



Election Commission announces dates of Kedarnath bypoll

Voting to be held on November 20, counting of votes on November 23

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The voting for the Kedarnath Assembly by-election will be held on November 20. The Election Commission announced the dates of the crucial bypoll in Uttarakhand on Tuesday.

The filing of nomination papers for the by-election will start on October 22 with the election commission notification. The last date of filing of nomination papers is October 29 and the scrutiny of the nomination papers will be done on October 30. The last date for withdrawal of the nomination papers is November 4. The voting will be held on November 20 and the counting of votes will be done on November 23.

With the EC announcing the dates of the bypoll the model code of conduct (MCC) has come into force in Rudraprayag district. The additional chief electoral officer (ACEO) of Uttarakhand, Vijay Kumar Jogdande said that the EC has set up 173 polling stations in Kedarnath. He informed that in 166 polling stations, the polling



ACEO VK Jogdande informs the media about the Kedarnath Assembly bypoll schedule on Tuesday
Pioneer photo

parties will depart one day before the polls while in seven polling stations the parties will depart two days before the polls. He said that there are 90,540 voters in the constituency (45,775 female and 44,765 male voters). The ACEO said that there are 1,090 Divyang voters and 641 voters older than 85 years. The constituency also has 2,949 service

voters. He further informed that the entire constituency has been divided into 27 sectors and two zones. The commission will deploy ten static surveillance teams, eight flying squads and two video surveillance teams in the constituency. The ACEO informed that the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines will be used in Kedarnath by-

election in all the polling stations. The EC will set up one Divyang, one women and one youth booth in the constituency. The ACEO said that snowfall usually occurs in some areas of Kedarnath in the month of December but the commission will take necessary measures to safeguard the polling parties in the eventuality of snowfall.

BJP to replicate success of Jammu and Haryana in Kedarnath: Bhatt

People of Kedarnath prepared to deflate balloon of lies propagated by Congress, says BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party has welcomed the announcement of the Kedarnath by-election dates, with the party's State president Mahendra Bhatt expressing confidence that the BJP would replicate the impressive performance seen in Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana in the Kedarnath constituency. Bhatt claimed that the people of Kedarnath are prepared to deflate the balloon of lies propagated by the Congress. Reacting to the election announcement, Bhatt stated that the party is fully prepared to seek the blessings of the Kedarnath Assembly voters.

He said that party workers have been actively working in the area since the Lok Sabha elections. Given that the BJP is a cadre-based party, its workers remain consistently



active among the people. He also stated that the party had already appointed an Assembly in-charge, co-in-charge, and managers for the constituency's five zones in anticipation of the by-election. Talking about the achievements of the double-engine government, Bhatt said that the historic development projects and the party's ideological com-

mitment are evident to the public.

He expressed optimism that the BJP candidate is poised for a record victory in the constituency based on ground level feedback. The Kedarnath Assembly seat, traditionally held by the BJP, became vacant following the demise of MLA Shaila Rani Rawat. Bhatt

emphasised the need to complete the unfinished development projects of the late MLA and sought the people's support in this endeavour. According to him, the electorate faces a choice between the BJP, which is committed to transforming the region through policies focused on development and cultural heritage, and the opposition, led by the Congress, which has allegedly opposed various developmental initiatives, including the transformation of Kedarnath.

He further criticised the Congress for not supporting efforts to preserve Uttarakhand's Sanatani identity and for allegedly opposing measures to curb the infiltration of outsiders that could disrupt the peaceful environment.

Congress appoints Godiyal as senior observer for Kedarnath bypoll

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) has appointed Ganesh Godiyal as the senior observer for the Kedarnath Assembly by-election. The party has also appointed the newly elected MLA from Badrinath Assembly constituency, Lakshat Singh Butola as the observer for Kedarnath. On October 11, the State in-charge of the Congress, Kumari Selja had appointed deputy leader of the Congress legislature party (CLP) Bhuwan Kapri and Virendra Jaati as the observers for the crucial bypoll. However on Tuesday Selja issued a new order and appointed Godiyal as senior observer while Kapri, Jaati and Butola will be the observers.

The new order of the AICC on appointment of Godiyal as senior observer is being viewed as the proof that the party has reposed its faith in him in the crucial battle of Kedarnath by-election. His appointment



by the central leadership of the party suppressing its earlier order is also being seen as a factional fight within the Uttarakhand Congress. The observers will now interact with the local leaders and party workers in Kedarnath and submit their report on selection of the Congress party candidate from Kedarnath. The party is also conducting a survey in the constituency for candidate selection. The party

high command will declare its candidate after going through the report of the observers and finding the survey.

Former MLA Manoj Rawat, former cabinet minister Harak Singh Rawat and the president of the district Congress committee of Rudraprayag Kunwar Sajwan are contenders for Kedarnath Assembly constituency.

Authorities impose section 163 of BNSS after clash between two communities

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Authorities imposed section 163 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) at Gauchar in Chamoli district after a clash broke out between two men from different communities on Tuesday. The altercation, which initially started as a verbal dispute, escalated into a physical confrontation, drawing in more individuals and prompting the intervention of the local police to restore peace, the officials said. They informed that as the news of the incident spread, unrest gripped the local market, with angry crowds resorting to vandalism. Several shops were reportedly damaged and in a climate of fear, shopkeepers began shutting down their shops. They

claimed that the situation intensified as protests broke out with traders organising rallies. The unrest in Gauchar followed a series of recent communal disturbances in Karnprayag and Tharali, escalating concerns of a wider conflict in the region, as per the officials. Considering this, the authorities imposed Section 163 of the BNSS to prevent any further escalation and ensure public safety. The imposition of this section prohibits the assembly of five or more people. This measure was taken to avoid any unlawful gatherings and curb the risk of communal riots, with police presence bolstered to maintain law and order in the area, the officials said.

CM hands over appointment letters to 289 officers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama handed over appointment letters to 289 officers selected in the State civil/ subordinate services examination at his residence on Tuesday. Congratulating the newly appointed officers, the CM

ery will move at a fast pace and the works related to the welfare of the general public will get expedited.

The CM said that in his first cabinet meeting a decision to fill 24,000 vacant posts in government departments

State was ranked in first place.

He also expressed hope that the newly appointed officers will ensure that the benefit of the welfare schemes of the government reaches the last person standing on the social ladder and work as a bridge between people and government.



said that in the last three years appointments have been given to more than 17,500 youths in various departments of State government. He expressed hope the young officers will play a major role in fulfilling the dream of developed India by the year 2047. Dhama said that with the appointment of new officers the government machin-

was taken and the process of appointment is going on. He said that everyone should contribute to the development journey of Uttarakhand. The CM averred that Uttarakhand has made a special place for itself in every sector and in the recent rankings released by the NITI Aayog in the sustainable development goals (SDG) the

Cabinet ministers Satpal Maharaj, Prem Chand Agarwal, Ganesh Joshi, Saurabh Bahuguna, Rekha Arya, additional chief secretary Anand Bardhan, principal secretary RK Sudhanshu, L Fenai, officiating director general of police Abhinav Kumar and others attended the programme.

CM presents compensation to Jamrani dam affected families

Launches development works worth Rs 17K lakh for Nainital

PNS ■ HALDWANI

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama presented Rs 195 crore in compensation to 494 families affected by the Jamrani multipurpose dam project here on Tuesday. The amount was transferred online into their bank accounts while the compensation to the remaining out of the total 1,267 project affected families will be deposited soon into their accounts after verification. The CM also laid the foundation of and inaugurated 18 developmental projects costing Rs 17,218 lakh in the district on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the CM thanked the families affected by the Jamrani project for dedicating their future to this project to enable the better future of the State and its people. About 300 acre land has been allocated free to the Irrigation department at Gadariyabagh village in Prayag Farm area of Udham Singh Nagar district to resettle the affected families, he said, while adding that all round development will be ensured in this area too. Dhama said that the 117 MLD water from Jamrani



CM Pushkar Singh Dhama launches development works along with ministers Satpal Mahara, Subodh Uniyal and others in Haldwani on Tuesday
Pioneer photo

project will be supplied to Haldwani city considering its projected population in 2051. The construction of the project will boost groundwater level and also generate employment. While drinking water will be supplied to Haldwani, irrigation water will be supplied to farmers in Nainital and

Udham Singh Nagar districts. "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, development works worth Rs 2,000 crore are being undertaken in Haldwani city and soon this city will develop into a grand and major city," he said.

The CM further informed

that the Jamrani dam project will be completed by 2029. Apart from such major projects, the State government is also focusing on education, health, tourism, child development, women development and connectivity. A special environment is being provided for investors in the State. The CM also said that

local products are being encouraged across India and abroad which is making the local people financially stronger. In the Kumaon region, the State government has approved eight acre land for the expansion of the Pantnagar airport which will be developed to international standards. Domestic and international flights will start operating from this airport in the near level, the CM said.

Nainital-Udham Singh Nagar MP Ajay Bhatt, cabinet ministers Subodh Uniyal, Satpal Maharaj, MLAs Banshidhar Bhagat and Ram Singh Kaida were also among those present on the occasion.

Rawat expresses concern for Madarsas, BJP alleges appeasement

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Harish Rawat has objected to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights opining that all types of government aid being provided to Madarsas should be stopped. Responding to this, the Bharatiya Janata Party has stated that Rawat indulges in appeasement and hence his concern is expected.

Rawat took to the social media stating that apart from religious students, children are also taught practical knowledge in Madarsas, which he said are helping in taking modern education forward. The Madarsas are gradually moving ahead with mainstream education, he said, adding that special assistance should be provided to these institutions to provide technical and skill education to their students. Stopping aid to Madarsas will harm the nation and society, he opined.

Responding to Rawat,

the BJP State media in-charge Manveer Singh Chauhan said that the Congress leader's allegations were unnecessary. The government is working to facilitate quality education in Madarsas with efforts underway for modernisation and educational improvement. "There should be no objection if institutions with forged student numbers or without proper recognition come within the ambit of action. There is no threat to the existence of institutions providing quality education and functioning according to

the standards. Instead, the parents will send their children with more confidence to such institutions and the Madarsas will also progress further," Chauhan said. Assistance can be provided only to those institutions which are functioning as per the standards set for educational institutions while those not following the standards are affecting the interests of the children. This issue is not limited to Madarsas alone but applies to educational institutions of other systems too, the BJP media in-charge added.

Indian Bank Zonal Office Dehradun 1, Gandhi Road, 1st Floor Near Clock tower, UttarakhandPin:248001 Email:zodeh@indianbank.co.in

TENDER NOTICE

Indian bank, a Public Sector bank invites tenders under 2 bid systems (Technical & Financial Bid) from the contractors willing to do Interior/Furnishing, Electricals & Data Cabling works for Our **BHEL, HARIDWAR BRANCH** at 38, New Haridwar Colony, Near Chandra Charya Chowk, Ranipur More, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

The tender forms can be downloaded from the bank's website www.indianbank.in.

Last date for submission of bids is 28.10.2024 by 1230 hrs.

Date of opening tender is 28.10.2024 at 1530 hrs.

The Technical & Financial bids to be submitted at Indian Bank Zonal Office-Dehradun in separate sealed covers. The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all offers without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Date: 15.10.2024 **Zonal Manager, Indian Bank Zonal Office, Dehradun**



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

souring relations

New Delhi dismisses the Canadian claims of Indian involvement in the Nijjar case as politically driven

The already tense relations between India and Canada have hit a new low, with both countries expelling each other's diplomats. New Delhi expelled six Canadian diplomats, including Acting High Commissioner Stewart Ross Wheeler after Ottawa's expulsion of 'targeted' Indian diplomats. These diplomats were allegedly involved in 'violent criminal activity in Canada.'



India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has responded with forceful rebuttal, describing the allegations as 'preposterous imputations.'

The MEA criticised Canada's decision to expel the Indian diplomats, dismissing the accusations as politically motivated and linked to the Trudeau government's domestic challenges.

India on its part has expelled six Canadian diplomats to leave the country by October 19, 2024, and announced the withdrawal of its High Commissioner from Canada. The root cause of the conflict lies in the ongoing issue of Sikh separatism and Canada's handling of the Khalistan movement.

India's national security. It is rather unfortunate that two friendly countries should snap diplomatic relations with each other. Justin Trudeau's electoral compulsions, with elections just a year away, could be behind his recent actions.

PICTALK



An oriental pied hornbill at Ponitora Wild Life Sanctuary, in Morigaon

The untold story of Captain Rameshwar Thapa's heroics



ASHOK K MEHTA

Capt Rameshwar Thapa, Nepal's first civilian pilot to command a Russian Mi17 helicopter, played a pivotal role during the country's Maoist insurgency

When you think of rotary wing aircraft in Nepal, some names will crop up: Tula Bahadur Thapa, Narain Singh Pun, Madan KC, all Army Colonels, but among civilians a pioneer is Capt Rameshwar Thapa, the first Russian Mi17 helicopter pilot who trained the then Royal Nepal Army on Mi17 and was later requisitioned by Security Forces during the Maoist People's War.



The humanitarian angle of saving lives and security posts at great personal risk. RT turns out to be a cat with nine lives having taken numerous hits and a life-threatening crash landing near Everest Base Camp.

King Gyanendra who had usurped power first in 2002 and done a coup in 2005, did not allow the RNA to aid or assist the police which suffered on account of it. He did not even allow PM GP Koirala to use it to break the siege of the Holleri post when 76 policemen were taken hostage.

Major encounters revive memories of fighting, their horror, ferocity and barbarity. Villages and towns have not forgotten



RT HAS NARRATED SEVERAL HUMAN INTEREST STORIES LIKE ONCE EVACUATING A FEMALE MAOIST WHO LATER BECAME A MINISTER AND MARRIED A FELLOW MAOIST MINISTER

His underground life at Oasis Hotel in Nepalgunj is cloak-and-dagger stuff. RT has not shied away from writing about RNA's November 2004 Pandaun, Kailali 'propaganda' attack under the lyricist Divisional Commander, Gen Rajendra Thapa.

Their prize was a huge cache of explosives stored at Pili for road construction. Nearly 160 soldiers were killed as RT conducted casualty evacuation flights. Elsewhere he mentions current President Ramchandra Poudel writing an article in Kantipur

daily titled 'Maobadi Paradise: Nirmal Nivas', which was Prince Gyanendra's residence. Having been as 'busy as a bee' in the People's War, as a 24X7 helicopter pilot, his life changed after violence ceased.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RTI POWER FADES

Madam — It is really unfortunate that the RTI Act, which came into effect in 2005, promising a new era in transparency in government functioning, has almost died its own death, with the executive not showing any keenness to infuse a fresh life into it.

The proposed amendments were dropped due to widespread public defiance. In the administration and functioning of a democratic government, the right to access and seek information is a sine qua non for transparency, openness and accountability.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

RAILWAY SAFETY NEGLECTED

Madam — Gone are the days when a Railway minister used to apologise for a train accident and even tender his resignation for it. Now, it is too much to expect even an explanation for the snail's pace at which the Train Collision Avoidance System is being installed and the lack of manpower that makes even loco pilots do the extra shifts.

Peacekeepers under attack



Just a week ago, Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz announced that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has been banned from entering Israel, accusing him of "supporting" Hamas, Hezbollah,

Houthis and Iran. Now a new order has been issued from Tel Aviv, which says that all UN peacekeepers should be removed from Lebanon. Israel is accusing without any proof that Hezbollah is using peacekeepers as human shields.

On the contrary, Israel has been continuously attacking the peacekeepers since last week. Dozens of peacekeepers have been injured so far. UNIFIL, a mission of about 9,500 soldiers of various nationalities, was created after Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

started for Kavach in 2016. But it has been installed only in less than 1,500 km of tracks out of the total 70,000 km covered by the Indian Railways across the country.

That means this lifesaving device has so far been placed in only a little over 2 per cent of railway tracks in eight years after its field trials! An RTI reply says that of 1,27,644 sanctioned posts of loco pilots and assistant loco pilots, 18,766-nearly 15 per cent - were vacant as of March 1 this year.

Sujit De | Kolkata

LAW AND ORDER CRISIS

Madam — The shooting of Baba Siddiqui could not have come at a worse time for the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, as elections to the assembly are just around the corner. The opposition has been handed over an issue of

law and order in the state which is certainly going to be used as ammunition against the government in the electoral campaigning. There is no doubt this issue will resonate with the people of the state.

With the right connections, jails seem to have become a holiday resort with all facilities available, like cell phones and wi-fi. The assailants are said to be in the ages of 19-21, and another one is supposedly said to be a minor. The lack of education and scarcity of jobs play their part in getting the young people sucked into the criminal world.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The invisible battle for mental health in India

Mental health remains an afterthought in our healthcare narrative. The true healing encompasses both body and mind

As a psychologist, I've seen how health in India isn't just a battle of the body—it's a struggle of the mind. Behind every disease is a person dealing with fear, frustration and, at times, loneliness.

In rural India, patients face challenges that go beyond medical diagnoses. I remember a man from a small village battling tuberculosis, but what weighed on him most wasn't just his illness—it was the isolation. He felt forgotten and cut off from the world because healthcare facilities were far away, and his family didn't know how to support him.



found. I think of Anjali, a young woman overwhelmed by anxiety. To the outside world, she seemed to have it all—a great job, a busy social life, and a bright future. But inside, she was spiralling. She hesitated for months before seeking help, afraid that admitting to her struggles would make her appear weak.

We focus on physical symptoms—treating heart disease, diabetes, and other

conditions—but the emotional weight people carry is often ignored. I've seen people suffer for years in silence, feeling their emotional pain isn't valid because it can't be measured like a physical illness. There's an urgent need for change. India's healthcare system mirrors this divide. In cities, private care offers options, but mental health services are still limited and expensive.

In rural areas, mental health is rarely even discussed. Socioeconomic barriers, especially for women, make it even harder to access mental health care. Women often put their health—both emotional and physical—on the back burner,

prioritising their families' needs over their own. One of my patients, a mother of two, delayed seeking help for her anxiety for years. She was exhausted, overwhelmed, and losing her sense of self.

This is a common story—too many women in India silently endure mental health struggles, dismissing their needs as unimportant, further isolating themselves in the process.

We need to change this narrative. Mental health is not a luxury or a sign of weakness. It is an integral part of overall well-being. We must make mental health care as important as physical health in our conversations and our healthcare system. Only then can we address the full scope of health challenges in India—because real healing isn't just about the body; it's about the mind too.

(The writer is Psychologist and founder - Kavita Kabira wellness clinic; views are personal)



KAVITA KABIRA

FIRST COLUMN

CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

The connection between a clean space and a peaceful mind is undeniable



RAVI VALLURI

When I recall our college days, particularly the hostel rooms, it takes me on a nostalgic trip. The days were full of fun and frolic, books scattered around, beer and rum bottles lying randomly, with cigarette butts strewn rather carelessly. The rooms were full of stench.

Most of the guys would ogle, there was no Google back then, at the girls. Posters of Pink Floyd, the Beatles, and Led Zeppelin populated the grubby and unwashed walls of the rooms. The politically inclined would paste large printed pictures of Che Guevara, Marx and Lenin among others, professing their ideological baggage unequivocally.

Some rooms were relatively cleaner and tidily kept. In our hail-fellow-well-met attitude we ended up ostracising such students. But they were our Gurus during examination times, much to their chagrin. A close friend had put up a poster which read: "Cleanliness is the sign of a sick mind." His room was particularly unclean and stained.

Cleanliness is both the abstract state of being clean and free from dirt, and the process of achieving and maintaining that state. However, to my mind cleanliness and spirituality are intertwined like Siamese twins. The human mind normally slips into a state of meditation and involuntarily has a spiritual experience at places which are relatively clean. Cleanliness is positively next to godliness.

India has of late embarked upon a major cleanliness drive where villages, bijou towns, cities, rivers, among others, places of historical importance and important religious places are being refurbished. This is indeed a positive statement made by the government. A gurdwara is the place of worship for Sikhs. People from all faiths and those who do not pro-



fess any faith too, are welcomed in Sikh gurdwaras. To me gurdwaras are among the cleanest spots in the country and it is a lesson in humility to observe how the devout keep it absolutely spick and span. The mind gravitates to the pristine spirit and listens to the soulful and mellifluous Gurubani being sung. The human mind, which is normally canonaded by innumerable thoughts, gradually settles down and is at rest and peace.

It would be interesting to mention that Sri Harmandir Sahib and Sri Darbar Sahib are informally referred to as the Golden Temple. Guru Ram Das constructed the Golden Temple in 1577. He was the fourth Guru in the pantheon of Sikh Gurus. A Sikh friend mentioned that a gurdwara is a community asset and serviced by unpaid and committed volunteers, those who perform seva from the kitchen to the shoe rack.

Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence, championed the cause of truth only as he could. His autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, like his life, documents every aspect where he does not dissemble anything. During my days of quotidian drinking, I drank heavily and remained inebriated. In that state of arrogance and hubris, I walked into the holy precincts of the Golden Temple carrying a packet of Wills Navy Cut. The act was certainly sacrilegious. For perpetrating this sinful act, I could have been trolled on social media. Today, I regret the mistake committed and apologise sincerely from the depths of my heart. I am sober today because of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and have given up drinking, smoking and eating non-vegetarian fare. The twisted personality in me is making amends and I hope those afflicted with these vices seek the grace of a Guru to extricate themselves from this cesspool of negativity and embark upon the voyage to discover the quintessential quality of cleanliness and spirituality.

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

Migration issue polarises Canada ahead of 2025 election

Canada is struggling to reconcile the benefits of foreign influx with stagnant wages, strained services and a housing crisis; analysis by AMAL CHANDRA and AJAY P KARUVALLY

Canada has recently cut down on international student permits and tightened eligibility for work permits in a bid to cut down on the number of temporary residents. As the federal election approaches in October 2025, immigration remains the most contentious issue in Canadian politics. "Immigration is an advantage for our economy — but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down." Said Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in a post on X. However, things are a little more complicated. Canada presents a unique case of population dynamics, with rapid growth despite record-low birth rates. Between 2023 and 2024, Canada's population surged by 3.2 per cent, outpacing even some African nations known for their high population growth. While the population is increasing rapidly, the total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.33 children per woman in 2022 was the lowest in Canadian history. Canada's population growth, despite a very low TFR, is a testament to the power of immigration. In 2023, 97.6 per cent of the growth in the Canadian population came through immigration.

This reliance on immigrants is a long-standing strategy to offset the country's ageing population. While the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily slowed population growth to just 0.4 per cent in 2021, immigration quickly rebounded, fuelling a rapid recovery in population growth. A significant portion of Canada's immigrants come from India, making up 10.8 per cent of all immigrants in 2023. The proportion of Indians among all the immigrant groups entering the country has increased from 9.6 per cent between 1991 and 2000, to 18.6 per cent between 2016 and 2021. Projections for the period between 2022 and 2026 suggest this trend will continue to accelerate.

Canada's Immigration Dilemma: Canada's immigration system comprises four main programs: economic, family, refugee, and temporary work. The first three lead to permanent residency, while temporary workers must follow specific pathways with quotas and criteria to attain permanent residency. The preferred route for international students is the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP), which is issued to foreign students who have completed a diploma or degree at a Canadian institution. This permit allows them to qualify for permanent residency programs. While all immigration programs have grown, the 127 per cent surge in international student permits issued in 2023 compared to 2006 is particularly remarkable. A 2015 study showed that between 20 per cent and 27 per cent of international students transitioned to permanent residency within ten years of receiving their first study permit. This conversion rate is likely even higher in more recent years, reflecting the growing appeal of Canada as a destination for long-term settlement through the student migration route.

Economic Growth or Illusion? The influx of immigrants and their economic activity has fuelled Canada's GDP growth (1.8 per cent average from 2000 to 2023), but population growth is masking underlying economic challenges. The GDP per capita rate for the same period from 2000 to 2023 is only



CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM COMPRISES FOUR MAIN PROGRAMS: ECONOMIC, FAMILY, REFUGEE, AND TEMPORARY WORK. THE FIRST THREE LEAD TO PERMANENT RESIDENCY, WHILE TEMPORARY WORKERS MUST FOLLOW SPECIFIC PATHWAYS WITH QUOTAS AND CRITERIA TO ATTAIN PERMANENT RESIDENCY

0.7 per cent, among the lowest in the G7. The Canadian economy and the living standards of its population have largely stagnated over the last decade.

While immigrants are contributing to economic growth, the GDP per capita rates are declining. Many new immigrants earn less than the national average, and there are doubts about their ability to achieve upward mobility as rapidly as past generations of immigrants, especially given that the majority are temporary residents.

The Government's Immigration Gamble: To course-correct a stagnating economy and compensate for poor growth rates, Canadian policymakers have made a bet on immigration. By letting in massive numbers of permanent and temporary residents, Canada has prioritised short-term growth, in hopes this can translate to a sustainable long-term growth strategy through the upward mobility of the recently introduced immigrant cohorts. While it may be too early to say this is not working, Canadian public opinion against immigration is at an all-time low. Many Canadians feel the rapid influx of immigrants is exacerbating critical issues like the housing shortage and the strain on social services, including healthcare and emergency response. Despite placing their hopes on immigration, the government has failed to make parallel investments in infrastructure to support both immigrants and the existing population.

Wages in Canada have struggled to keep pace with inflation and there is rising concern among Canadians that immigrants are

suppressing wages. Although evidence suggests that immigrants have little to no impact on the average wages of native workers, the perception of such effects tends to fuel stronger anti-immigration sentiments. Corporations, however, have capitalised on this dynamic, employing temporary workers, including international students, in low-wage, precarious jobs. The promise of permanent residency keeps them in the system, even when working conditions are poor.

For corporations, this represents a windfall of cheap labour. Coincidentally, working these low-paying jobs means the immigrants are unlikely to undergo the upward social mobility the government is hoping they would. Rising Hostility and Public Sentiment As frustrations over the government's immigration policies mount, this frustration is being increasingly manifested as resentment toward immigrants themselves. Public sentiment has noticeably shifted in recent years, with more Canadians expressing negative views toward international students and other immigrants. While this is hard to quantify and prove, public sentiment analysis using machine learning models on social media platforms like Reddit provides a useful indication.

We analysed all the comments under posts containing the word "international students" in the r/Canada subreddit (community) from 2010 to 2022. While the r/Canada subreddit is not in any way a reflection of Canadian society, it could be a fair representation of a microcosm of Canadian centrist views on immi-

gration. Till 2015, There was minimal discussion or negative sentiments related to international students (see figure below). Starting from around 2015, the number of negative comments saw a sharp rise. This trend peaks significantly after 2020, indicating a growing negative discourse, especially in recent years. The number of positive comments seems to plateaued after 2017. Although positive sentiment persists, sentiment analysis reveals a shift in public discourse toward increasingly negative views on the broader issue of international students in recent years.

Conclusion: A Broken System For many international students and temporary immigrants, these growing negative sentiments could lead to increased hostility and more barriers to integration. Instances of food bank usage, cultural misunderstandings, and economic struggles may further inflame these tensions. Canada's immigration system, which lacks a strategic vision, seems to benefit neither Canadian citizens nor immigrants.

Without meaningful reforms, only corporations exploiting cheap labour will see long-term gains, while social unrest and economic stagnation will continue to grow. The future of Canada's immigration policy hinges on the ability of the government and its citizens to address the current challenges and find a path forward that benefits all residents.

(Chandra is an author, policy analyst and columnist and Ajay P Karuvally is a Research Fellow at The International Institute of Migration and Development; views are personal)

The divisive legacy of British colonialism: A persistent threat to India's unity

Politicians continue to exploit social divisions for electoral gains, while foreign forces seek to undermine India's unity

The legacy of British colonialism in India remains a contentious issue, with far-reaching consequences that continue to impact the country's social fabric. In the contemporary context, this can be seen in the practice of politics by the opposition parties, particularly the Indian National Congress (INC).

The colonial era strategically exploited India's inherent social and cultural diversities, creating fault lines that persist today. These divisions, crafted to serve the interests of the British Empire, have become entrenched in India's societal landscape, posing a significant challenge to national unity. Post-1857, British authorities, scholars, and missionaries collaborated to divide Dalits, tribals and Muslims



SHIV PRAKASH

from the Hindu community. This agenda leveraged scholars and missionaries to separate Dalits and tribals through conversion and social manipulation, as detailed in Arun Shourie's seminal work, "Missionaries in India." By creating artificial distinctions and fueling social conflict, the British successfully fostered alliances and divisions that endured long after

independence. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently highlighted Congress's departure from its founding principles, embracing leftist ideologies instead. Modi cited Congress's original stance on issues like Swadeshi, Swavalamban, and Panchayat Raj, and Mahatma Gandhi's opposition to religious conversion and cow slaughter.

Gandhi's post-1920 emphasis on eradicating untouchability, casteism, alcoholism, and women's oppression, and promoting national unity, has given way to divisive rhetoric. Congress's current leadership, exemplified by Rahul Gandhi, has strayed from these ideals. Gandhi's recent US visit sparked controversy, as he claimed Sikhs face identity crises in India, despite no evi-

dence. His comments fueled separatist sentiments among Khalistani supporters, echoing the tactics employed by British colonialists.

Meanwhile, in Sikh communities, Max Arthur Macauliffe sowed seeds of separation, as detailed in Khushwant Singh's "The Sikh Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors." These foreign interventions fabricated logic, distorted literature, and spread misinformation to execute their divide-and-rule policy.

Gandhi's stance resonates with the British-era concept that India is not a nation but a union of states. This contradicts the ancient Indian ethos, affirming India's nationhood. The Vedas proclaim, "Vayam Rashtra Jagryam Purahitah" (We are the guardians of the

nation). Even former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's wish to have his ashes immersed in the Ganges reflects his devotion to Mother India. The British exploited these divisions, nurturing enduring fault lines evident in the Direct Action orchestrated by the Muslim League, resulting in the brutal massacre of 16,000 Hindus in Calcutta alone.

Notable figures like Jaipal Singh Munda and Jogendra Nath Mandal eventually broke away from the Muslim League, recognising the sinister intentions. Mandal resigned from the Pakistan government and returned to India, highlighting the atrocities faced by Dalits and tribals.

Today, India must recognise and learn from this history,

acknowledging the artificial divisions created by British colonialism and guarding against similar tactics employed by contemporary forces seeking to exploit these fault lines for political gain. Citizens and political parties must remain vigilant, prioritising national unity over sectarian interests.

The 1946 Jharkhand, Chota Nagpur Pakistan Conference and Jogendra Nath Mandal's alliance with the Muslim League exemplified this strategy. British authorities fueled fears among Dalits and tribals, claiming the "Hindu Raj" would oppress them. This manipulation ignored the historical social cohesion and shared struggles of India's diverse communities.

Mahatma Gandhi's vision for

a unified India contrasts sharply with the divisive agenda of some contemporary politicians, who seek to resurrect the British-era fault lines. Gandhi's emphasis on eradicating social evils and promoting national unity has given way to identity politics and vote bank manipulation. India's democratic fabric demands that citizens and leaders recognise and resist these divisive forces, promoting national unity and social cohesion. The country must acknowledge its complex history and address the lingering consequences of colonialism. By doing so, India can overcome the artificial divisions imposed upon it and forge a path toward true unity and progress.

Despite progress, India faces

significant challenges in overcoming the legacy of colonialism. Politicians continue to exploit social divisions for electoral gains, while foreign forces seek to undermine India's unity. The rise of social media has amplified divisive rhetoric, making it easier to spread misinformation and fuel tensions. The divisive legacy of British colonialism remains a pressing concern for India. By acknowledging this history and resisting divisive forces, India can build a more unified future. Citizens must prioritise national interests over sectarian agendas, and leaders must work toward inclusive governance.

(The writer is National Joint General Secretary, Organisation BJP; views are personal)

PM Modi advocates ethical global digital framework

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday made a fervent pitch for framing of a global digital framework, with clear-cut dos and don'ts for ethical use of technology. Speaking at the inauguration of the International Telecommunication Union - WTSA and India Mobile Congress here, he said just like the aviation sector, where the global community has framed a comprehensive framework, the digital world too needs rules and regulations. Global institutions, he said,



should come together to work out dos and don'ts. He went on to emphasise on ethical use of AI with security, dignity, equity being at the centre. Talking of India's experience, he said after the expeditious

roll out, 5G telecom services are now available in most places across the country and work on 6G has already begun. Giving out statistics, the Prime Minister said India has in the last decade become an exporter of mobile phones

from being an importer, and has laid an optic fibre network that is eight-time more than the distance between earth and the moon. India's digital vision that was unveiled in 2014 rests on four pillars making devices cheaper, connectivity reaching all concerns, affordable data and digital-first, he said. "We have made digital connectivity an effective tool for last-mile delivery," he said. Modi said India is willing to share its experience of successful building of digital public infrastructure with the rest of the world.

India poised to lead global 6G: Scindia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
India is resolved to lead the world in 6G, communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Tuesday, terming the telecom sector of the country as 'aggressive' and 'ambitious'. Scindia, speaking at the inauguration of India Mobile Congress and World Telecommunication Standardization (WTSA) 2024, said with the Bharat 6G Alliance, India hopes to contribute at least 10 per cent patents to 6G standardisation. "It is our belief and our commitment India followed the world in 4G, we marched with the world in 5G, but we shall lead the world in 6G," the minister asserted. With the fastest 5G rollout in India wherein 98 per cent of districts and 90 per cent of all villages were covered in a



is ambitious, and its outlook in our journey from Amrit Kaal to Shatabdi Kaal is to lead the world," he said. India Mobile Congress (IMC) is an annual event organized by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). IMC 2024 will see participation from over 400 exhibitors, nearly 900 startups, and participation from 120+ countries. About 3,200 delegates from over 160 countries are part of the WTSA assembly. "We are confident that this (WTSA), along with the Indian Mobile Congress in its 8th edition. Will serve as a breeding ground for innovation, but also showcase India's impending but inevitable emergence as a global hub for telecommunications across the world," Scindia said.

span of just 21 months, Scindia said it is the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's effort of not just embracing, but bracing the country to become the first-mover in 6G technology. "It is noteworthy that the Indian Mobile Congress and the International 6G Symposium demonstrates both local and global advancements in 6G, and also design principles that will shape the future of telecom," he further said.

The recent changes to the Telecommunications Act 2023 have been designed in such a way so as to modernise India's telecom framework, drawing light upon hitherto unaddressed areas such as the high potential sector of satellite communications, addressing the challenges of the digital era, the most important being cyber security, Scindia said. "The telecom sector, much like other growth-critical sectors in India, is aggressive,

Government planning development beyond elections: Vaishnav

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The government is laying the process of development which is 'beyond the cycle of elections' for India to be able to grow six to seven times the current level to become a developed nation by 2047, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on Tuesday. Addressing a symposium by the Indian Foundation for Quality Management (IFQM), the Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics & IT, said one of the key elements of the government's goal of a developed nation is having "a very inclusive and harmonious society". For India to become a developed nation by 2047, the target for measurable parameters is "USD 18,000 per capita income



and USD 30 trillion nominal GDP", he said. "Today, we are just shy of USD 4 trillion nominal (GDP), just shy of about USD 3,000 nominal per capita.

It means we have a path where we need to grow about '6x' '7x' in the next 25 years," Vaishnav asserted. Sharing the government's approach to meet the

target, the minister said, "It needs a very strong foundation, a very carefully thought through strategy, meticulous execution, and laying the process of development, which is beyond the cycle of elections." He further said that the intent of the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to build further on the foundation laid in the past ten years. "What we are going to do in these five years of Prime Minister Modi, his third term, will be beyond the cycle of elections will be beyond the cycle of business cycles," Vaishnav said. Taking a dig at the Opposition without naming anyone, he added it will be beyond "people who can, who have a lot of destructive mindsets. It's beyond the capability

of such destructive mindsets. That's the thought process." Elaborating on what the government meant by becoming a developed nation, the minister said, "First is a very inclusive and harmonious society. First and foremost is a very inclusive and harmonious society, a society which cares for everybody, a society which considers every section of the society as equally important and gives opportunities for everybody to come up." He further said, "The second big element of being a Viksit Bharat is to have the social, physical and digital infra place in place." The third, he said is meeting the measurable parameters of per capita income and GDP to meet the set targets.

Samsung workers call off strike, to return to work: TN govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Over a month-long indefinite strike by the employees of Samsung India Electronics Ltd at its plant near here was called off on Tuesday and the workers have decided to resume work, the Tamil Nadu government said. The state government in a statement said the strike at the factory of the Korean electronics giant in Sriperumbudur has come to an end and all the workers would get back to work. Pressing for various demands, about 1,100 workers of the total 1,750 employees of Samsung India have been on strike since September 9, which includes wage revision, better work conditions, registration of the newly formed Samsung India Workers Union backed by



CITU by the labour department. The decision to call off the strike was taken at the conciliatory meeting which was held at the office of the Department of Labour Welfare here on Tuesday in which representatives from the Samsung India and the

striking workers took part. "All the striking workers will call off the agitation and return to work immediately. On returning to work the management will not victimise the workers for having participated in the protest," an official release said.

Coal India digitises fuel supply agreements process

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Coal India Ltd (CIL) on Tuesday said that it has started the online process of signing fuel supply pacts with its various clients including those in the power sector to ensure ease of business. With this move, CIL has discontinued with the earlier practice of physical submission of official papers, while bank guarantees and other required documents can be submitted through digital mode. "Coal India Ltd, in a first ever, introduced online signing of fuel supply agreements (FSA) for power as well as non-regulated sector customers participating under linkage based auctions," the company said in a statement. To ensure ease of business, CIL said, it has also cut down

the number of documents that were required to be submitted. "The online signing of FSAs for linkage auctions...Evades the cumbersome process of voluminous documents. It ushers in greater customer ease as they can conduct the entire process from their place of work without having to visit the coal companies," a senior executive of the company said. Previously, in case of any discrepancy in documents, customers had to visit the company to get them rectified. Now, this can be done online. CIL signs hundreds of FSAs annually necessitating maintenance of bulky documents. The electronic arrangement makes the upkeep much easier.



Since the documents are stored digitally, tracking the status of progress also gets simplified at supplier and customer ends. Among non-regulated sectors so far, nearly 700 FSAs have been formalised online for a total of about 19 million tonnes of coal supply. In case of power sector 262 FSAs have been signed digitally till now for a total quantity of around 24 MT. Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output.

Corporate India to maintain 9.5 per cent salary increase in 2025: WTW survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Corporate India is expected to offer a salary hike of 9.5 per cent in 2025, similar to the 2024 actual salary increase, as companies are balancing optimism with caution, a report said on Tuesday. According to WTW's latest Salary Budget Planning Report, the median salary increase in India is forecasted to rise by 9.5 per cent in 2025, similar to the 2024 actual salary increase of 9.5 per cent. Salary increases in India continue to be the highest across the region. Markets such as Vietnam (7.6 per cent), Indonesia (6.5 per cent), the Philippines (5.6 per cent), China (5 per cent) and Thailand (5 per cent) are also projected to maintain a strong salary increase for next year. The Salary Budget Planning Report is compiled by WTW's Rewards Data Intelligence practice. The

survey was conducted in April and June 2024. Approximately 32,000 responses were received from companies across 168 countries worldwide. The survey had 709 participants from India. "While companies in India are optimistic about growth, they are balancing optimism with caution. The era of 'Great resignation' is behind us, both employers and employees are now seeking stability and the market sentiment is notably steadier," Rajul Mathur, Consulting Leader, Work and Rewards, WTW India said. In 2025, salary increases across industries such as the Pharmaceuticals (10 per cent), Manufacturing (9.9 per cent), Insurance (9.7 per cent), Captives and SSO sectors (9.7 per cent) and Retail (9.6 per cent) are likely to be above the general industry salary median, whereas software and



Business Services at 9 per cent are projected below the general industry median of 9.5 per cent. "India's captive sector is thriving, with a forecasted jump from around 1,500 captives in 2023 to 2,000 by 2025. As the home to nearly half of the world's global capability centres, the country's rich pool of skilled talent is driving innovation and boosting projected salary increases", Mathur added. In 2025, variable payouts are projected to remain consistent at 12.5 per cent, following 2024's 12.6 per cent. As organisations prioritise performance, they are assigning larger portions

of their variable pay budgets to top and above-average performers, ensuring talent is recognised and suitably rewarded. "Organisations are placing a stronger emphasis on performance-based pay differentiation. This trend sees top performers potentially earning salary increments three times that of average performers, while above-average performers are expected to receive about 1.2 times the increment of an average performer," Mathur said. In terms of hiring, almost 28 per cent of companies plan to add headcount in the next 12 months, while 68 per cent

companies plan to maintain their headcount in 2025 as compared to the previous year. With higher growth rates anticipated, India's voluntary attrition rate continues to be one of the highest in the region. However, it is observed that the voluntary attrition rates in India have reduced slightly from 11 per cent in 2023 to 10.8 per cent in 2024. In addition, around 46 per cent of companies in India expect that their salary increase budgets for 2025 will be similar to 2024, while 28 per cent said that the budgets are likely to be lower than projected. Concerns related to cost management, inflationary pressures, anticipated recession. A tighter labour market are the major factors influencing budget projections for 2025, the report said.

Government to verify air purifier claims amid pollution

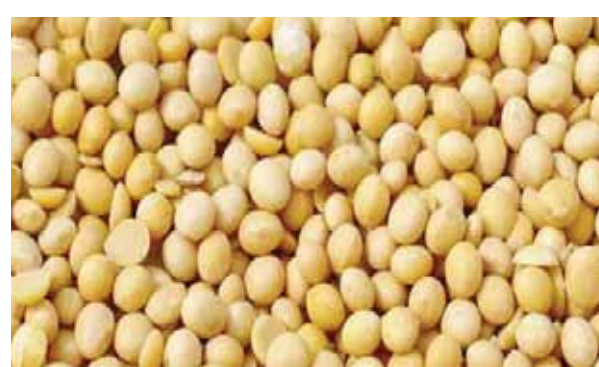
PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The government on Tuesday announced plans to conduct market surveillance to verify claims made by air purifier manufacturers, amid rising concerns about pollution in Delhi and other major cities. This move comes in response to Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday accusing some companies of making false assertions about their products. Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare, addressing a media briefing on Tuesday, stated, "We will try to see through market surveillance and check if the claims are correct or not." Khare also mentioned that the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has taken note of the issue and will examine compliance with existing quality control orders on air filters. The announcement follows Joshi's remarks at a World Standards Day event, where



he expressed concern over misleading marketing tactics. "Air purifiers make such false claims. We see air purifiers and so much is written but nothing is there in it. There is just a fan in it, yet claims are still made," Joshi had said, highlighting the need for increased consumer awareness. The minister advocated for a collaborative approach involving the BIS, the consumer affairs ministry, and consumers to address the issue. This initiative comes at a time when rising pollution levels in Indian cities have led to increased public interest in air purifiers.

Soybean output reaches 126 lakh tonnes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Soybean production in the country has increased by about 6 per cent to nearly 126 lakh tonnes in the current kharif season due to favourable weather conditions, an organisation of the crop processors said on Tuesday. Its acreage remained almost the same as last season, the trade body said. During the last kharif season, the average productivity of soybean per hectare in the country was 1,002 kg, while this time it has increased to 1,063 kg. Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA) Executive Director D N Pathak told PTI. "This time the distribution of monsoon rains in the major soybean producing areas of the country was good, which boosted the crop yield. The adoption of advanced methods of farming by cultivators and increased the crop yield," he said. After the sowing of soybean during the kharif season of 2023, there was a severe lack of moisture in the fields due to lack of rain for three weeks in the major soybean producing areas in August, as a result the crop productivity



fell, Pathak said. As per the SOPA's estimate, during the kharif season in the country this time, soybean was sown in 118.32 lakh hectares and its yield was 125.82 lakh tonnes. During the kharif season of 2023, soybean was sown in a total of 118.55 lakh hectares in the country and the yield of this oilseed crop was around 118.74 lakh tonnes, as per the association's data. This time in Madhya Pradesh, which is the largest soybean producer in the country, the crop was sown in about 52 lakh hectares and its production stood at the level of 55.40 lakh tonnes, according to the SOPA. In the current kharif season, soybean production is estimated to be 50.17 lakh

tonnes from 45 lakh hectares of area in Maharashtra, while the crop was sown in 11.13 lakh hectares in Rajasthan and its yield was around 10.53 lakh tonnes, as per the organisation. India imports about 60 per cent of its edible oil requirements. In such a situation, experts feel that to achieve the ambitious target of self-sufficiency in the production of edible oils, there is a need to increase the production of major oilseed crops like soybean in the country. The central government has increased the minimum support price (MSP) of soybean for the marketing season 2024-25 to Rs 4,892 per quintal from Rs 4,600 per quintal in the last season.

ASSOCHAM, Savlon lead handwashing drive in NDMC schools

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Seeking to inculcate the importance of healthy habits among students and encourage widespread behaviour change in hygiene practices through handwashing, ASSOCHAM Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility (AFCSR), the social arm of ASSOCHAM, organised an awareness drive across New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) schools here on the occasion of 'Global Handwashing Day'. Supported by hygiene brand Savlon and covering nearly 28,000 students across 43 NDMC schools, AFCSR conducted the programme in a hub and spoke model in which a mega activity was organised at Atal Aadarsh Bengali Balika Vidyalaya, Gole Market and parallel activities were carried out in other NDMC schools. Speaking about the initiative, Anil Rajput, Chairperson, ASSOCHAM National CSR Council, said, "There is an old saying that good habits formed at a young age make



all the difference. I believe that on this global handwashing day, the youth have to understand, incorporate and disseminate information on the importance of handwashing. Every year about 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die from diarrheal diseases and pneumonia that are attributed to poor hand hygiene, and therefore, it is my firm conviction that the incorporation of this habit in our daily routine will go a long way in leading a healthy and productive life at an individual level, along with creating a high performing society that will increasingly

contribute towards nation building." Pramod Kumar, Academic Consultant, New Delhi Municipal Council, (NDMC), said, "Awareness and behaviour formation from an early age has a multiplying effect on the potential benefits and impact on human lives. Today's event not only highlights the importance of handwashing, it also delivers valuable lessons on the impact of personal hygiene on public health and betterment. Initiatives such as this will surely have a positive impact on the future of the children and also of the society in general."

Lakshya, Malvika make first-round exits at Denmark Open

PTI ■ ODENSE

India's Lakshya Sen battled hard against China's Lu Guang Zu but ultimately lost in three games to make an early exit from the Denmark Open Super 750 badminton tournament here on Tuesday. Lakshya, a 2021 World championship bronze medallist, squandered an opening game advantage, losing 21-12 19-21 14-21 to Lu in a men's singles opening round match which lasted 70 minutes.

Malvika Bansod, who had reached the quarterfinals at China Open, also couldn't cross the opening hurdle, going down to Vietnam's Nguyen Thuy Linh 13-21 12-21 in women's singles. Panda sisters Rutaparna and Swetaparna also made a first-round exit after losing 18-21 22-24 against Chinese Taipei's Chang Ching Hui and Yang Ching Tun in women's doubles. Lakshya, competing in his second event since the Olympics, kept pace with his Chinese rival before pulling ahead at 8-8 to take an 11-9 advantage at the break. The Indian kept his nose ahead after resumption and jumped to 20-11 with a



seven-point burst to comfortably pocket the opening game. After the change of sides, Lakshya surged to 8-2 but Lu rallied to narrow the gap to 11-12. The Indian extended his lead to 16-11 but Lu's persistence paid off as he kept troubling Lakshya and reversed the situation, taking 19-18 lead. The Indian drew parity but Lu got the required two points to script a comeback. In the decider, Lu maintained his composure and pulled ahead to 14-9, while the Indian struggled to keep pace. In a jiffy, Lu seized six match points and sealed the victory when Lakshya went long.



Alex Ferguson to step down as club ambassador

AP ■ MANCHESTER (ENGLAND)

Manchester United great Alex Ferguson will step down from his role as club ambassador at the end of the season, a person with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the move has not been publicly announced. Ferguson will be 83 in December and the person said the ending of his ambassadorship was "amicable" and he would "always be welcome at Old Trafford."

Ferguson won 13 Premier League titles with United and is widely regarded as one of the finest managers in the history of soccer. He is United's most successful manager, having won 28 major trophies.

He has been a club ambassador since retiring after leading United to its last league title in 2013. His imminent departure comes at a time when the club is undergoing major change following the partial buyout by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe in February.

United has undergone an extensive restructuring program following Ratcliffe's investment of \$1.3 billion for a 27.7% stake and implemented cost-saving initiatives that it said included staff redundancies of around 250 roles. United reported losses of 113.2 million pounds (\$148 million) in its latest accounts. Ferguson was hired by United in 1986 at a time when the club had long-since lost its place as the pre-eminent force in English soccer.

He ended its 26-year wait for the league title in 1993 and went on to dominate the Premier League era right up until his retirement when United was crowned champion with an 11-point lead over Abu Dhabi-backed Manchester City.

He also won two Champions League titles and an unprecedented treble of trophies in 1999 when leading United to victory in the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup.

He has been a regular spectator at United games since his retirement, watching the team home and away during a time when the club has been in obvious decline on the field. Ratcliffe assumed control of United's soccer operations as part of his minority investment. The sporting side had previously been under the control of the majority owning American Glazer family.

A new CEO, Omar Berrada, and sporting director, Dan Ashworth, have been installed, while key figures at Ratcliffe's Ineos Sport, Dave Brailsford and Jean-Claude Blanc, have been appointed to the board.

Udita attracts highest bid in first half of HIL women's auction

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian defender Udita Duhan emerged as the costliest buy in the first half of the Hockey India League women's auction after she was acquired by Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers for Rs 32 lakh here on Tuesday. Dutch star drag-flicker Yibbi Janssen was the second most expensive player and was bought by Odisha Warriors for Rs 29 lakh.

Indian players Lalremsiami (for Rs 25 lakh to Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers), Sunelita Toppo (for Rs 24 lakh to Delhi SG Pipers), and Sangita Kumari (for Rs 22 lakh to Delhi SG Pipers) attracted significant attention in the first half of the auction.

Several overseas players, including Belgium's Charlotte Englebert (for Rs 16 lakh to Soorma Hockey Club), Germany's Charlotte Stapenhorst (for Rs 16 lakh to Soorma Hockey Club), and Australia's Jocelyn Bartram (for Rs 15 lakh to Odisha Warriors) were the notable buys.

Veteran India striker Vandana Katariya fetched Rs 10.5 lakh from Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers.



India captain Salima Tete (Rs 20 lakh), Ishika Chaudhary (Rs 16 lakh) and Neha Goyal (Rs 10 lakh) were picked up by Odisha Warriors. Former India captain Savita (Rs 20 lakh), Sharmila Devi (Rs 10 lakh) and Nikki Pradhan (Rs 12 lakh) are some of the big Indian names bought by Soorma

Hockey Club. Delhi SG Pipers also picked up India internationals Navneet Kaur (Rs 19 lakh), young goalkeeper Bichu Devi Kharibam (Rs 16 lakh) and Deepika (Rs 20 lakh). In the first half of the auction, all four franchises made strategic bids to build their core team.

I waited for many years for women's HIL: Rani Rampal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rani Rampal waited for the women's Hockey India League as a player for years but now that the league will finally see the light of the day, the former India captain will wear a different hat.

Rani, who captained India to a historic fourth place finish at the Tokyo Olympics, will be the mentor and coach of Soorma Hockey Club of Punjab and Haryana in the women's HIL which will make its debut later this year.

"Hockey is my passion and I played my entire career with that. It was always in my mind that I will definitely accept any opportunity to serve Indian hockey. Hockey was always on my mind," Rani said on the sidelines of the HIL women's auction here on Tuesday.

"I tried a lot to make a comeback in the national team but could not do so before the Paris Olympics. I had waited for many years for this women's league and when it started, it felt very good to be a part of the coaching staff and not as a player," said the 30-year-old Padma Shri awardee, who has scored 134 goals in 212 matches for India.

"Asked why she opted out of the



league as she had not officially announced her retirement yet, Rani said: "I am a female player and I have faced a lot of struggles. A player is always a player. The desire to play never ends."

"But sometimes you have to make a difficult decision and I decided to join the coaching staff.

"It is difficult to talk about retirement right now. Now I will face a new challenge in the league and after that I will take a final decision."

Rani admitted that India's failure to qualify for the Paris Olympics was a setback for women's hockey in the country, but said there is no point in thinking about the

Bangladesh coach Hathurusingha suspended



Chandika Hathurusingha



Phil Simmons

PTI ■ DHAKA

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has suspended men's team head coach Chandika Hathurusingha due to inappropriate conduct by him during last year's ODI World Cup in India.

Hathurusingha, the former Sri Lanka all-rounder under whom Bangladesh recently endured a forgettable tour of India where they were whitewashed in both the Test and T20I series, will be sacked and replaced by former West Indies player Phil Simmons.

'According to ESPNcricinfo, Simmons, who was also an all-rounder and opened the batting for the West Indies in the early and mid 1990s, will be in charge of the Bangladesh team until next year's ICC Champions Trophy. "Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha has been suspended following allegations he slapped a player at last year's ODI World Cup. His contract will be terminated after 48 hours of suspension, with Phil Simmons to take over until next year's Champions Trophy," the website said. "The BCB investigated an

allegation from a player that the coach had slapped him during the World Cup last year.

The contract of the 56-year-old Hathurusingha, who rejoined the Bangladesh team in February last year for a second stint with the Asian side, was to expire after the 2025 Champions Trophy.

'He will therefore not be present with the team for the upcoming two-match Test series at home against South Africa.

'His exit marks an underwhelming end to his brief stint as Bangladesh coach with debacles in the 2023 ODI World Cup and the 2024 T20 World Cup.

Arsenal Women coach Jonas Eidevall quits less than a month into the new season

AP ■ LONDON

Arsenal Women manager Jonas Eidevall quit on Tuesday, less than a month into the new season. The English team has won just one of its first four matches in the Women's Super League and lost its opening game in the Champions League group stage, 5-2 at Bayern Munich. Eidevall joined in June 2021 from FC Rosengard in his native Sweden and led Arsenal to two League Cup titles as well as the Champions League semifinals in the 2022-23 season. It was the first time in 10 years Arsenal reached that stage in Europe's top club competition.

His last game in charge was a 2-1 home loss to Chelsea in the Super League on Saturday. Arsenal said Eidevall



resigned with immediate effect. "We have great respect for the dedication and commitment he showed to our women's first team," Arsenal sporting director Edu Gaspar said of Eidevall, "and recognize the role he has played in the growth and

development of Arsenal Women." Assistant coach Renée Slegers will take charge of the team on an interim basis, starting with the home match against Valerenga in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Italy-Israel soccer match is held without incident despite security concerns

AP ■ UDINE

There were snipers on the roof of the stadium and a heavy police presence throughout the city of Udine for Italy's home match against Israel.

In the end, both the game and an earlier pro-Palestine demonstration passed without incident as Italy beat Israel 4-1 in the Nations League. Udine was on high alert, with the game being played against the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East which has spread to Lebanon after more than a year-long war in Gaza. It was the first match Israel has played outside neutral Hungary this year. After the Israel-Hamas war

started on Oct. 7 last year, the national soccer team played in Kosovo and Andorra last November.

All Israel matches since then have been in Hungary, including last month's game against Belgium in the Nations League after the Belgian Football Association refused to host the game for security reasons.

"We are going to play this match with the hope of convincing ever more people of the wrongness of war," Italy coach Luciano Spalletti said.

"There are many Israelis who don't want it and we must convince ever more people that this is something that has to stop." When Spalletti's team played its "away" match against



Israel last month in Hungary, a group of about 50 Italy fans clad in all black turned their backs in apparent protest during Israel's national anthem.

There were boos from some fans in Udine when the Israeli anthem was played on Monday but the rest of the stadium tried to drown that out with loud applause - just as they had done when the Israel team was read out. At least one Palestinian flag was held up.

There was a highly visible group of around a dozen Israel fans and they loudly chanted their support. Fewer than 12,000 tickets were sold for Monday's match - less than half the capacity of the 25,000-seater Stadio Friuli - amid stringent

security measures, that also included armed military personnel on the roof of the stadium.

Areas around the stadium were blocked off 48 hours before kickoff and declared a "red zone," and only fans with tickets could pass through the tall metal barriers.

Supporters were strongly advised to arrive early because of rigorous checks. Hundreds of extra police officers were called up from surrounding areas.

Around 1,000 people took part in a pro-Palestine demonstration earlier in the city center. Among the placards, there were several posters calling on soccer's governing bodies to ban Israel.

1ST TEST: GILL, JAISWAL CONTINUE GOOD FORM; KOHLI, ROHIT EYE CONSISTENT RUN

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill, the torchbearers of India's transition phase, will have to be the team's driving force in its quest to lord over an unsettled New Zealand when the two sides square off in a three-Test series, beginning here on Wednesday. The baton has not been completely passed, but Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are certainly running their last lap and these two young superstars will have to show that they can carry forward the legacy of the titans. Since a productive series against England earlier this year, Gill is now more familiar and comfortable with the rigours of Test cricket. His last 10 innings contain three hundreds and two fifties, while Jaiswal's last eight outings in Test cricket feature a 214 and five fifties. Those numbers are not to be scoffed at. But at the same time, it is important for them to build on the foundation through this series, a precursor to the much tougher journey to Australia next month. Gill seems to have sorted his issues with the in-coming deliveries from pacers, but a trace of the old failing still remains.



In Chennai, Bangladesh pacer Hasan Mahmud troubled him with nip-backers before eventually grabbing his wicket. Similarly, Jaiswal has a penchant to go for expansive shots against pace bowlers to get dismissed, evidenced by his three dismissals recently

against Bangladesh quicks. In all, the left-hander has fallen to pacers 12 times in 20 innings, and he would want a better record before facing a clutch of top-class Australian pacers. While these concerns are not deeply rooted, they serve as cautionary points against a

New Zealand attack that has capable hands in pacers Matt Henry, William O'Rourke and the experienced Tim Southee, if he gets to play here after a sharp decline in his form. There is another angle to the emergence of Jaiswal and Gill as the pillars of the Indian line-up, as Kohli and Rohit

have not precisely set the field ablaze. Rohit, who has played 15 innings this year, has made two hundreds but managed only one fifty in the remaining 13, totaling 497 runs in eight Tests at just over 35. Kohli, 53 runs shy of 9000 Test runs, has not made even

a fifty in six innings this year, and while Rohit often perishes in his attempt to grab the momentum, his colleague offers a much more curious case. The 35-year-old Kohli has not been able to convert the two starts he got this year, ending up with 46 (vs SA) and 47 (vs Bangladesh), stirring

the uncomfortable memories of that great slump between 2019 and 2023. The master batter will also have to keep an eye on New Zealand left-arm spinners - Ajaz Patel and Rachin Ravindra - the tribe which has been a thorn in his flesh in the past. It has been a while since these two stalwarts embossed their mark across a full series, and a nervy New Zealand could be their golden chance to do so. India has only minor concerns, but New Zealand's troubles across batting and bowling departments are more pronounced. Their batsmen struggled copiously against Sri Lankan spinners recently while losing an away series 0-2, and here they will have to negate two modern-day greats in Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja. They took 20 wickets together against Bangladesh and with the Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch expected to give some assistance to spinners, the veterans might be itching to have a bowl here. Besides the duo, the Kiwis will have to contend with the genius of Jasprit Bumrah, who rattled Bangladesh by picking up 11 wickets across two Tests. If they persist with the combination from the last series, Akash Deep will be the

third pacer behind Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj. The weather here is expected to be gloomy over the course of the Test match, and there could be some delayed starts and truncated sessions. The management will take into account the fact that New Zealand, who have already lost Kane Williamson to an injury, were put through the wringer by Lankan spinners recently. In another blow, right-arm pacer Ben Sears has been ruled out of the series due to a knee injury. An uncapped Jacob Duffy, who has played six ODIs and 14 T20Is, has been brought into the squad. Teams (from): India: Rohit Sharma (c), Jasprit Bumrah (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Dhruv Jurel (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep. New Zealand: Tom Latham (captain), Devon Conway, Kane Williamson, Mark Chapman, Will Young, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Mitchell Santner, Rachin Ravindra, Tom Blundell (wk), Ajaz Patel, Matt Henry, Tim Southee, William O'Rourke, Jacob Duffy.

Don't want to take undercooked Shami to Australia: Rohit

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India skipper Rohit Sharma has virtually ruled out Mohammed Shami from the upcoming Test tour of Australia, saying that the pacer's recovery from an ankle surgery has been hampered by swelling in knees and it would not be right to take an "undercooked" version of him for the marquee showdown. Shami last played for India during the ODI World Cup final last year and has been recuperating from an ankle surgery after that. "To be honest, right now, it's pretty difficult for us to make a call on him, whether he'll be fit for this series or Australia series. He recently had swelling on his knee, which was quite unusual," Rohit told



reporters here on the eve of the first Test against New Zealand. "He was in the process of getting fit, getting close to 100 per cent, he had swelling in his knee, that put him back a little bit in his recovery. So, he had to start again. Right now, he's at NCA, he's working with the physios and the doctors at NCA," he added. Rohit said the team management wants Shami to regain full fitness before returning to top-flight cricket. "We are keeping our fingers crossed, we want him to be 100 per cent fit. We don't want to bring an undercooked Shami to Australia, that is not going to be the right decision for us. "It is quite tough for a fast bowler, having missed so

much of cricket, and then suddenly to come out and be at his best, it is not ideal," he noted. Rohit said the National Cricket Academy staff will continue to assess Shami's fitness and he might play a couple of internal matches in that process. "We want to give him enough time to recover and be 100 per cent fit. The physios, the trainers, the doctors have set a roadmap for him. "He is supposed to play a couple of (practice) games before he plays international cricket," he added. Shami has played 64 Tests for India, taking 229 wickets at an impressive average of 27.71. India will play five Tests in Australia starting November 22.



New Zealand pacer Ben Sears ruled out of India tour due to knee injury

PTI ■ BENGALURU

New Zealand right-arm pacer Ben Sears has been ruled out of the upcoming three-Test series against India due to a knee injury. The opening Test begins here on Tuesday. Sears' departure to India was delayed after he experienced pain in his left knee during New Zealand's recent tour of Sri Lanka. Scans back home revealed a tear to his meniscus, prompting medical consultations in hopes he could be cleared to play. "However, following the medical advice, the decision was made to rule him out of the series. A plan on the best course of treatment and rehabilitation for the injury will be advised in due course," New Zealand Cricket said. Jacob Duffy has been called in as his replacement and the uncapped 30-year-old right-arm fast bowler will leave for India on Wednesday. Duffy has so far played six ODIs and 14 T20Is for the

Kiwis and in 102 First-Class outings he has claimed 299 wickets. "We're obviously disappointed for Ben who made a strong start to his Test career during the home summer and offers a genuine pace option," New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said in a statement. "It remains to be seen how long we'll be without him for, but we're hopeful his road to a full recovery will be a short one. It's an exciting opportunity for Jacob who has been around Test the squad before. With three Tests ahead of us he has every chance of making his Test debut." Stead hoped Duffy's experience in County Championship would be beneficial for the player. "Jacob's recent experience playing for Nottinghamshire in the County Championship certainly pushed his place. His performances in white-ball cricket for the Blackcaps have always been impressive and we're confident he'll be able to contribute if called upon," he said.

Keeping Jasprit Bumrah quiet will go a long way in winning against India: Pat Cummins

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Australia will have to find a way to keep Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah quiet if they are to win the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, reckoned captain Pat Cummins on Tuesday as they draw comfort from success in last two ICC finals against their fierce rivals. The world's top two Test teams will clash in a five-match affair starting on November 22 in Perth and India will enter the contest having held the trophy for nearly a decade, which includes winning two consecutive series Down Under. "I'm a big fan of Bumrah. I think he's a fantastic bowler. Hopefully, if we can keep him quiet, that is going to go a long way to winning the series," Cummins said on the

Star Sports Press Room. "Alongside him, he has got some other guys who haven't played a lot over here in Australia (that) we haven't seen a lot of. We'll see how it goes," he added. Cummins said Australia will lean on happy memories of winning the last two ICC finals -- World Test Championship and ODI World Cup -- against Rohit Sharma's India. "The last two series were a long time ago. We have got over it," he said. "I've never played alongside him (Rohit Sharma), so I don't know him super well. But it has looked like they (Indian team) are pretty organised, pretty well-planned. "Fortunately, over the last few years, we've had some success in the World Test Championship final and (in



a different format for the ODI World Cup. We'll be trying to lean on those memories. As I'm sure they're trying to remember some of the previous series over here as well," he said. Pujara's absence will give a 'different feel' Cummins said playing against Cheteshwar Pujara, whose stoic resistance with the bat laid the foundation of India's away wins in 2018-19 and 2020-21, was 'real Test

cricket'. "It was always great playing (against) Pujara. He was one of those guys who never really felt like he was getting away from you. But then he would (just) bat, bat, bat and bat," he said. "I really enjoyed the contest against him. Some days he won, other days I won. It's going to have a bit of a different feel without him. Pujara is a great player." "(I) had lots of battles against

him over the years. I quite enjoyed them, to be honest. It was real Test cricket. He might score runs, but you always feel like you're in for a chance." Cummins said playing against India's former No 3 batter was a battle of outlasting each other. "It comes down to almost who wants to outlast each other, which I quite like that aspect of Test cricket. It's going to be a shame that he is not there, but I'm sure they'll pick someone else who's in a similar kind of style," he said. Cummins said the India-Australia rivalry will now be "mirroring" the Ashes given that there will be five Tests hereon. "I do think it is," said Cummins when asked if India-Australia rivalry matched that of the Ashes. "Particularly, after the Indian

team won the last couple of series at (our) home. We've had more success against England over the past decade. I think it's right up there," he said. "You know when you play against India, you've got a few Indian fans that are watching. It's a slightly different rivalry to England-Australia rivalry. But again, now having a five-Test match series, it does mirror the Ashes series very closely," he said. Cummins said India's reputation has been consolidated by winning away from home. "Winning (in) Test cricket away from home is as tough as it gets in our sport and India have done that around the world. They are really, really good at home but also, one of the better teams to travel as well that's their reputation," he said.

Latham looking forward to challenge of beating "well-rounded" India

PTI ■ BENGALURU

New Zealand captain Tom Latham on Tuesday conceded that beating a "well-rounded" India would be an enormous task but said his team is ready to face the challenge over the course of a three-match Test series, beginning here from Wednesday. The presence of a host of experienced batters and bowlers, Latham said, makes India a formidable opponent. "You obviously look at the spinners when you come over these conditions. But they've got an equally good seam attack in Bumrah, Siraj, Akash Deep, who's played the last couple of Tests against Bangladesh. So just a well-rounded side," Latham said in the pre-match press meet here on Tuesday. "From a batting point of

view. You have a lot of match winners who can take a game away from you pretty quickly. "We're looking forward to the challenge. Hopefully, we can lean back on the experiences that we've had here the last couple of times that we've toured," he added. In that context, Latham said the Kiwis will miss the presence of former captain Kane Williamson, who has been ruled out of the early part of this tour owing to a groin injury. "It's disappointing not to have Kane here. Fingers crossed he'll be ready as soon as possible. I think Youngie (Will Young) will play. He'll bat at three. He's batted all over the order. I guess it's his opportunity to put his hand up. "Yeah, obviously, disappointing when you miss a senior guy like Kane, but it



gives opportunities for other guys to put their hand up," he said. However, Ben Sears getting ruled out because of a knee injury has opened up a chance for out of form veteran Tim Southee to get a place in the eleven. "Absolutely, I think last time they played a Test here, Tim took 7 for 60. Obviously, Ben Sears has been ruled out, so I guess if we end up going with the three seamers, then obviously Tim will come right into the equation." Latham admitted that the build-up to this series was not ideal after a 0-2 series defeat against Sri Lanka, but hoped to carry over the learning from that contest. "Obviously, results weren't ideal in Sri Lanka. I think that first Test was a reasonably small margin in terms of the defeat. But we

actually did a lot of good stuff in that tour. "And, yeah, I guess you come here to India, it's slightly different conditions. That wicket at Galle didn't offer a lot from a bowling point of view," he noted. Latham is no stranger to captaincy but being in the hot seat on a permanent basis from the three-match series against India excites the Canterbury man. The 32-year-old was handed the skipper's arm band after Southee stepped down from the role after a poor away series against Sri Lanka. "It's obviously a huge, exciting privilege for me to be in this position. But regardless whether I'm captain or not captain, I'm trying to perform my role as best as I can. "That's not going to be any different being captain," said Latham.