duty," the minister said.

He added that if the Indian industry is not competitive in any product, that can be imported the industry has to work towards competitiveness where it has a comparative advantage with other nations.

The government is taking a series of steps such as rolling out Quality Control Orders



(QCOs) to boost manufacturing in the country.

Till 2014, he said, only 14 QCOs covering 106 products were issued, but in the last 10 years, the government has issued as many as 174 such orders covering 732 products to ensure that more and more people will become aligned with better quality standards.

These orders help curb the import of sub-standard products, prevent unfair trade practices and ensure the safety and well-being of consumers as well as the environment.

Under the order, an item cannot be produced, sold, traded, imported and stocked unless it bears the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) mark. Violation of the provision of the BIS Act can attract imprisonment of up to two years or a fine of at least Rs 2 lakh for the first offence. In case of second and subsequent offences, the fine will increase to a minimum of Rs 5 lakh and extend up to 10 times of the value of goods or articles.

QCOs are issued in accordance with the WTO Agreement on Technical

# Ministers' panel discusses merger of GST compensation cess into taxes

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The group of ministers (GoM) on GST compensation cess, under Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, on Wednesday discussed merger of compensation cess into GST.

States suggested that during the transition of cess, once it is decided to merge with taxes no new goods should be added to the list of luxury, sin and demerit goods.

States were of the view that since the compensation cess ends in March 2026, the only way to restructure it is to merge the levy with the taxes and bring about separate tax rates for the items on which cess is levied currently.

"GST compensation cess is coming to an end. A discussion needed to be done on what will be the future of the cess. Every state has given their views. This was the first meeting," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said.

Should it continue as cess or be converted to tax and whether there would be changes in luxury, demerit and sin goods items, Chaudhary said, "Discussion is going on".

The next meeting of the GoM on compensation cess is in the second week of November. Sources said all states have suggested merger of taxes under GST, because

compensation cess has expired.

"But no new goods will be added. Compensation period has ended and if it has to be brought under GST then it has to be restructured and brought in as taxes," sources said.

The Group of Ministers (GoM), which includes members from Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, will submit its report to the GST Council by December 31.

In the GST regime, compensation cess at varied rates is levied on luxury, sin and demerit goods over and above the 28 per cent tax. The proceeds from the cess, which was originally planned for five years after GST roll-out or till June 2022, was used to compensate states for revenue loss incurred by them post the introduction of GST.

In 2022, the Council decided to extend the levy till March 2026 to repay the interest and the principle amount of the Rs 2.69 lakh crore worth loan taken in the 2021 and 2022 fiscal years to make good states' revenue loss during Covid years.

With just one-and-a-half year remaining for the cess to end, the GST Council in its 54th meeting on September 9 decided to set up a GoM to decide the future course of the cess.

# RBI celebrates 90th anniversary with nationwide quiz

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is commemorating the 90th year of its operations this year. As part of the series of events being held throughout the year to mark this milestone, the Bank has launched the RBI90Quiz, a nationwide general knowledge-based quiz competition aimed at undergraduate students.

The RBI90Quiz is a team-based contest, being held in multiple stages. The online phase was conducted from September 19-21, 2024. Based on the performance in the online phase, college teams were selected for participation in State-level rounds. The State-level round of the RBI90Quiz for

# STPI Launches LEAP AHEAD 2nd Edition for Startups

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Building on the success of its inaugural edition, the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) on Wednesday launched the LEAP AHEAD 2nd Edition at the Indian Mobile Congress 2024 in the national Capital.

The initiative was launched by K. K. Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and Arvind Kumar, Director General, STPI; Dr. Rasappa Viswanathan, Director, ICAR Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research; Pradeep Gupta, Chairman & Managing Director, CyberMedia and Board Member, TiE Delhi-NCR; and Roshan Lal Tamak, Executive Director & CEO, DCM Shriram Ltd, Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Senior Director, STPI; Subodh Sachan, Director, STPI. Following the impactful success of the LEAP AHEAD 1st Edition, which anchored young entrepreneurs and tech startups, the second edition promises to revolutionize tech startups in scaling, product diversification, and regional expansion.

With up to Rs One Crore in funding support, the program includes a comprehensive three-month mentorship program offering a mix of virtual and in-person sessions.



# Promote Indian firms in infra consultancy: Ex-PIB chief

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Former Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB), Govt of India, Rajeev Kumar Jain on Wednesday said the government must take efforts to promote more and more Indian Companies in the infrastructure consultancy space to fully realize the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, more so when we are already promoting the manufacturing of train coaches in India.

Jain further said that Indian Railways and metro projects have embraced the "Make in India" philosophy by promoting local manufacturing of rolling stock, signaling systems, and other critical components. "This can be done so even for the infrastructure consultancy sector," said Jain who had a stint Rail, Civil Aviation and Urban Affairs



Lal, Principal FA & CAO (Retd), Ministry of Railways and Rajesh Agrawal, Former Member Railway Board, were also present at the inaugural function.

Complimenting the Government for promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat, Jain said that the High-Speed Railway is a classic example of awarding the consultancy contract to all the Indian companies. "The project being highly technical and complex in nature, and being built for the first time in India, the Govt. has relied on all the Indian companies (Tata Consulting Engineers, Consulting Engineers Group for the job of project management consultancy. This makes a compelling case for the Govt. to do so in the other infrastructure consultancy works, particularly in metro sector," he stated.

US-based cyber security firm Rubrik on Wednesday announced the launch of Rubrik Data Security Posture Management (DSPM) for Microsoft 365 Copilot to provide greater visibility and control of sensitive data, reduce the risk of exposure, and empower organizations to quickly and securely adopt Copilot, an AI-powered assistant that generates answers anchored in an organization's business content to deliver highly relevant and contextual responses.

"The announcement comes at a crucial time as many organizations are preparing to embrace AI tools and adopt Microsoft 365 Co-pilot in a big way. The biggest hurdle that's slowing down organizations is the lack of tools and platforms that can identify and control access to sensitive data," said Abhilash

# Rubrik launches DSPM

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Purushothaman, Vice President and General Manager, Rubrik (Asia).

"With the growing volume of Microsoft 365 customers in India, managing and safeguarding sensitive information has become increasingly complex. Rubrik aims to mitigate these risks, strengthen resilience for organizations and enables accelerated adoption of transformational AI tools like M365 Copilot; without worrying about potential sensitive data exposure and associated regulatory fallout that are a slowing down the AI adoption," Abhilash Purushothaman added.

"Organizations are facing significant pressure when it comes to improving security of their rapidly growing data," said Mike Torniccas, Chief Business Officer at Rubrik. "Microsoft is committed to enabling secure and intelligent productivity tools for our customers," said Tony

Surma, CTO, Americas Partners at Microsoft. Microsoft 365 Copilot is an AI-powered assistant that generates answers anchored in an organization's business content to deliver highly relevant and contextual responses.

To ensure Copilot surfaces only data which users have permissions to view, it follows the same data access controls already in place in Microsoft 365. Misconfigurations in these controls could lead to the exposure of sensitive data to unauthorized users.

To help mitigate this risk, Rubrik DSPM for Microsoft 365 Copilot is designed to provide the data visibility and control needed to ensure sensitive data is correctly classified, labeled, and segmented - and has the right access permissions. This enables organizations to leverage the power of Copilot while securing sensitive data from the risk of exposure.

## IN BRIEF

### RECPDCL HANDS OVER RAJASTHAN-IV

**RAJASTHAN:** REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of REC Limited, the Maharashtra CPSU under the aegis of Ministry of Power, handed over a project specific SPV on 15th October 2024 at Gurugram.



### IIFL FINANCE OFFERS GOLD LOAN AT 0.99% INTEREST RATE PER MONTH



**DELHI:** IIFL Finance, one of India's leading non-banking financial companies (NBFC), is offering Gold Loan at 0.99% interest rate per month with zero processing fees until October 19, 2024 under its ongoing Gold Loan Mela.

### LOCOMOTIVES ACROSS INDIAN RAILWAYS TO BE EQUIPPED

**MALIGAO:** In a major milestone, Indian Railways is all set to install Kavach 4.0 - an indigenous Automatic Train Protection System on 10,000 locomotives across its network. Recently, after successful trial implementation of Kavach 4.0 was done at a stretch of 108 km in the West Central Railway.





