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CONTINUES TO 4TH WEEK

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# Marital rape not a crime, Centre tells Supreme Court

**Government says punitive measures in place**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



asserted that the issue is more of a social than a legal one, which has a direct bearing on society in general. While so, even if 'marital rape' is to be criminalised, it is not up to the Supreme Court to do so, the Centre argued. "The (issue) cannot be decided without proper consultation with all the stakeholders or taking the views of all the States into consideration ... the act colloquially referred to as 'marital rape' ought to be illegal and criminalised. The Central Government asserts that a woman's consent is not

obliterated by marriage, and its violation should result in penal consequences. However, the consequences of such violations within marriage differ from those outside it," the affidavit stated. It added that a breach of consent should be punished differently, depending on whether such an act occurs within or outside a marriage. These remedies include laws punishing cruelty to married women (as it was under Section 498A under the Indian Penal Code then), laws punishing acts against the

modesty of women, and remedies under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. The Bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud with Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra is currently seized of the matter. Marital rape is excluded from the ambit of "rape" by way of Exception 2 to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). A similar provision is also present in the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) which replaced the IPC on July 1 this year. In 2022, the

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

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

# West Asia war hits Sensex

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

An escalation in the West Asia conflict had a massive impact on the Indian market on Thursday. The Sensex tanked 1,769 points to slide to a three-week low on Thursday as a spiralling triggered selling in oil, banking and auto shares, wiping out Rs 9.78 lakh crore investor money in a single day.

The NSE Nifty slumped 546.80 points or 2.12 per cent to 25,250.10 with 48 of its constituents ending lower. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,579.35 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Falling for the fourth day, the BSE Sensex tumbled 1,769.19 points or 2.10 per cent to settle at 82,497.10, its lowest closing level since September 11. During the day, it plummeted 1,832.27 points or 2.17 per cent to 82,434.02. As many as 29 Sensex scrips closed in the red while only one stock ended in the green.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, Tata Motors, Bajaj Finance, Maruti, Bajaj Finserv, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan, Adani Ports and HDFC Bank were the major laggards. JSW Steel emerged as the only gainer. A total of 2,881 stocks declined while 1,107 advanced and 88 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped by around Rs 9.78 lakh crore to Rs



# Israeli hits Hezbollah in southern Lebanon

BEIRUT: An Israeli airstrike on an apartment in central Beirut killed seven Hezbollah-affiliated civilian first responders. Israel has been pounding areas of the country where the militant group has a strong presence since late September, but has rarely struck in the heart of the capital.

There was no warning before the strike late Wednesday, which hit an apartment in central Beirut not far from the United Nations headquarters, the prime minister's office and

parliament. Hezbollah's civil defence unit said seven of its members were killed. The Lebanese Red Cross, meanwhile, said an Israeli strike wounded four of its paramedics and killed a Lebanese army soldier as they were evacuating wounded people from the south. It said the convoy near the village of Taybeh, which was accompanied by Lebanese troops, was targeted Thursday despite coordinating its movements with UN peacekeepers.

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4,65,07,685.08 crore (USD 5.54 trillion). Continuous foreign fund outflows and rising crude oil prices dented investors' sentiment, analysts said. "The domestic market took a sharp downturn following Iran's launch of ballistic missiles at Israel, sparking fears of retaliation and escalation in the war," Vinod Nair, Head of

Research, Geojit Financial Services said. "New SEBI regulations for the F&O segment have raised concerns about reduced trading volumes in the broader market. Lastly, with attractive valuations in China, FIIs have redirected their funds, adding pressure on Indian stocks," Nair added.

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# Delhi Police summons Elvish Yadav, Bharti

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Delhi Police has summoned YouTuber Elvish Yadav, comedian Bharti Singh and three others in an alleged app-based scam involving a fraud of Rs 500 crore, an officer said on Thursday.

Police received over 500 complaints alleging that many social media influencers and YouTubers promoted the HIBOX mobile application on their pages and lured people into investing through the app, the officer added. The main accused in the scam, Sivaram (30), a resident of Chennai, has been arrested, police said. As per the complaint, social media influencers and YouTubers including Saurav Joshi, Abhishek Malhan, Purav Jha, Elvish Yadav, Bharti Singh, Harsh Limbachiya, Lakshay Choudhary, Adarsh Singh, Amit, and Dilraj Singh Rawat promoted the application and lured people into investing through the app.

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# Drug mastermind has Congress link, says BJP



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Tushar Goyal, the mastermind behind Delhi's biggest drug bust worth over Rs 5,640 crore allegedly has Congress connections. Sources in Delhi Police's Special Cell said that he admitted to having held office in the Congress's IT Cell.

Later, a war of words broke out between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress. The BJP claimed that the kingpin arrested in the case of seizure of drugs worth Rs 5,600 crore is the chairman of the Delhi Youth Congress' RTI cell. It asked if the money was brought in for the October 5 Haryana elections while a claim refuted by the opposition party as baseless.

According to sources, Goyal claimed

during interrogation that he has been the chairman of the RTI cell of Delhi Pradesh Congress till 2022, Delhi Police sources said. Photos of the accused with many Congress leaders have also surfaced.

Delhi police special cell has arrested Goyal, the main accused following the recovery of more than 500 kg of cocaine and 40 kg of hydroponic marijuana worth over Rs 5,600 crore in a raid conducted in south Delhi on Wednesday.

Later, a war of words erupted between BJP and Congress on this issue. "Drugs worth Rs 5,600 crore have been recovered from Delhi. The main accused in this case is Tushar Goyal, who is the chief of the RTI cell of the Indian Youth Congress," BJP spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Sudhanshu Trivedi said addressing a press conference in the national capital on Thursday. Trivedi sought explanation from the Congress, questioning if the party used drug money in its election campaign and if its association with Goyal extended to business as well. Was there an arrangement between the drug dealers and the Congress that they will be given a free run in Haryana if the party comes to power, he asked, alleging that the neighbouring state of Punjab is already in the grip of drugs.

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# Revolving door in Haryana, Tanwar back in Congress

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ MAHENDRAGARH (HARYANA)/ NEW DELHI

The high-voltage campaign for a cut throat finish in Haryana for the October 5 Assembly polls came to an end on Thursday evening. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) suffered a major blow as its senior leader and former Member of Parliament Ashok Tanwar, who was the party's candidate from Sirsa for the Lok Sabha elections a few months ago, re-joined Congress at a rally of Rahul Gandhi in Mahendragarh district in Haryana on Thursday. Interestingly, shortly before joining the grand old party, the former Sirsa MP, who represented it as a Congress member, was campaigning for the BJP candidate in Safidon Assembly constituency. As Rahul Gandhi finished his speech, an announcement was made from the stage asking the audience to wait for a few minutes. To their surprise Tanwar walked on to the stage and greeted Rahul.



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with former BJP leader Ashok Tanwar as the latter joins Congress during a public meeting ahead of Haryana Assembly elections, in Mahendragarh district. PTI

Tanwar, a former Haryana Congress president, shook hands with Rahul and greeted senior party leader and former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. Tanwar, who was considered close to Rahul and had left the Congress in 2019 following differences with senior party leader former Hooda and in the belief he had his stint with Trinamool Congress (TMC) as well as Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Leading the campaign for BJP Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Congress stands for the "guarantee of corruption, casteism,

communalism and nepotism". The PM exhorted people to vote for the BJP, saying it is important that they elect a government which strengthens India at a time when the entire world is looking at the country with hope and expectations. In his last speech for the campaign in Haryana, Rahul said his party will not let the "hatred" being spread by the BJP on the basis of religion, language, and caste win and appealed to the people of Haryana to oust the ruling party in the Assembly polls. More than two crore voters are eligible to exercise

their franchise in Haryana for 90 assembly seats. The key parties in fray are BJP, Congress, AAP, Indian National Lok Da-Bahujan Samaj Party (INLD-BSP) and Jannayak Janta Party-Azad Samaj Party. While BJP focused its election campaign on the works and performance of the "double-engine" government, while it targeted the Congress on reservation, corruption, appeasement and dynastic politics, Congress wooed by announcing seven guarantees, including the promises of a legal guarantee for MSP, a caste survey, and Rs 2,000 per month to women, if voted to power.

On the last day of campaigning, Congress's Rahul Gandhi and Bhupinder Singh Hooda, BJP's Yogi Adityanath and Nayab Singh Saini, JJP's Dushyant Chautala and INLD's Abhay Singh Chautala were among the prominent leaders who canvassed for their respective parties. AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal also campaigned in Haryana for his party.



# Delhi's traffic needs divine intervention

**Navratri begins, and so does road congestion**

New roads, fancy flyovers, route expansion but the traffic situation in the national Capital remains horrific. Due to the exponential growth of vehicular population, or poor traffic management, commuters are spending more time in their vehicles, including both private and public. Traffic comes to a standstill when a "VIP movement" takes place. Major roads such as those in Lutyens' Zone, Sardar Patel Marg, Dhaura Kuan, RTR, Mathura Road, Tilak Marg, Bahadur Shah Marg, have remained a traffic nightmare for the past three decades. The festive season sees the highest number of traffic jams in the national Capital. The Pioneer begins a campaign on the crisis that unfolds on the city roads with a deep dive into the traffic around the temples in the city on the first day of Navratri, and Durga Puja festivities.

BY RAJESH KUMAR

From Mehrauli-Badarpur Road to Vikas Marg and Jhandewalan, Najafgarh to Peeragarhi, commuters in Delhi had harrowing experiences during the peak hours on the first day of the Navratri festival in the national Capital. However, according to frequent road users, this traffic stagnation is a routine affair. Wrecked roads, potholes, breakdown of vehicles, high volume of traffic and poor maintenance of major stretches result in massive jams. On Thursday, the first day of the Navratri festivities, heavy traffic exacerbated congestion on all roads leading to prominent temples

Jhandewalan, Kalkaji, Maa Katyani Devi mandir in the national capital. The situation worsens each year as according to experts, while road size and capacity remains the same, the number of vehicles has grown exponentially. The vehicle movement was also badly affected on Vikas Marg in the carriageway from Karkari Mor towards Preet Vihar and vice-versa, due to ongoing work being carried out by Delhi Jal Board (DJB) at Preet Vihar Red Light and Najafgarh Road and Old Pankha Road in both the carriageways due to ongoing work being carried out by DJB at Old Pankha Road. Commuters had a harrowing experience on GTK Road on



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

both the carriageways from Jahangirpuri to Azadpur flyover as the entire traffic came to standstill for two-three hours due to heavy vehicles movement in

Azadpur Mandi. According to a traffic police advisory, traffic was affected on Maa Anandmai Marg in the carriageway from ESI Hospital towards Govind

Puri due to breakdown of a bus at Crown Plaza Red Light. Traffic was affected on Ring Road in the carriageway from DND towards Ashram Chowk due

to breakdown of a water tanker on Maharani Bagh Flyover. A loaded truck near Peeragarhi flyover broke down which led to massive jam on the Main Outer Ring Road in the carriageway from Madhuban Chowk towards Peeragarhi. Traffic was also affected on Rohtak Road in the carriageway from Nangloi towards Tikri Border and vice versa due to potholes and water logging. There was a traffic jam on the SSN Marg in the carriageway from Satbari towards Mehrauli due to drain work being carried out by civic agency. Commuters were advised to plan their journey accordingly. "Traffic remained affected on

Dwarka Palam Road in the carriageway from Palam Flyover towards IOC Red light due to breakdown of a bus on Palam flyover. Kindly plan your journey accordingly. Traffic was affected on Mathura Road in the carriageway from Badarpur towards Sarita Vihar due to breakdown of a truck near Aali Village", traffic police advisory stated. According to traffic police, breakdown of vehicles during peak hours on major roads is also an issue that leads to traffic jams. Roads leading to the Jhandewalan temple and Shri Adhya Katyayani Shaktipeeth temple witnessed heavy traffic flow on the first day of Navratri festival.

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# Cabinet confers Classical Language status to five more languages

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a clamour for classical status for many languages, the Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal conferring status of Classical Language to Marathi (Maharashtra), Pali and Prakrit (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh) Assamese (Assam) and Bengali languages (Bengal) involving six states. The Union Cabinet has also approved the proposal of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs for Chennai Metro Rail Project Phase-II comprising three corridors. The total length of the approved lines will be 118.9 km with 128 stations. The project completion cost is Rs.63,246 crore and is planned to be completed by 2027. Once Phase-II is fully operational, the Chennai city will have a total Metro Rail network of 173 Km.

According to the cabinet decision, the six languages which presently enjoy classical language status are Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Malayalam (2013), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008) and Odia (2014). The Classical Languages serve as a custodian of Bharat's profound and ancient cultural heritage, embodying the essence of each community's historical and cultural milestone. The inclusion of languages as Classical Language will create significant employment opportunities, particularly in academic and research fields. Additionally, the preservation, documentation, and digitization of ancient texts of these languages will generate jobs in archiving, translation, publishing, and digital media. According to a statement, a proposal from the Maharashtra Government in 2013 was received in the Ministry requesting Classical

Language status to Marathi, which was forwarded to the LEC. The LEC recommended Marathi for Classical Language. During the inter-ministerial consultations on the draft note for cabinet in 2017 for conferring classical status to the Marathi language, MHA advised to revise the criteria and make it stricter. PMO vide its comment stated that the Ministry may conduct an exercise to find out how many other languages are likely to become eligible. In the meantime, proposal from Bihar, Assam, West Bengal was also received for conferring status of Classical Language to Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali. The Ministry of Education has taken various steps to promote Classical Languages. Three Central Universities were established in 2020 through an Act of Parliament for promotion of Sanskrit language. The Central



Institute of Classical Tamil was set up to facilitate the translation of ancient Tamil texts, promote research and offer courses for University students and language scholars of Tamil. To further

enhance the study and preservation of Classical Languages, the Centres for Excellence for studies in Classical Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia were established under the auspices

of the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysuru. In addition to these initiatives, several national and international awards have been instituted to recognize and encourage achievements

in the field of Classical Languages. Benefits extended to Classical Languages by the Ministry of Education include National Awards for Classical Languages, Chairs in Universities, and Centers for promotion of Classical Languages. The Cabinet has also approved two major schemes -- PM Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and Krishonnati Yojana -- with an expenditure of over Rs 1 lakh crore to promote sustainable agriculture and ensure food security. The Cabinet approved the PM Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) to promote sustainable agriculture and Krishonnati Yojana (KY) to achieve food security for self-sufficiency. The combined total expenditure will be Rs 1,01,321.61 crore, the government said in a post on social media platform X. "Cabinet approved rationalisation of all centrally

sponsored schemes operating under Ministry of Agriculture into two umbrella scheme," it added. The government on Thursday approved National Mission on Edible Oils-Oilseeds with an outlay of Rs 10,103 crore to make India self-sufficient in cooking oils. India imports more than 50 per cent of its annual edible oil requirement. "With an aim to make India self-reliant in oilseed production in next 7 years, Cabinet approves National Mission on Edible Oils ? Oilseeds (NMEO-Oilseeds) for 2024-25 to 2030-31 with outlay of Rs 10,103 crore," the government said on social media platform X. The mission aims to increase primary oilseed production from 39 million tonnes in 2022-23 to 69.7 million tonnes by 2030-31, the government said. "It seeks to extend oilseed cultivation by an additional 40 lakh hectares," it added.

## SC sets aside caste-based provisions of prison manuals of many states

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday set aside caste-based discriminatory provisions of prison manuals of around 11 States while deprecating the practice of distribution of work and segregation of prisoners in separate wards on basis of their castes. The top court also directed the states to amend their prison manuals within three months. "State has a positive obligation to prevent such discriminations," a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra held while issuing a slew of directions to abolish caste-based discrimination inside jails. "All such provisions are held to be unconstitutional. All the states are directed to make changes (in prison manuals) in accordance with the judgment. "The references to habitual offenders shall be in reference to the habitual offender legislations and all such references of habitual offenders in state prison manuals are declared as unconstitutional if they are based on castes," the CJI said while pronouncing the verdict in a packed courtroom. The top court also took suo motu cognizance of the instances of caste-based discrimination inside prisons and directed the apex court

registry to list it with a title of 'In re: Discrimination Inside Prisons' after three months. The Chief Justice said the PIL challenged the provisions of state prison manuals on the grounds of them being discriminatory. The CJI said there are divisions of manual labour, barracks inside jails in some states on the basis of identity of the prisoners. "We have said that the criminal laws of the colonial era impacts even the post colonial period...The constitutional laws must uphold equality and dignity of citizens," he said. "We have also dealt (in the judgement) with the concept of emancipation, equality and the fight against caste-based discrimination and said it cannot be won overnight," he said. This court is making a contribution to the ongoing struggle against caste-based discrimination and the judgement has dealt with aspects of non-discrimination under Article 14 (right to equality) under the Constitution, the CJI said. Based on the analysis of the judgment certain anti-discrimination principles emerge and such instances can be both "direct, indirect" and stereotypes they can further such discriminations, he said. "State has a positive obligation to prevent the same and the courts have to adjudicate claims of indirect and systemic discrimination...Not

providing dignity to prisoners is a relic of colonial period where they were dehumanised and the Constitution mandates that prisoners have to be treated humanely and prison system must be aware of mental and physical state of prisoners," the judgement said. The verdict said the states will be held liable if the prisoners are being made to do inhuman work and treated inhumanely. "Hatred and contempt towards the castes showed inherent and pervasive bias towards such castes. The colonial history indicates that social hierarchy was imbibed in their administration," the CJI said. Discrimination against the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the de-notified tribes have continued and the courts have to ensure there is implementation of protective legislations and ensure that marginalised people do not suffer, the judgement said. "We have held that the Constitution recognizes that SCs, STs for protective discrimination...Castes cannot be used to discriminate against the marginalised ones," the CJI said. There cannot be such a discrimination between prisoners and their segregation based on their castes will not lead to their rehabilitation and such a practice does not survive the

test of "intelligible differentia", the verdict said. "We have held that assigning cleaning and sweeping work to marginalised and assigning cooking to higher caste is nothing but violation of Article 15 (it forbids discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, gender, or place of birth or any of them)," the CJI said. The bench referred to an Uttar Pradesh law which provides that a person undergoing simple imprisonment will not work in degrading and menial work unless his caste is used to do such jobs. "We hold that no group is born as a scavenger class or to do or not do menial jobs. The classes who can cook and who cannot cook are aspects of untouchability which cannot be permitted...Sweepers should be chosen from 'chandal' caste is nothing but entirely opposed to substantive equality and a facet of institutional discrimination. "The prisoners shall not be permitted to undertake cleaning of sewers tanks in hazardous conditions," it said while ordering that the police will have to work in earnest to deal with the cases of caste-based discriminations. The apex court had in January this year sought responses from the Centre and 11 states, including Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, on a plea filed by Sukanya Shantha, a native of Kalyan in Maharashtra.

## Delhi-NCR schools get top rating in EducationWorld India School Rankings

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The annual EducationWorld India School Rankings 2024-25 have accorded top rating to Delhi-NCR schools. The EducationWorld in association with AZ Research Partners surveyed the schools on a sample database of 8,700 respondents, including 5,150 parents and 3,550 education professionals across 34 cities to rate the country's top 4,000 schools on 14 parameters of educational excellence. Delhi NCR schools have made a significant impact in the national education landscape, securing several spots in the top 10 rankings. Government



Schools of Delhi in Top 10 rankings include Army Public School, Delhi Cantt, securing the top rank jointly with Navy Children School, Colaba, Mumbai, Army Public School, Dhaula Kuan got the third spot and Air Force Golden Jubilee Institute, Delhi was ranked ninth in the Central government school category. Likewise, under the State Government day schools category, Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya, Sector 10, Dwarka, Delhi stood at the second position followed by Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi at the sixth spot and Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya, Sector 19, Dwarka, Delhi was rated at the seventh position.

## Police arrest two for allegedly brandishing knife

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested two individuals, including a 17-year-old for allegedly brandishing knife at a woman shopkeeper in the Sultanpuri market of outer Delhi. A purported video of the incident surfaced online which led to the police investigation into the matter. In the video, a boy was seen brandishing a knife and threatening the shopkeeper in F-Block of the DDA Market. The incident occurred on September 22, at around 6 pm. The video has sparked outrage within the

businessmen community, police said. The video surfaced online, prompting the authorities to take immediate action. On October 1, the shopkeeper, identified as Mamta Devi (28), came forward and gave her statement to the police, an officer said. Based on her statement, and FIR was registered and investigation was launched, said the officer. Police said that out of the three people depicted in the video, one, identified as Rakesh (19), was arrested. Additionally, a 17-year-old boy has been apprehended. Efforts are being made to locate the third accused in the case.

## Himanta thanks Modi for classical language status of Assamese

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Centre's recognition of the Assamese language as a classical one, and said the step will help preserve his mother tongue in a better way. "On behalf of the people of Assam, I extend my gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji and the entire Union Cabinet for the historic decision to accord Assamese the status of Classical Language," Sarma said in a post on X.

Assamese joins a select group of languages to enjoy the status and this exemplifies the unique civilisational roots of Assam that has withstood the test of time, he added. "With today's decision we shall be able to better preserve our beloved mother tongue, that not only unites our society but also forms an unbroken link to the ancient wisdom of Assam's saints, thinkers, writers and philosophers," the CM said. He termed the occasion as one of the happiest days in his life, considering the sacrifices that his generation has made to protect the Assamese language and culture.

## Israeli hits Hezbollah...

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In a separate development, the Israeli military ordered the evacuation of villages and towns in southern Lebanon that are north of a United Nations-declared buffer zone established after the 2006 war. The warnings issued Thursday signalled a possible broadening of Israel's incursion into southern Lebanon, which until now has been confined to areas close to the border. At least eight Israeli soldiers were killed in clashes with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, where Israel announced the start of what it says is a limited ground incursion earlier this week. The region was meanwhile bracing for Israeli retaliation following an Iranian ballistic missile attack. In a separate development, Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen said they had launched two drones at Tel Aviv overnight. The military said it identified two drones off the coast of the bustling metropolitan area, shooting one of them down while the other fell in the Mediterranean Sea. The escalating violence in Lebanon has opened a second front in the war between Israel and Iran-backed militants that began nearly a year ago with Hamas' surprise Oct 7 attack from the Gaza Strip into Israel. The Israeli military said Thursday that it killed a senior Hamas leader in an airstrike in the Gaza Strip around three months ago. It said that a strike on an

underground compound in northern Gaza killed Rawhi Mushtaha and two other Hamas commanders. There was no immediate comment from Hamas. Mushtaha was a close associate of Yahya Sinwar, the top leader of Hamas who helped mastermind the Oct 7 attack. Sinwar is believed to be alive and in hiding inside Gaza. In recent weeks, Israelis strikes in Lebanon have killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and several of his top commanders. Hundreds more airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon since mid-September have killed at least 1,276 people, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. The Israeli military said Thursday that it had struck around 200 Hezbollah targets across Lebanon, including weapons storage facilities and observation posts. It said the strikes killed at least 15 Hezbollah fighters. There was no independent confirmation. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes, as Israel has warned people to evacuate from around 50 villages and towns in the south, telling them to relocate to areas that are around 60 km (36 miles) from the border and considerably farther north than a UN-declared buffer zone. Israel says it is targeting Hezbollah after nearly a year of rocket attacks that began on Oct 8 and have displaced some 60,000 Israelis from communities in the north. Israel has carried out

retaliatory strikes over the past year that have displaced tens of thousands on the Lebanese side. The vast majority of recent strikes have been in areas where Hezbollah has a strong presence, including the southern suburbs of Beirut known as the Dahiyeh. But Israel has also carried out strikes in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and a strike in central Beirut earlier this week killed three Palestinian militants. Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis are part of the Iranian Axis of Resistance, which also includes armed groups in Syria and Iraq. They have launched attacks on Israel in solidarity with the Palestinians, drawing retaliation in a cycle that has repeatedly threatened to set off a wider war. The region once again appears on the brink of such a conflict after Iran's missile attack on Tuesday, which it said was a response to the killing of Nasrallah, an Iranian Revolutionary Guard general who was with him, and Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, who was killed in an explosion in Tehran in July that was widely blamed on Israel. Both Israel and the United States have said there will be severe consequences for the missile attack, which lightly wounded two people and killed a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank. The United States has rushed military assets to the region in support

## Delhi Police summons...

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"HIBOX is a mobile application that was part of a well-planned scam," Deputy Commissioner of Police (IFSO Special Cell) Hemant Tiwari said. Through this application, the accused promised guaranteed returns of one to five per cent daily, amounting to 30 to 90 per cent in a month, the DCP said. The app was launched in February 2024. Over 30,000 people invested money into the app. During the initial five months, the investors received high returns. However, from July the app

withheld the payments citing technical glitches, legal issues, GST issues, etc. "The alleged companies disappeared after closing their office in Noida in Uttar Pradesh," DCP Tiwari said. Police said the mastermind Sivaram was arrested and Rs 18 crore has been seized from his four different bank accounts. On August 16, police received complaints from 29 victims against the HIBOX application at the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO). The complainants alleged that they were promised high returns on their investments. On August 20, the Special

Cell registered an FIR under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act. During the investigation, many complaints from the cyber Northeast district have also been registered against the HIBOX application by nine people who were cheated similarly. These nine cases were transferred to IFSO. Police have received over 500 complaints from the northeast district, outer district, Shahdara and NCRP portal. "Our team gathered details of payment gateways and bank accounts involved in the

fraud. Analysis of the transactions led the team to identify four accounts which were used to syphon off cheated amounts," the DCP said. "To date, 127 complaints are clubbed and the roles of EASEBUZZ and PhonePe are under probe as the merchant accounts of the fraudsters operating HIBOX were opened virtually without following the due verification process and bypassing laid down norms of RBI, police said. "Involvement of EASEBUZZ and PhonePe employees can't be ruled out and an investigation is underway," DCP said.

## West Asia war...

From page 1

The BSE midcap gauge tumbled 2.27 per cent and smallcap index dropped 1.84 per cent. All indices ended lower. Realty tanked 4.49 per cent, while capital goods (3.18 per cent), auto (2.94 per cent), services (2.87 per cent), industrials (2.75 per cent) and oil & gas (2.52 per cent) were among the major losers. "Fears of FPIs and FIIs switching to China from Indian equities were prevalent, especially considering the sharp valuations of domestic markets compared to China," Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.37 per cent to USD 74.91 a barrel.

## Drug mastermind...

From page 1

Trivedi said Goyal not only had pictures with senior Congress leaders like KC Venugopal and Deepender Singh Hooda but also had the mobile number of Hooda, the son of former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. "The Hooda family should also explain," he said. Responding to the allegations, Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit said that the accused is a former member of the Indian Youth Congress and was expelled by the party two years ago. The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) said in a statement that Tushar Goyal, the suspected kingpin, was expelled from the organisation on October 17, 2022 for anti-party activities

soon after BJP spokesperson and MP Sudhanshu Trivedi charged the opposition party with having links with the drug dealers. Hitting back, the IYC accused the BJP of trying to tarnish its image and that of the Congress leaders in order to influence the Haryana Assembly elections on October 5, asserting that the accused has not been associated with it since his expulsion. Trivedi's claims are "baseless and misleading" just to influence the Haryana elections, it claimed. "Rather than spreading half-baked political stories, the BJP should trust the Delhi Police to investigate and uncover the truth. We urge the Delhi Police to take strict action against those arrested in the alleged drug bust rather than allowing it to become a vicious

## Delhi's traffic needs...

From page 1

Heavy traffic flow around the Jhandewalan temple affected both carriageways of Rani Jhansi Road, Faiz Road, New Rohtak Road and DBG Road, and traffic flow around Shri Adhya Katayayani Shaktipith Mandir is likely to affect Chhattarpur Mandir Road, CDR Chowk on MG Road, Mandi Village exit on MG Road, Mandi Road, Andheria Mor on MG Road, Anuvrat Marg, 100 Feet Road, 60 Feet Road, MainChattarpur Road and the adjoining Y-junction. Currently, PWD is repairing a 3.5-kilometre-long stretch of the Outer Ring Road from Chirag Delhi to Modi Mills, which is affecting the traffic movement.

## Delhi's traffic needs...

From page 1

In an advisory for commuters heading to Kalkaji temple from October 3 to 13 - the Dussehra period - police said traffic on both carriageways of the road from Nehru Place to Modi Mills will be affected. "Commuters going to IGI Airport, New Delhi, Chhattarpur Mandir Road, Old Delhi and Nizamuddin railway station, and ISBTs should leave with sufficient time in hand to accommodate possible delays on the route. Avail public transport to help decongestion of roads. Park your vehicles only at designated parking lots and avoid roadside parking as it causes hindrance to normal flow traffic," traffic police stated.

## Delhi's traffic needs...

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# Order barring assembly of five, more persons lifted

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Thursday informed the Supreme Court that an order prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons in the national capital from September 30 to October five has been "withdrawn." Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told this to a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud when a matter pertaining to the order passed by Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora was mentioned for urgent listing.

Menaka Guruswamy, who mentioned the matter for urgent listing. The order issued by the police commissioner prohibited the assembly of five or more persons, carrying of fire-arms, banners, placards etc, pocketing or dharnas in any public areas from September 30 to October 5, citing law and order issues, including calls of protests given by several organisations. Guruswamy mentioned the matter before the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, and said the order passed by the police commissioner impacts the city right now because of the Dussehra season. She said due to the order,

Ram Leela cannot take place and the order affects the Durga Puja festivities as well. "Go to the Delhi High Court," the bench initially said. Mehta informed the court that petitions raising similar issue was scheduled to come up for hearing before the High Court during the day. The CJJ told Guruswamy that the senior law officer has stated that the order has been withdrawn. According to a police officer, the old order has ceased on the intervening night of October 2 and 3. According to the earlier order issued from the Delhi Police Headquarters, the police commissioner had directed to impose Section 163 (which was earlier Section 144 of



Cr(PC) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita in the districts of New Delhi, North Delhi and Central Delhi and all police stations in the jurisdiction sharing the borders with other states.

of Shahi Idgah in Sadar Bazaar area, politically surcharged issue of MCD Standing Committee elections and pending declaration of results of DUSU elections etc," the order had stated. "Further, there will be heavy movement of the VVIPs and dignitaries in the areas of New Delhi and Central District on October 2 on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi," it had said. The earlier order further stated that the Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana Legislative Assembly elections are underway and, thus, there was a need to have continuous checks on the movement of persons and vehicles from Delhi borders.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said the withdrawal of the prohibitory order was a "victory" of the people, especially Hindu devotees. At a press conference, AAP leader and Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj claimed that the order had sparked "outrage" among Hindu devotees concerned about Navratri programmes like temple visits, Jagran and religious processions in the coming days. The nine-day Navratri celebrations began on Thursday. "This is a moment of triumph for the people of Delhi, especially for the Hindu devotees, who were worried about how they would celebrate the festival," said the AAP leader. The minister said that with-

drawal of the order was also a "defeat" of the Lt Governor under whom the Delhi Police worked. "This is an embarrassing defeat for the Lieutenant Governor. The Central government and its lawyers knew that such absurd orders cannot be implemented in a sovereign, free country," he said. The prohibitory order was challenged in the court by the Kalkaji temple priest and during the hearing, the solicitor general representing the Centre informed that it was revoked, Bharadwaj said. He also slammed the BJP and the RSS for not speaking against the order despite claiming to be "defenders of Hinduism".

## SC slams Commission for Air quality management

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday slammed the Commission for Air Quality Management for failing to control incidents of stubble burning in NCR and adjoining areas, and said it has made no effort to implement its direction to prevent such incidents. The top court said the Commission only kept on calling meetings but did not take penal action against the violators. There was no implementation of directions to stop stubble burning at the ground level and the state governments of Punjab and Haryana have done nothing except recovering nominal compensation from the farmers who indulge in stubble burning, the court added. A three-judge bench of Justices Abhay S Oka, Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Augustine George Masih said the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has not launched a single prosecution against incidents of stubble



burning in the National Capital Region (NCR) and the adjoining areas. The bench said neither Punjab nor Haryana has placed on record any document showing efforts made to comply with the directions issued by the Commission. "We find from the compliance affidavit filed by the commission that no effort is made by the commission to secure implementation of its own directions. There is a sub-committee (of CAQM) on safeguarding and enforcement. The last meeting of the sub-committee was held on August

29, 2024 in which there is not even discussion of the implementation of directions. Though there is a specific direction in the order to prosecute wrong doers under section 15 of Environment Protection Act, not a single prosecution has been launched," the bench said. The SC said in one of the CAQM sub-committee meetings held on August 29, only five out of 11 members were present apart from the fact that the committee did not discuss implementation of directions.

## Former bus marshals protest near LG residence demanding reinstatement

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former bus marshals staged a protest near the residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi on Thursday, demanding reinstatement of their jobs. The protest was joined by Delhi Cabinet Ministers, including Saurabh Bharadwaj, Imran Hussain, and Mukesh Ahlawat, along with other MLAs of the party. Police detained some protestors along with Bharadwaj and other AAP leaders, citing that they had not taken permission for the protest. Bharadwaj criticised the delay in resolving the matter and said that the marshals should not be treated like a "football" between political parties. "We are here in solidarity with the protestors. We are now waiting for the BJP to come and extend support," he added. The party earlier in the day accused the BJP of taking a U-turn on the reinstatement of former bus marshals in the national capital. The recent two-day assembly session in Delhi saw a heated discussion between AAP and



the opposition over the termination of bus marshals, with both sides supporting a resolution to restore their jobs. According to the resolution passed in the Delhi Assembly, all the MLAs of Delhi, both AAP and BJP, were to meet LG on Thursday at 11 am for the reinstatement of bus marshals. However, no such meeting has taken place. AAP accused the LG's office of ignoring their request, with Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj claiming that he had written to the LG but received no response. "According to the resolution passed in the Delhi Assembly, all the MLAs of Delhi were to meet LG today for the rein-

statement of bus marshals, but neither did LG Sahab give time to meet nor did the BJP MLAs arrive," the party said. BJP and their LG should stop this "cheap politics" and reinstate Delhi's bus marshals immediately, AAP added. Responding to the accusations, Delhi Assembly Leader of Opposition Vijender Gupta criticised AAP for misleading the public. Gupta said that when they decided to meet LG on October 3, then why did he not ask for the time? "Aam Aadmi Party means fraud party. AAP and Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj themselves chose the date to meet LG Sahab. When the time came, the chief minister, ministers, Aam Aadmi Party MLAs, and all the leaders disappeared," Gupta said. Last year, LG V.K. Saxena approved a proposal to terminate the services of civil defence volunteers deployed as bus marshals. He also directed the then Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to consider appointing such volunteers in over 10,000 posts of home guards sanctioned by him.

## Mastermind behind firing incident at luxury car showroom arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Thursday arrested the mastermind behind the firing incident at a luxury car showroom in the national capital on September 27. Police also arrested his accomplice after a brief encounter in outer Delhi. The arrested individual, Deepak (26), hailing from Rohtak, is an international-level kick-boxing player with a dark side that led him into a life of crime. The incident, which occurred on the evening of September 27, left both staff and customers terrified as three assailants barged into the showroom, demanding extortion money. "A significant breakthrough has been achieved in this case with the arrest of Deepak, who was the mastermind behind the attack. We are continuing our efforts to apprehend the remaining suspects and bring them to justice," said Amit Goel, Deputy Commissioner of Police Crime Branch.



## Event for women working on Sustainable Development business held at Miranda



Two days conclave held in the Delhi University's Miranda House focused on empowering women business owners to forge collaborations, mentorship, and investment opportunities for women entrepreneurs working in waste management, circular economy, climate technology, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. UnPollute was a two days Sustainability Conclave, organised by STEP in partnership with Miranda House, which brought together women entrepreneurs, students, government leaders, and industry experts. Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor at the Ministry of Commerce & Industry Arti Bhatnagar highlighted the government's support for women entrepreneurs, citing the Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme, which allocates Rs. Five crore to each incubator for start-ups, including women-led initiatives. "Women entrepreneurs are driving India's sustainability journey," she said, applauding the platform for amplifying their impact. Reenu Shah, STEP's Founder, stressed the role of women entrepreneurs in creating jobs and catalyzing systemic change. Miranda House Principal Bijayalaxmi Nanda reaffirmed the institution's commitment to nurturing future leaders in environmental sustainability through partnerships like the one with STEP. "The solutions to climate change will emerge from the knowledge and innovation we foster today."



Entrance of the official residence of Punjab Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Mittal on Ferozeshah Road is seen where the party convener Arvind Kejriwal will shift after vacating the chief minister's residence, in New Delhi, Thursday, Kejriwal, who resigned as Delhi chief minister last month, will live with his family at Mittal's residence near Mandi House, close to the AAP headquarters at Ravi Shankar Shukla Lane.

Photo by: RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIONEER

## Kejriwal, Sisodia shifting to party MPs official bungalows

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP national convener and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal will move to 5, Ferozeshah Road bungalow of Ashok Mittal, the party's Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab. Kejriwal and his family will thus vacate the CM residence at Civil Lines. Earlier in the day, former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia shifted to a bungalow on Rajendra Prasad Road. The house is the official residence of AAP Rajya Sabha MP Harbhajan Singh, party leaders said. "Kejriwal will move into 5, Ferozeshah Road residence of AAP MP from Punjab Ashok Mittal on Friday," AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj told reporters at a press conference. Mittal, founder of Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar, was picked by the Aam Aadmi Party as one of its seven Rajya Sabha members in 2022 and was allotted the Ferozeshah Road bungalow. While the bungalow will remain allotted to Mittal, Kejriwal and his family will move into it for the time being. Several party leaders, including MPs, MLAs and councillors, had offered Kejriwal their houses after he decided to leave 6,

Flagstaff Road in north Delhi's Civil Lines, where he lived since 2015 as the chief minister, Bharadwaj said. The new accommodation of Kejriwal, where he will move in with his family, is close to the AAP headquarters at Ravi Shankar Shukla Lane. Living in the New Delhi area, which is also his Assembly constituency, Kejriwal will supervise AAP's campaign for the upcoming polls in Delhi and other states, party leaders said. The 6, Flagstaff Road house where Kejriwal lived with his family, including his wife, children and elderly parents, was targeted by the BJP as "Sheesh Mahal" over alleged irregularities in its reconstruction. Party leaders said Sisodia moved with his family from the AB-17 bungalow on Mathura Road that was earlier allotted to him as deputy chief minister of Delhi. The bungalow was allotted to the Delhi government minister and now chief minister, Atishi, after Sisodia was arrested in the excise policy case in March 2023. Atishi currently lives in her Kalkaji constituency house even after becoming the chief minister while Sisodia and his family were living in the Mathura Road bungalow, they said.

## Dust-free Delhi drive: Government agencies removing silt, C&D waste

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As part of the Dust-free Delhi drive launched in the national capital on the instructions and under the guidance of Lt Governor VK Saxena, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is making a continued and substantial contribution, removing over 6156.94 metric tons (MT) of silt and C&D waste/ malba from the city since September 24, Raj Niwas said here on Thursday. Giving details of the ongoing effort, officials said MCD's 12 zones collectively had removed 404.65 MT of waste on September 24 and October 2, it was able to remove 6156.94 metric tons (MT) of silt and construction and demolition (C&D) waste. The Shahdara South Zone continued to demonstrate the most significant progress since



September 24 removing a combined total of 1230.76 MT in last 10 days. Keshapuram zone was next and it was also able to remove 1019.67 MT of waste by October two. The removed silt and C&D waste is being safely transported to designated dumping sites for proper disposal and bio-remediation.

While this initial effort of removing the silt from various choked drains is in progress and encouraging, the road ahead remains tough. It may be recalled Saxena, who had in a meeting to review air pollution on September 20 stressed upon preparedness for mitigating it, well in advance. He had asked the MCD, PWD, NDMC, I&FCD and DJB to take up a Dust-free Delhi drive over the next one week / 10 days and asked for the same to be converted into a year-long campaign. Pollution caused by road dust is one of the two major contributors to air pollution in Delhi, and with the rains having stopped, dried up mud/ silt accumulated on roads is flying high in the environment causing major air pollution.

## Gopal Rai launches bio-decomposer spraying drive in farmlands to avoid stubble burning

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday launched a drive of spraying bio-decomposer solution in farmlands to avoid stubble burning in the national capital aiming to reduce pollution levels during winter. The drive was launched at Palla village of Narela Assembly constituency. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said the Delhi government will spray bio de-composer on more than 5,000 acres of farmland to get rid of winter pollution. To facilitate this, 11 teams have been formed and the initiative will cover all basmati and non-basmati rice fields in Delhi. Taking to social media plat-

form X, the AAP said, "Another effective step of AAP government to reduce pollution in winter. Today minister @AapKaGopalRai inaugurated the spraying of bio de-composer mixture for decomposing stubble. "This year, the Delhi government will spray bio de-composer on more than 5,000 acres of farmland to combat pollution during the winter." According to a statement, the Delhi government has ensured a simplified process for availing the facility where the farmers are only required to fill out a form to participate and 841 farmers have already done so. Rai highlighted that Delhi government has developed a 21-point winter action plan to address the rising pollution during the winter season.

## BJP workers protest against pothole-ridden roads

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Carrying cut-outs of former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders, the BJP workers on Thursday staged protests against "pothole-ridden" roads in the city. The protesters kept the cut outs in the potholes and damaged patches of roads at many places across the city, slamming the AAP government through slogan shouting and waving posters. The BJP should stop "spreading misinformation" and focus on positive politics by allowing the Delhi government to do its work, the ruling AAP said. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva took part in the protests at Church Road, Khari Baoli, Mission Road and Railway Station Road in Chandni Chowk area. "The potholes of Delhi's roads are an evidence of the Aam Aadmi Party government's incompetence and corruption" he charged.



Chief Minister Atishi recently promised repair of all the damaged roads in the city by Diwali. The ministers of the Delhi government are currently visiting different areas of the city identifying damaged sections of the roads. Under the 'Pol-Khol' (expose) campaign of Delhi BJP, the party MPs, MLAs and senior leaders took to streets at 60 locations across the city, said a party statement. The party leaders and workers "exposed" the "media events" of

Bidhuri, along with Councillor Seema Pandit and party workers, staged protest in Palam area. "The poor condition of Delhi's roads is because of 10 years of corruption in road maintenance and not due to Monsoon rains this year," Bidhuri charged. Party leader Arvinder Singh Lovely accompanied by Mayur Vihar district president Vijender Dhama protested at Trilokpuri. From 1993 to 2013, every government worked for the development of Delhi, but the AAP government since 2013 has pushed the city two decades back, Lovely alleged. Paharganj area having numerous hotels has become a "nightmare" for the tourists due to the poor civic conditions, including roads, Delhi BJP general secretary Vishnu Mittal said in a protest near Ashram Metro station. The AAP in a statement alleged that the BJP tried to halt work in Delhi by sending Kejriwal to jail.

## Pul Bangash Gurdwara riots: Victim's wife deposes against Tytler

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The wife of a victim in north Delhi's Pul Bangash Gurdwara case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots on Thursday deposed before a Delhi court against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler. Special Judge Rakesh Syal recorded the statement of Lakhwinder Kaur, the wife of Badal Singh who was one of the three men killed by a mob that torched the Gurdwara during the riots. In her statement, Kaur said an eyewitness told her that Tytler had come to the place of the incident in a vehicle and incited a mob. Kaur told the court that she met Surrender Singh Granthi, who worked as a Granthi in the Gurdwara in 2008, who described the incident to her. "Surrender Singh told me that he saw the incident from the roof of the Gurdwara.

# India rejects USCIRF report as political bias

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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



desist from such agenda driven efforts. The USCIRF would also be well advised to utilise its time more productively on addressing human rights issues in the

United States." "Newagency PTI reported from Washington a US federal government commission has flagged the alleged worsening of religious freedom in India

and called for it to be designated as a "Country of Particular Concern". Authored by senior policy analyst Sema Hasan, the section on India describes the

use of misinformation and disinformation -- including hate speech by government officials -- to incite violent attacks against religious minorities and their places of worship, the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) said in a statement. In its annual report, the USCIRF also recommended that the US Department of State designate India as a "Country of Particular Concern" for engaging in systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom. The state department has so far refrained from accepting the recommendations. "This report highlights how, throughout 2024, individuals have been killed, beaten, and lynched by vigilante groups, religious leaders have been arbitrarily arrested, and homes and places of worship

have been demolished. These events constitute particularly severe violations of religious freedom," the USCIRF said. Beginning with the previous Manmohan Singh-led government, India has consistently denied visas to USCIRF members to visit the country, citing "interference" in its internal affairs, it added. India and several Indian-American groups have in the past accused the USCIRF of biased, unscientific and agenda-driven reporting to malign the country. "It (the report) further describes changes to and enforcement of India's legal framework to target and disenfranchise religious minorities, including the Citizenship Amendment Act, a uniform civil code, and several state-level anti-conversion and cow slaughter laws," the USCIRF said.

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

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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

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

# Modi greets people on Navaratri festival

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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

# Indian researchers develop road safety sensor prototype

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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

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



were prepared by integrating these nanoparticles at various concentrations into a well-known piezoelectric polymer, poly (vinylidene difluoride) (PVDF). Further they investigated how

the surface charge of nanoparticles will affect the piezoelectric properties of polymer nanocomposite. In addition, a laboratory-scale demonstration of a road safety sensor and smart door

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

# Modi to address Kautilya economic conclave in Delhi

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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



# India joins IMDRF as affiliate member, enhancing global collaboration

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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

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

# Air Marshal SP Dharkar appointed Vice Chief of Air Staff

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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



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

as the assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Training) at the air headquarters. As the Director General of the Defence Space Agency (DSA), he was responsible for handling all aspects related to setting up of the new organisation. The DSA would control and oversee all aspects of space exploitation in the military domain by the Indian defence forces.

# Congress demands urgent relief for Bihar flood victims

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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



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

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

# Climate change fuels gender-based violence in Bangladesh

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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



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

# Reducing smoking could boost life expectancy: Study

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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



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

University of Washington, emphasised the critical need to sustain and enhance efforts to reduce smoking rates worldwide. He noted that the potential for avoiding millions of premature deaths underscores the importance of comprehensive tobacco control policies. The study's estimates regarding preventable deaths were derived from analysing the implications of banning tobacco sales on lung cancer mortality among people born between 2006 and 2010.

"We must not lose momentum in efforts to reduce, and ultimately eliminate smoking around the world. Our findings highlight that millions of premature deaths could be avoided by bringing an end to smoking," said Vollset. Commenting on the study's observation, a representative from Mothers Against Vaping, a united front of concerned mothers combating the escalating vaping crisis asserted that there is a need to highlight health hazards of New-Age Gateway devices like e-cigarettes, vapes, and heat-not-burn devices for India to meet its tobacco control goals for the youth. In fact, the authors of the Lancet study have advocated for not only maintaining existing tobacco control measures but also implementing new strategies to address the ongoing risks associated with smoking which are major reasons for many preventable diseases including cancers.

# BJP proposes renaming Sealdah station after Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

The proposal to change the name of the country's sixth oldest railway station after Mumbai VT, Howrah, Chennai, Kanpur and Vadodara was given by BJP Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya before Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav during his visit to Kolkata on Wednesday. "But what is in a name?" asked Trinamool Congress' Kunal Ghosh who wondered why the name of only Mukherjee and why not Swami Vivekananda who lived nearby, barely a mile or two away from the Station at Shimla Street should be considered.

"Why the station should not be named after Swami Vivekananda because after returning from his glorious trip to Chicago his ship came to Budge Budge from where he took a train to Sealdah It is from this place where thou-



sands of young people assembled and dragged his cart by hand," Ghosh said. However according to Bhattacharya, "When lakhs of beaten and uprooted refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan thronged Sealdah Station post Partition it was Dr Mukherjee who stood by them and their cause I will request the honourable Railway Minister to consider renaming Sealdah Station after Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee."

Historically speaking: British architect Walter Glanville in 1869 designed the Sealdah Main Railway Station as it stands today pursuing a Victorian-Gothic form. Sealdah which has 20 platforms today had only four in 1862 standing out amidst muddy, marshy and potholed

vicinity. It was a part of the East Bengal Railway and then Assam Bengal Railway set up in 1857 for the sake of establishing connectivity with northern and southern Bengal which then comprised a large province including Bihar, Odisha and portions of the present North East. Incidentally there was a tram terminus located just outside Sealdah Station before the year 1978 from where the concept of horse tram carriage started. Historically speaking Sealdah owes its name to Sealdih or a village infested by jackals. In fact the station itself was built clearing a huge Pipal tree surrounded with bushes, swamps and marshes and heavily colonized by jackals on two sides of the great Maratha Ditch (a canal) that surrounded the city and where today

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

# Indian Army aims to crack terrorists' encrypted communication networks

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JANMU

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



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

seen a good year so far like last year. "We need a few more good years to make peace a permanent feature here. I believe maintaining this peaceful atmosphere is the biggest challenge for the security forces," the GOC 15 Corps said. Lt Gen Ghai said that there hasn't been any active recruitment of terrorists this year. "The numbers were down to a dozen last year and this year it is next to nil," the GOC said. He said as far as the terrorist-initiated incidents in Kashmir, they are between far and few. "Some incidents were reported where soft targets were made by even an untrained person using a pistol," the army officer said. To a query whether any

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

# Vijayan retracts claims on gold smuggling allegations



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Chief Minister Vijayan on Thursday made a quick volte-face from his earlier stance that Malappuram district topped the table in gold smuggling and hawala cash flow. Addressing the media after the cabinet meeting on Thursday, the chief minister said that he never blamed Malappuram district or the Muslim community for gold smuggling and hawala cash flow to the State.

But this is in stark contrast to his stance during the 21st September press meet when he had said that out of the 147 kg smuggled gold seized in the State during the last three years, Malappuram accounted for 124.47 kg of yellow metal and Rs 87.22 crore of hawala cash out of Rs 122.5 crore seized during the period.

It is widely believed that the chief minister retracted his statement on smuggled gold and hawala cash under pressure from leaders of a minority community who were offended by his disclosures. The chief minister had also said during the media meeting that the money generated out of smuggling and hawala cash transactions were being pumped into the State for anti-national activities.

While Vijayan did not disclose the reasons behind the sudden change in his stance, he gave a clean chit to the Chennai based English newspaper for carrying in its column an apology for publishing a statement attributed to him which he said he had not told the journalist who had interviewed him in New Delhi. The said interview which was carried in the 30th September edition of the paper had featured the chief minister's allegation that large scale gold smuggling and hawala cash was taking place in Malappuram district. "I did not tell this reporter anything on this issue. When I was asked about Anvar and gold smuggling, my reply was that I had made it clear in the press meet held on 21st September itself and do not have much time to elaborate further on the topic," said Vijayan who patted the Chennai newspaper for its decision to run a public apology.

# CPI(M) demands 12 seats in MVA alliance



T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ahead of the formalisation of the seat-sharing tie-up among the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) for the Maharashtra Assembly polls, its smaller ally - the Communist Party of India (Marxist) - has staked claim

for 12 seats. Confirming the development, CPI (M)'s Maharashtra State Committee Dr Uday Narkar said on Thursday: "We have attended a couple of meetings of the MVA...We have asked the MVA leadership to allocate us 12 seats." In the 288-member

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

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

# SC halts Isha Foundation probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

# Bengal doctors divided over protest strategies



SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There seems to have developed differences of opinion among the doctors of Bengal agitating in demand of justice for their woman colleague who was on August 9 raped and murdered inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital with the seniors opposing the juniors' decision to resume indefinite "cease work" for the second time within a span of ten days following repeated attacks on their colleagues at various medical college hospitals. According to the senior doctors the protestors who had been getting full support from the general public should not take recourse to actions that could impede people's interest. "About 35,000 patients come to the five medical colleges in Kolkata alone for treatment most of them have supported our cause throughout the movement so we should also take their plight into consideration particularly during the festive season when many private doctors would go on vacation and the poor patients would be left in lurch," said one of the senior doctors while

expressing his views in a general convention of doctors called in RGKMCH on Thursday. Another senior doctor said that "we have been by the side of these junior doctors and will continue to support their cause but without imposing our views on them we will just like to advise them that this is not right time to resume cease work impeding the interests of thousands of common people who have been by us all these days we cannot alienate the common man from this movement," said another senior paediatrician. The doctors who had gone on an indefinite cease work post the RGKMCH incident had resumed duty breaking their 42-days' cease work after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee assured foolproof security inside hospital premises besides conceding to their demand of removing Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal and two directors of Health. "But the Government which had given us assurance on other demands would not fulfill them forcing us to resume our movement," said Dr Aniket one of the leaders.

Another doctor, a cardiologist suggested alternative mode of movement saying, "we can think about partial cease work or regular rallies and even dharnas or even go to the districts setting special medical care camps so as to make people aware about the plights of the doctors." The junior doctors had not presented their views when reports last came in. However some of them said that they would take the advice of the senior doctors and hold general body meeting of joint platform of junior doctors before taking a final decision. "It is clear that this Government is trying to create a rift between the common people who have supported us and the doctors but we will not fall in its trap if we withdraw our cease work then it will not be because of the government pressure but because of the needs of the people but still we will continue to agitate until attacks on doctors stop and until the Government takes some concrete steps to ensure safety and security inside the hospitals," said Dr Kinjal Nanda one of the agitating doctors.

# Bombay HC orders to expedite inquiry into custodial death

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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



six years -- were sexually abused allegedly by sweeper Shinde when they in the washroom of the kindergarten school run by Adarsh Vidya Prasarak Sanstha (AVPS) on August 13 for using the toilet there. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Thane police that investigated the case has filed a charge-sheet in the case before the special Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act court in Kalyan. The incident caused a major public uproar in the state and always as other parts of the state. The Opposition MVA - comprising Congress, Uddhav Thackeray-headed Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) - had demanded a judicial probe into the suspicious circumstances leading to the accused Shinde's death in a police van. Directing the prosecution to collect strong forensic evidence in the case, the HC asked the prosecution if the police had collected forensic evidence from the body of the deceased. "Every firearm has a peculiar pattern and the residue it leaves is also differ-

ent. The residue left on the deceased's head where he was shot, his hands when he opened fire from the police's pistol needs to be collected, preserved and analysed forensically," the HC bench said. "Dead body is the most silent and honest witness... There is a need to collect and preserve all evidence. Bullets were fired from two different firearms in the incident. Empty shells found were of two different arms. The firing pin of every gun is different. This can be a conclusive proof which firing arm will have which firing pin," the HC bench said. "We want to see a report showing this conclusively," the HC bench said, while wanting to know from the police State CID police who are investigating the case if the bullet had pierced through the accused. Advocate General Saraf replied in the affirmative. Expressing its displeasure over the failure to recover a bottle of water that was given to the accused when he asked for water in the vehicle. "The police's case is that the handcuffs of the accused were removed after he asked for

water after which he forcibly snatched the pistol of one of the police officers and opened fire. "It (bottle) is an important piece of evidence," the bench said. Seeking the medical report of the police officer who sustained injury in the firing opened by the deceased accused, the HC bench said: "The police officer who sustained gunshot injury... Has he been examined properly? Was there any residue or blackening at the spot? We need to see that. Was there an entry and exit wound on the thigh of the police officer who got hurt?" At a hearing held on September 25, a HC bench of Justice Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan had questioned the version put out by the police Shinde was shot by the police in self defence. Justice Chavan said "it is hard to believe" that a man of slight build as Akshay Shinde could be overpowered by the four policemen when he turned violent and pulled the slide back on a 9 mm pistol for firing which "requires strength".



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## The caste contest

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

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



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

protests against the now-repealed agricultural laws. Farmers' resentment towards the government has not entirely subsided, and the opposition parties, particularly Congress and JJP, are using this to mobilise rural voters. Besides, Haryana has one of the highest unemployment rates in India. Both the BJP and Congress have promised to address the issue, with the BJP touting its industrial initiatives and the Congress proposing new employment schemes. But all said and done, it is the caste politics which decides who rules the State. The traditional Jat-non-Jat divide continues to shape Haryana's political landscape. The BJP, which has traditionally garnered support from non-Jat communities, faces the challenge of consolidating this base while the JJP and Congress focus on winning over Jat voters. Caste dynamics have always been a significant factor in Haryana's political landscape, deeply influencing voter behaviour and electoral outcomes. Jats, who make up approximately 25-30 per cent of Haryana's population, are the state's most politically influential caste group. The Congress, under Hooda, is attempting to bridge the gap between Jats and non-Jats by emphasising its rural-urban development plans but is plagued by rebels. The outcome of the elections will be favourable to the party which manages the complex caste matrix of the state well.



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

## Online gaming industry needs regulation and govt support

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

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



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

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

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

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



ARJUN SINHA

## BJP strives hard to imbibe 'integral humanism'

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



K S TOMAR

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

**Economic Ideals vs Modern Policies:** Deendayal Upadhyaya's vision of economic self-reliance and decentralisation stands in contrast to India's current globalised and capital-driven economic policies, particularly those introduced since the liberalisation reforms of the 1990s. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP has focused on economic growth through increased foreign direct investment (FDI), free-market reforms, and privatisation. Critics argue that this approach clashes with Upadhyaya's idea of a self-reliant economy, which emphasises supporting rural and local industries, creating jobs at the grassroots level, and minimising dependence on foreign capital.

**Balancing Indigenous Culture and Globalisation:** Deendayal Upadhyaya advocated for the preservation and promotion of India's indigenous culture, even as the nation embraced modern advancements. Striking this balance has been a delicate task for the BJP. On one hand, the party emphasises cultural pride, nationalism, and traditional values, promoting initiatives like Ayurveda and yoga on the global stage. On the other hand, India's integration into the global economy, alongside the rise of modern lifestyle trends and technology, risks diluting the deeper cultural roots Upadhyaya sought to preserve. The BJP has been critiqued for veering toward an exclusionary



cultural nationalism, which may diverge from Upadhyaya's more inclusive vision.

**Ethical Governance vs Corruption:** A key tenet of Upadhyaya's philosophy was the need for ethical governance, marked by integrity, honesty, and service to the people. While BJP leaders, including Modi, have presented themselves as champions of clean governance, the party has faced allegations of corruption, crony capitalism, and favouritism toward large corporations. Such accusations, particularly regarding land acquisition policies and privatisation, have cast doubt on the party's commitment to Upadhyaya's ethical standards.

**Inclusive Society vs Polarisation** Upadhyaya's vision of an inclusive society focused on addressing the needs of all communities, ensuring harmony across social and religious divides. However, the BJP has often been criticised for promoting divisive politics, particularly along religious lines. Reconciling Hindutva-driven politics with the ideals of inclusion and social harmony remains a central challenge for the BJP as it seeks to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality.

**Antyodaya - Uplifting the Last Person:** One of



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

Upadhyaya's most important principles, Antyodaya, focus on uplifting the most marginalised in society. The BJP has made significant strides in this area through its welfare schemes such as the PM Ujjwala Yojana (providing LPG to rural households), the PM Awas Yojana (affordable housing), and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (improving sanitation).

The BJP has adopted this principle through various campaigns, such as the global celebration of Yoga Day, the promotion of Indian languages, and the reassertion of India's historical achievements.

**Political Decentralisation** A core aspect of Upadhyaya's philosophy was decentralising power, ensuring governance was closer to the people. The BJP's emphasis on cooperative federalism and policies such as GST and the creation of NITI Aayog are steps in this direction. Moreover, the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system and the Jan Dhan Yojana have empowered citizens by reducing middlemen and ensuring that subsidies and welfare benefits reach the people directly.

Self-Reliance through Atmanirbhar Bharat; The Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, resonates with Upadhyaya's emphasis on self-

reliance. The promotion of local manufacturing, domestic industries, and efforts to reduce dependence on foreign goods align with his philosophy. The "Make in India" initiative, a key aspect of this vision, has made strides in boosting domestic production and job creation. However, the globalised nature of modern economics makes it challenging to fully realize a self-reliant economy.

**Striving toward Upadhyaya's Vision:** As the ruling party, the BJP's journey in adopting and implementing Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideals has been a mixture of successes and challenges. While considerable progress has been made in promoting nationalism, self-reliance, and Antyodaya, the party faces significant hurdles in achieving true economic decentralisation, upholding ethical governance, and fostering social harmony. The complexities of modern governance, global economic integration, and political strategies often pull the BJP away from Upadhyaya's pure vision. However, the ideals of Integral Humanism remain a guiding light, challenging the party to strike a balance between philosophical ideals and contemporary realities in their pursuit of a better India.

(Writer is a political analyst and strategic affairs columnist based in Shimla; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DECLINE OF GANDHIAN IDEALS

Madam — Since the Mahatma was an epitome of confidence and possessed an international mindset, he didn't treat the hymns of the Scottish gem "Abide with me" as threat enough to get blown off his feet! Rather, he allowed the window of his mind to let in the breeze of all possible cultures around the globe, including the evergreen Henry Francis Lyte classic. It is indeed a matter of utmost disgrace to notice the closure of minds in the country of Mahatma Gandhi—the epitome of liberal values and humanitarian thoughts with an all-embracing mindset.

Not to forget Gandhi's cardinal call: "Recall the face of the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything from it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? Will it lead to 'swaraj' for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?" Do the faces of any weak man get recalled today amidst the zealous trumpet of India being 'Viswaguru' (fast marching towards the status of "world's third largest economy") being beaten like a maniac! When none other than the Gandhians find themselves cornered and marginalised in the very state and den of Mahatma Gandhi itself (Sabarmati Ashram, Gujarat), rest assured about the fate of his values, ethics and humanitarian thoughts in the rest of the country!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

### FLOODS HITS BIHAR

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

## India's triumph in Kanpur



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

2-0. Team India has set a record of never losing to Bangladesh so far and has created a record on home ground by achieving a thrilling victory in the 18th series. With this extremely brilliant and powerful performance of Team India, India has reached the top position in the ICC World Test Championship table (WTC).

Yashasvi Jaiswal scored his second half-century with great skill and scored 51 runs to win the title of 'Player of the Match'. Bangladesh's so-called opening batsman Shadman Islam and former captain Mushfiqur Rahim were forced to kneel in front of Indian bowlers. India's next match with Bangladesh will be in the 3 T20 match series from October 6. It is hoped that Team India will be successful in maintaining its magical status.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

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

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

### KARNATAKA LAND SCANDAL

Madam — Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, BM Parvathi, said she would return the 14 plots she received in exchange for her undeveloped land.

However, the return policy, seen as Siddaramaiah flipping, might actually be counter-productive. The Muda case pertains to allegations that compensatory sites were allotted to BM Parvathi in an unmarked area in Mysuru that had a higher property value as compared to the location of her land that had been "acquired" by the authority.

Siddaramaiah, BM Parvathi, Mallikarjuna Swamy, and one Devaraju were named in an FIR registered by the Mysuru-based Lokayukta police on September 27. This came after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) initiated a probe against her, Siddaramaiah, and her brother, Mallikarjuna Swamy, in what has now become popular as the Muda scam. Parvathi, the wife of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, has returned 14 plots of land to Muda. Thus, Siddaramaiah shot himself in the foot for gaining more wealth using power politics.

CK Subramania | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### REBALANCING THE GLOBAL ORDER

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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



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

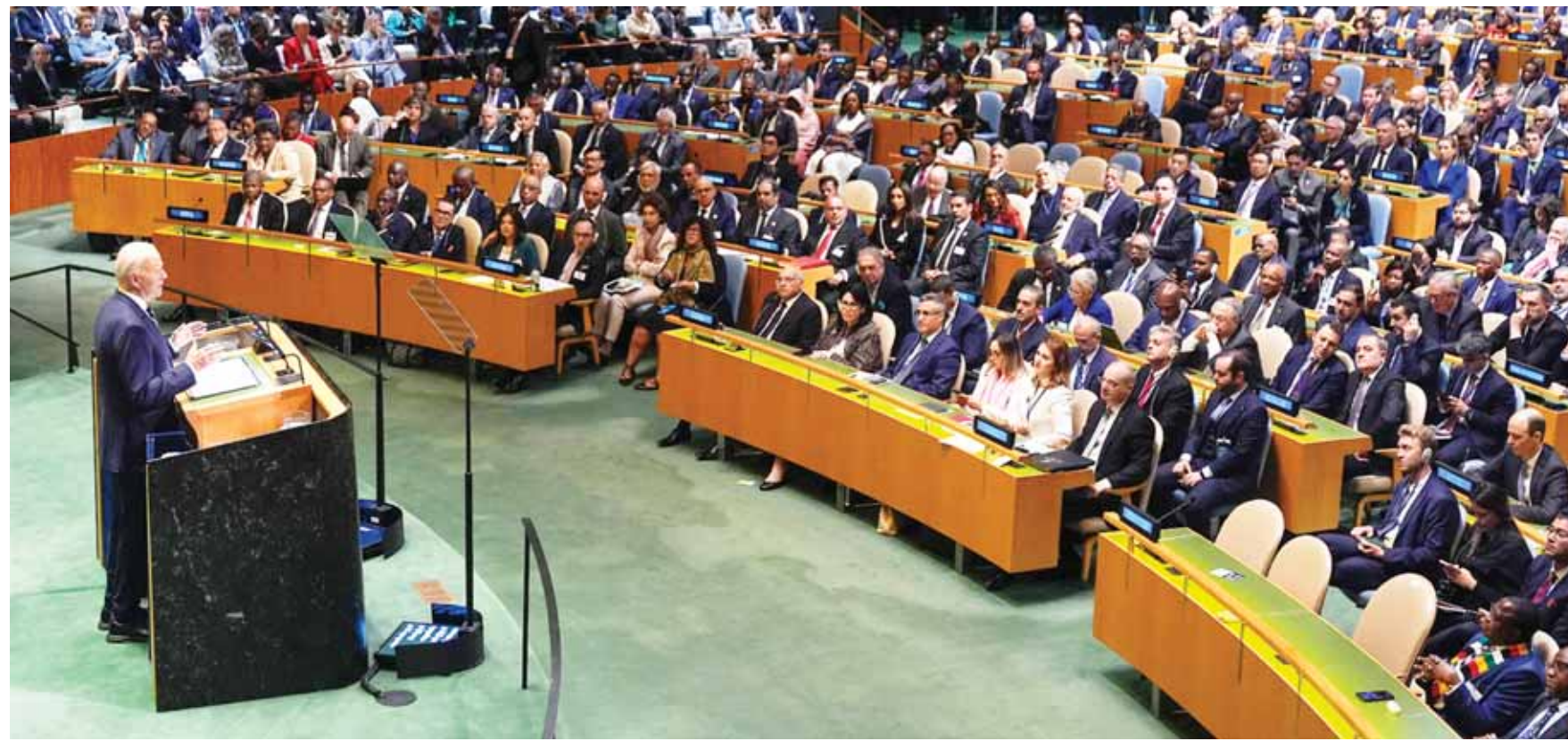
The minister carefully brought multipolarity and plurilateralism in same address while trying to define the evolving global order. He said "Today, we are looking really at a global landscape which is much more regional, which is, as I said, much more characterised by countries who have their strong interests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

# How global powers exploit democratic ideals



V K BAHUGUNA

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

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

Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution, Nimuben Bambhaniya, recently inaugurated Gujarat's first grain ATM in Bhavnagar, facilitating 24/7 ration distribution under the Central Government's Public Distribution System (PDS). The grain ATM, called Annapoorti, was installed in the Karchaliapara area of Bhavnagar city to free the poor from India's outdated, bureaucratic ration distribution system. According to Minister Bambhaniya, the grain ATM represents a global success story. She expressed pride in the Annapoorti scheme, a globally awarded solution developed in India, which is set to be operational in multiple states. Based on a year-long pilot program, the Annapoorti technology, developed by WFP India, is an important step toward improving food security and ensuring that people receive their rations efficiently and accurately. The new system allows people to obtain their ration from any PDS shop, reducing dependence on shop owners and minimising corruption.

After the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system, the biggest beneficiaries of grain ATMs will be migrant laborers and disadvantaged communities who live outside their home states for extended periods or are unable to reach grain shops. For

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



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

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

# Boat capsizes in Congo, killing at least 50 people: Witnesses

**AP ■ GOMA**  
A boat carrying scores of passengers capsized on Lake Kivu in eastern Congo on Thursday, killing at least 50 people, witnesses told The Associated Press.  
It was not immediately clear exactly how many people were on board or how many perished but witnesses said they saw rescue services recover at least 50 bodies from the water. They said 10 people survived and were taken to the local hospital.  
The boat, overloaded with passengers, sank while trying to dock just metres (yards) away from the port of Kituku, the witnesses said. It was going from Minova in South Kivu province to Goma, in North Kivu province.  
Local authorities said that the rescue efforts continued and the death toll remained unknown for the moment. In February, the majority of the 50 passengers aboard a wooden boat were presumed dead after the vessel capsized on Lake Kivu. “This boat was carrying about a hundred people when it had the capacity for about thirty passengers,” the governor of the province of South Kivu Jean-Jacques Purusi told a local radio station following the accident.  
It was the latest deadly boat accident in the central African country, where overcrowding on vessels is often to blame. Maritime regulations also are often not followed.  
Congolese officials have often warned against overcrowding and vowed to punish those violating safety measures for water transportation. But in remote areas where most passengers come from, many are unable to afford public transport for the few available roads.  
In June, an overloaded boat sank near the capital of Kinshasa and 80 passengers lost their lives. In January, 22 people died on Lake Mai-Ndombe and in April 2023, six were killed and 64 went miss-

ing on Lake Kivu.  
Witnesses said the boat that capsized on Thursday was visibly overcrowded.  
“I was at the port of Kituku when I saw the boat arriving from Minova, full of passengers,” Francine Munyi told the AP. “It started to lose its balance and sank into the lake. Some people threw themselves into the water.”  
“Many died, and few were saved,” she added. “I couldn’t help them because I don’t know how to swim.”  
The victims’ families and Goma residents gathered at the port of Kituku, accusing authorities of negligence in the face of growing insecurity in the region.  
Since the fighting between the armed forces and the M23 rebels made the road between the cities of Goma and Minova impassable, forcing the closure of the passage to trucks transporting food, many traders have resorted to maritime transport on Lake Kivu. It’s an alternative considered safer than road traffic, which is threatened by insecurity. But according to Elia Asumani, a shipping agent who works on this line, the situation has become dangerous: “We are afraid,” he told the AP. “This shipwreck was predictable.”  
Bienfait Sematumba, 27, said he lost four family members.  
“They are all dead. I am alone now,” he said, sobbing. “If the authorities had ended the war, this shipwreck would never have happened.”  
The survivors, about 10 of them, were taken to Kyeshero hospital for treatment. One of them, Neema Chimanga, said she was still in shock.  
“We saw the boat start to fill with water halfway,” she recounted to the AP. “The door of the boat opened, and we tried to close it. But the water was already coming in, and the boat tilted.” “I threw myself into the water and started swimming,” she said. “I don’t know how I got out of the water.”

# New NATO chief visits Ukraine in his first trip since taking office

**AP ■ KYIV**  
New NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte visited Ukraine on Thursday in his first official trip since taking office and pledging the alliance’s continued support for Kyiv in its war with Russia.  
Rutte met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv as air raid sirens twice went off in the Ukrainian capital.  
The new head of NATO vowed when he took office on Tuesday to help shore up Western support for Ukraine, which has been fighting Russia’s full-scale invasion since February 2022 and has for most of this year been on the defensive due to a relentless Russian army push in the country’s eastern regions.  
Rutte expressed confidence that he can work with whomever is elected president of the United States, the alliance’s most powerful member, in November. That could be a key moment for Ukraine’s effort to ensure continuing Western support.  
Zelenskyy said he discussed with Rutte elements of Ukraine’s so-called victory plan, ahead of a NATO meeting at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany next week. The gathering draws together defence leaders from the 50-plus partner nations who regularly meet to coordinate weapons aid for the war. The two also discussed the battlefield situation and the specific needs of Ukrainian military units. Zelenskyy reiterated that Ukraine needs more armaments, including long-range weapons it has long requested.  
Asked whether the war in the Middle East will affect the timeline he had envisioned for the victory plan, Zelenskyy noted that the US and Britain say Iran has supplied missiles and drones to Russia for use against Ukraine.  
He also appealed for Western countries to scrap restrictions on Ukraine’s use of Western-supplied long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russia. “Of course, we want Ukraine to not

be forgotten. But the best way not to forget about Ukraine is to provide the appropriate weapons and the necessary permissions,” Zelenskyy said. “And to help shoot down...the same Iranian missiles or drones, just as they are shot down over Israel, to shoot them down in the same way over Ukraine.”  
Rutte reiterated the alliance’s unwavering support for Ukraine, insisting that “Ukraine is closer to NATO than ever before”.  
He said recent steps taken by NATO “build a bridge to NATO membership” for Ukraine, including 40 billion euros (\$44 billion) of funding assistance, bilateral security agreements between allies, and the formation of a new NATO command to coordinate assistance and training. Rutte arrived after a Russian glide bomb struck a five-story apartment block in Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second-largest city, injuring at least 12 people, including a 3-year-old girl, local officials said Thursday.  
The bomb hit between the third and fourth floors of the building on Wednesday night, igniting a fire, Kharkiv regional Governor Oleh Syniehubov said. Firefighters searched for survivors through smoke and rubble.  
The city of Kharkiv, around 30 km (18 miles) from the Russian border, has been a frequent target of aerial attacks throughout the war against Russia that is now deep into its third year. Increasingly common in the war, glide bombs have terrorised civilians and bludgeoned the Ukrainian army’s front-line defences. Ukraine has no effective countermeasure for glide bombs, which are launched from Russian aircraft inside Russia. They were a key weapon in Russia’s capture of the tactically significant town of Vuhledar on Wednesday, as Russian forces wreck destruction on the eastern Donetsk region and force weary Ukrainian troops to withdraw from obliterated towns and villages.

# 12 hurt as Russian bomb hits Ukrainian apartment

**AP ■ KYIV**  
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Rescue workers clear the rubble inside a building damaged by a Russian airstrike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, Thursday. **AP/PTI**

increasingly common weapon in the war. They have terrorised civilians and bludgeoned the Ukrainian army’s front-line defenses. They were a key

region and force weary Ukrainian troops to withdraw from obliterated towns and villages. Ukraine has no effective countermeasure for glide bombs, which are launched from Russian aircraft inside Russia. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the latest Kharkiv attack highlighted the urgent need for increased support from Ukraine’s Western allies.  
Zelenskyy recently held talks with officials in the United States in an effort to ensure further Western military support. Russia has had the battlefield initiative since late last year, when a Ukrainian counteroffensive petered out. Ukraine is grappling with a critical manpower problem on the front line and is straining to hold back Russia’s grinding assaults.  
Though Russia’s battlefield gains have been incremental, its steady forward movement is adding up as the Ukrainians are pushed backward and yield ground. Both sides have kept up regular cross-border aerial attacks, usually at night.  
Ukraine’s air force said Thursday that 78 out of 105 Shahed drones launched by Russia overnight were destroyed on Thursday as 15 regions of the country came under attack. The Russian military, meanwhile, intercepted 113 Ukrainian drones overnight, according to a statement by the Defense Ministry in Moscow.  
The drones were destroyed over four Russian regions on the border with Ukraine — Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk and Voronezh, it said.

# Votes against party lines can be counted, rules Pak’s top court

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**  
Pakistan’s Supreme Court ruled Thursday that the votes cast by lawmakers in parliament against their party directions can be counted, in a major relief to the government seeking support for a constitutional amendment to tweak laws related to the judiciary.  
The apex court’s previous ruling had stated that the votes of parliamentarians who deviated from their party’s directives were to be disregarded and not counted. The Supreme Court Bar Association had filed a review petition against the apex court’s verdict related to the defection clause under Article 63-A of the Constitution.  
Hearing the plea, a five-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa announced the unanimous verdict and approved the review petition with the top judge saying the detailed verdict would be issued later.  
The bench comprising Chief Justice Isa and justices Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Aminuddin Khan, Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal issued the verdict after hearing the petition that the bench had started on Monday.  
The court in its May 17, 2022 verdict had said that the votes of the lawmakers would not be counted but after granting of review petition, the vote would be counted but the person going against the party line would lose his seat.  
The 2022 verdict was given in response to the presidential case filed by then-President Arif Alvi. It was then a 3-2 split decision, with then-chief justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar being the majority verdict authors. The development comes as the government is struggling to get support for its planned constitutional amendment to tweak laws related to the top judiciary.  
Lahore (PTI): Over 700 supporters of the jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan were arrested from different parts of Punjab province on Thursday, a day before a major showdown in Islamabad by his party for the independence of the judiciary, release of the party founder and against rising inflation.  
“Do or die — October 4th is the battle cry! No more waiting, no more silence. This is the final stand at D Chokh (Islamabad), where the brave gather and the weak fall behind.  
We are unstoppable, unbreakable, and ready to fight for the soul of this nation. Either we win or we perish trying,” Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said soon after the arrests started. It said the Punjab police arrested over 700 its workers and leaders in different districts including Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Mianwali and Jhang following its announcement to hold protests on Friday demanding independence of the judiciary, release of party founder Imran Khan and against rising inflation.  
Punjab’s provincial government had adopted similar measures to prevent PTI’s Jalsa — the power show — at Lahore last month.  
Khan, 71, has been in jail since his arrest on August 5, 2023. Facing dozens of cases, he has been convicted in a few of them. His party has been staging protests demanding his release and claiming that the government should adhere to the constitution and the independence of the judiciary.  
PTI’s central information secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram said the government led by

# Imran Khan’s party claims over 700 supporters held ahead of protests

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had sealed the Red Zone in Islamabad and was taking similar measures in other cities to stop PTI workers from holding protests and public meetings.  
“PTI’s call for protests has panicked the government which is why it is sealing the cities,” he said.  
The Punjab police have deployed heavy contingents of police and put in place containers at the entry and exit points of all cities to stop the protesters’ movement, he said. “The selected districts were turned into no-go areas for the residents of Punjab and those inside the cities were not allowed to go out.”  
Punjab’s provincial government on Thursday also imposed Section 144 in Lahore banning all kinds of political assemblies, gatherings, rallies and protests.  
On Wednesday, despite the restrictions, party workers including women, took to the streets, managed to cross hurdles and survived tear-gas shelling to stage rallies in different cities, the PTI said.  
Chief minister Maryam Nawaz, daughter of Khan’s arch rival Nawaz Sharif, said political activity is allowed in the province but not terrorism by the PTI. “We will deal with such elements with iron hands” she said. Khan’s party held three major political events, including a rally each in Islamabad and Lahore, and a protest in Rawalpindi. The party had called for protests in Mianwali, Bahawalpur and Faisalabad on Wednesday, which would be followed by a power show at D-Chowk in Islamabad on Friday.

# Amid reshuffle, B’desh recalls envoy from India

**PTI ■ DHAKA**  
Bangladesh’s interim government has recalled five envoys, including its high commissioner in New Delhi, as it carried out a second phase of reshuffle in the diplomatic service alongside the domestic administration, an official said on Thursday.  
The interim government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus as the Chief Adviser has asked Bangladesh’s envoys in India, Brussels, Canberra, Lisbon, and the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York to return immediately and report to the foreign ministry here as part of the latest reshuffle. “The recalling of the envoys is part of a government decision under which our High Commissioner to India, Mustafizur Rahman, has been asked to return to the foreign ministry in Dhaka,” an official said on Thursday, preferring anonymity. Bangladesh High

Commissioner in London Sadia Muna Tasneem was asked to return to Dhaka four days ago.  
The foreign service witnessed a major change in late August, weeks after the ouster of the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina’s regime on August 5 after a massive student-led

mass upheaval. The upsurge installed the Nobel Laureate’s interim administration on August 8. Dhaka, at that time, ordered its ambassadors to the United States, Russia, Germany, Japan, the United Arab Emirates & Saudi Arabia and the High Commissioner to the Maldives to return home.

**SALE NOTICE**  
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on “AS IS WHERE IS BASIS” and “AS IS WHAT IS BASIS” for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Case Details	Asset Details
ICI/ Bank Ltd. V. GULFISHA CS (COMM) 439/21	Make and Model- MARUTI SWIFT Vehicle No-DL2CAZ4264, Manuf. Yr 2018

Auction Date : 4-November 2024  
Venue: Godara Yard, Khewat No:166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi School, Sec-17, Sukhraili, Gurugram  
Contact Person:- Rohit Srivastava (8857476284) / Vijay Sharma (9372730494)  
Terms of Sale  
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participants are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself/ themselves with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids.  
Successfully approved bidder shall have to deposit sole amount within 5 days from the approval date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT.  
The intending bidders may visit at ICI/ Bank Ltd, Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle

**ICICI Bank**  
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005  
**PUBLIC NOTICE:**  
Builder Cancellation  
Public Notice:  
This is to bring to your notice that ANKUR TYAGI/ SHWETA TYAGI (borrowers) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBNOD00003078610 located at FLAT NO 1123, 11TH FLOOR, FERRARA MAHAGUN MEZZARIA SIENA, PLOT NO GH-01/A SECTOR 78, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, NOIDA - 201301. The borrowers/has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement.  
The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated June 02, 2021, informing that MAHAGUN INDIA PVT LTD, has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication.  
Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.  
Dated: October 04, 2024 For ICICI Bank Limited Place : Delhi/NCR

**Case Ref. No. DIAC/566/11-22**  
In the matter of  
**M/s Mihurisha Global Marketing Pvt. Ltd. ...Claimant**  
Versus  
**M/s Anil Bhutani Products ...Respondent**  
Notice to Respondent  
M/s Anil Bhutani Products having Reg. office at H. No. 415, 1st Floor, Sector-22, Faridabad, Haryana-121005.  
Whereas the above noted case is listed before Sole Arbitrator Smt. Kamalakhshi Singh Chauhan, The Delhi International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), Delhi High Court, S-Block, New Delhi on 09.10.2024 at 2p.m. Since despite the service, no one has appeared and represented the Respondent (M/s Anil Bhutani) on date fixed i.e., 23.09.2024. Consequently, the Ld. Arbitrator has directed the Claimant (M/s Mihurisha Global Marketing Pvt. Ltd.) to serve the respondent through publication as a precautionary measure before proceeding Ex Parte against Respondent.  
In pursuance to and compliance with the order dated 23.09.2024, we hereby serve upon you the present notice to appear before the person or through your Authorized Representative before the Ld. Arbitrator, DIAC in captioned matter on 09.10.2024 at 2p.m. Please note, in case no one appears on the said date, time and venue before the Ld. Sole Arbitrator, the matter will be heard and determined Ex Parte in your absence.  
**Smt. Kamalakhshi Singh Chauhan (Sole Arbitrator)**  
The Delhi International Arbitration Centre (DIAC)  
Delhi High Court, S-Block, New Delhi  
Tel: 011-23386492

**THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.**  
C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058  
Phone: 011-25611042, 25611043, 25611044  
Email: legal@kangrabank.com, legal1@kangrabank.com, website: www.kangrabank.com

**APPENDIX IV [See rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)**

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized officer of “The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.”, Head office at, C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi - 110058, having its registered office at 1916, Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055, under The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule [3] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Bank had issued a demand notice on dated 27-06-2023 calling upon the borrower **Sh. Ganesh Gupta S/o. Sh. Kumar Pal Gupta R/o. RZ-82, Gali No. 1, Main Sagarpur, New Delhi-110046** and calling upon the Mortgagee/sureties namely: **Smt. Sneha Lata, W/o. Sh. Kumar Pal Gupta, R/o. RZ-82, Gali No.1, Main Sagarpur, New Delhi-110046**, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 22,32,298/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakhs Thirty Two Thousand Two Hundred and Ninety Eight Only), together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of the notice till the date of payment, within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice.  
The above mentioned borrower, mortgagee & surety having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, mortgagee and the public in general that the Bank has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (4) of section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with rule [8] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024.  
The borrower, mortgagee & surety in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the mortgaged property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of “The Kangra Co-operative Bank Ltd.”, for an amount of Rs. 22,32,298/- together with further interest, penal interest and other charges as are applicable to this Loan account from time to time, from the date of notice till the date of realization together with all the costs incurred by the Bank in realizing the said amount.  
The borrower, mortgagee & surety attention is also being invited towards provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, in respect of time available, to redeem the below mentioned mortgaged property/Secured Asset.

DISCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY	DISCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY
The property under consideration is entire built-up property bearing no. RZ-82, with roof rights, area measuring 24 Sq. Yds.	All that part and parcel of the BUILTUP PROPERTY BEARING NO. RZ-82, ON PLOT NO. 82, LAND AREA MEASURING 24 SQ. YDS., WITH ALL THE ROOF RIGHTS, OUT OF KHASRA NO. 21/24, SITUATED IN THE REVENUE ESTATE OF VILLAGE DABRI, DELHI STATE DELHI, ABADI KNOWN AS WEST SAGARPUR, NEW DELHI-110046. Falling Under the Registration of Sub-Registrar IX, New Delhi/Delhi.

Bounded as under:- EAST : HOUSE OF OTHERS, WEST : HOUSE OF OTHERS, NORTH : NALA ROAD, SOUTH : PART OF PROPERTY NO. RZ-82.

(HARISH SHARMA) AUTHORIZED OFFICER THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. HEAD OFFICE AT, C-29, COMMUNITY CENTRE, PANKHA ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58. DELHI. DATED : 27.09.2024

**THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.**  
C-29, Community Centre, Pankha Road, Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058  
Phone: 011-25611042, 25611043, 25611044  
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The above mentioned borrower, mortgagee & surety having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, mortgagee, surety and the public in general that the Bank has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (4) of section 13 of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of the Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with rule [8] of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024.  
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Bounded as under:- EAST : HOUSE OF OTHERS, WEST : HOUSE OF OTHERS, NORTH : NALA ROAD, SOUTH : PART OF PROPERTY NO. RZ-82.

(HARISH SHARMA) AUTHORIZED OFFICER THE KANGRA CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. HEAD OFFICE AT, C-29, COMMUNITY CENTRE, PANKHA ROAD, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI-58. DELHI. DATED : 27.09.2024

# Singapore court jails Indian-origin ex-minister for 12 months

**PTI ■ SINGAPORE**  
Singapore’s Indian-origin former transport minister S Iswaran has been sentenced to 12 months jail on Thursday by the High Court for obtaining gifts worth about SGD 403,300 over seven years, from two businessmen he considered his friends. The 62-year-old pleaded guilty to four charges relating to receiving gifts and one blocking justice on September 24, the first day of trial proceedings, cutting short what was set to be a protracted trial with 56 prosecution witnesses.  
In sentencing, Justice Vincent Hoong said he had considered submissions on sentence from both prosecution and defence but was “ultimately unable to agree with both the positions taken”.  
In his sentencing remarks, Justice Hoong emphasised that trust and confidence in public institutions are the bedrock of effective governance.  
The judge added that the former minister abused the position to accept gifts worth about SGD 403,300 (USD313,200).  
He said, “This can all too easily be undermined by a public servant who falls below standards of integrity and accountability.”  
The judge said it was significant that Iswaran had made public statements rejecting the charges as false. “In a letter to the Prime Minister, Iswaran said he rejected the charges and was innocent, and believed he would be acquitted. Thus, I have difficulty believing that he was remorseful,” The Straits Times quoted the Judge as saying. As Justice Hoong addressed the court, Iswaran looked down and took notes.  
The judge added, “The higher the office held by the offender as a public servant, the higher his level of culpability.”  
He said such individuals set the tone of public servants in conducting themselves with high standards of integrity, and they must avoid any perception that they are susceptible to influence to financial benefits.  
Iswaran’s lead lawyer Davinder Singh had argued for no more than eight weeks’ jail, while Deputy Attorney-General Tai Wei Shyong sought a jail term of six to seven months.  
“In my view it is appropriate to impose a sentence in excess of both parties’ positions,” said Justice Hoong, adding that taking the submission of either prosecution or defence would result in a “manifestly inadequate sentence”.  
Justice Hoong noted certain aggravating factors such as the total duration of Iswaran’s offending, the high office he occupied and the overall harm to public interest as well as trust in public institutions.



Prosecutors lay out new evidence in Trump election case

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



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

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

Kamala Harris surveys Hurricane Helene devastation in Georgia

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that my client Sri. M. Prasad is the owner of Plot No. 227, AREA MEASURING 60 SQ. YARDS, GALLI NO. 4, SITUATED AT AMBEDKAR NAGAR, TEHSIL & DISTRICT GHAZIABAD...

PUBLIC NOTICE: My client Mr. Jahangir Alam S/o. Jafar Khan is the owner of the property situated at Plot No. 124, 4th floor, Abul Fazal Enclave Part-II, Shaheen Bagh, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that my client Mrs. Sushila Jindal is the owner of the property situated at Plot No. 35, situated in the area of Village Chokri, Muzarabadi, Ahadi known as Budh Nagar, Jai Mata Market, Tri Nagar, Delhi-110035...

PUBLIC NOTICE: General public is hereby informed that my client Mrs. Sushila Jindal is the owner of the property situated at Plot No. 35, situated in the area of Village Chokri, Muzarabadi, Ahadi known as Budh Nagar, Jai Mata Market, Tri Nagar, Delhi-110035...

कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून: नगर निगम क्षेत्रांतर्गत राजपुर रोड पर विभिन्न 7 स्थलों पर निविदा के माध्यम से पार्किंग संचालन हेतु अनुबन्ध की तिथि से कुल 02 वर्ग हेतु निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि से दिनांक 19.10.2024 की अपराह्न 2.00 बजे तक ई-0 निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं-

NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL: Palika Kendra : Sansad Marg Electric Establishment-1, Personnel Department VACANCY CIRCULAR: The New Delhi Municipal Council proposes to fill up 02 posts of Superintending Engineer (Electric) in the pay level 13 of Rs. 123100 - 215900 under 7th CPC pay matrix on deputation basis.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (AGRI.), SOUTHERN ZONE, BRAHMAPUR, RITE CAMPUS, RANGEILUNDA, GANJAM No. 1055 /SE (Agril.) Date. 26.09.24 INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) e-procurement notice

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, खण्डवा ( म.प्र. ): डाउन हॉल एम.जी. रोड, खण्डवा ( म.प्र. ) पिन कोड - 450001, टेलीफोन नं. 0733-222523, Email ID- smokhandwa@mpurban.gov.in

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम, चम्पावत: अद्यक्ष उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु निर्दिष्ट श्रेणी में उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम / उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान में पंजीकृत टेकदारों से मुहुरबन्ध निविदायें दिनांक 18.10.2024 को अपराह्न 1.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती हैं, जो उसी दिन 2.00 बजे अपराह्न कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, चम्पावत में उपस्थित निविदा-दाताओं या उनके मनोनीत प्रतिनिधि के समक्ष अधिशासी अभियन्ता द्वारा या अधिकृत प्रतिनिधि के द्वारा खोली जायेगी।

M/s MMR SAHA INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATE LIMITED has been granted Environmental Clearance (EC) regarding Revision & Extension of Mix land use project at Plot No. E-1, Sector -52, Noida, District - Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh on 03.09.2024.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority: Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida - 201301 (U.P.) Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE: E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned.

# Samsung workers protest continues to 4th week

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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



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

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

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

# Government launches internship programme for youth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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



# Kia launches two new MPV

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

# SEBI lowers InvIT trading lot to ₹ 25 lakh



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



# Mahindra Thar ROXX sees 1.76 lakh bookings in 60 minutes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

# Goyal seeks US investments for Indian manufacturing



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

# Coal production jumps 32 per cent in FY24-25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

# BPCL signs pact for green fuel ecosystem at Mumbai port

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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



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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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



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

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

# Tata Power-DDL conducts Extensive Safety Awareness Drive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

# INBRIEF

## GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY RELEASES SCHEDULE

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

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

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



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

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



## WORLD ANIMAL DAY: OCTOBER 04, 2024

## A HOME FOR EVERY HEART

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

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

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

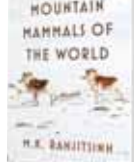
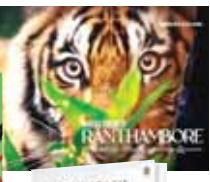
Habitat destruction, poaching and human-wildlife conflict have left these species teetering on the edge of survival. The tiger, once a symbol of untamed power, now roams in small, fragmented patches of forest. The *Indian Rhinoceros*, whose numbers were once decimated by hunting, faces the constant pressure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

## BOOKS TO CELEBRATE WORLD ANIMAL DAY

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

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

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



Rather than purchasing pets, adopting from shelters not only saves lives but helps reduce the suffering caused by overpopulation. We must also push for stronger laws against animal cruelty and promote humane population control measures for stray animals, such as spay and neuter programmes.

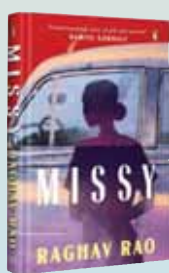
On this day, let's broaden our perspective. Let's not just think about the wild animals in distant forests or the pets in our homes. Let's consider all the creatures that make up our world: the birds, the cattle, the marine life and the strays and how each one plays a vital role in the delicate balance of life on Earth. Every action we take, no matter how small, contributes to creating a better world for them. As we observe *World Animal Day*, let's remember that the answer for stray animals begins with a simple yet profound action: adopt, don't shop. Every stray dog on the street is a potential companion, waiting for a family. By adopting a stray, you give an animal a second chance at life and the warmth of a loving home. This small act not only transforms their lives but also enriches yours with unique love and companionship. Every life saved reflects our compassion for these deserving souls. The world is their home too and together, we can ensure that every animal feels safe, loved, and valued.

## NEW ARRIVALS



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

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



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

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

## Hindus and the Modern Struggles of Religious Persecution

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

BY **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

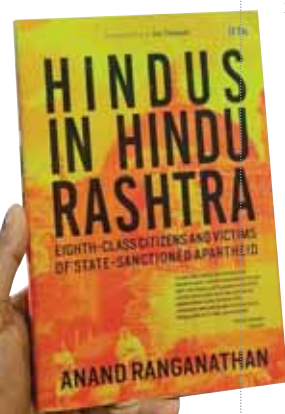
Sufferance is the badge of our tribe," Shylock, the Jewish money lender, says in the Shakespearean play "The Merchant of Venice." Had Shylock been around now, he would certainly have added Hindus too as the victims of hatred and cruelty perpetrated by the Abrahamic religions. History, as well as modern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

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



## ABOUT THE BOOK

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



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

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

# INDIA NEED TOP GUNS FIRING IN UNISON AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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



They have only three pacers in their squad — Renuka Singh, Pooja Vastrakar and Arundhati Reddy.

In all likelihood, India will only play two of them, while depending on a plethora of spinners in their line-up.

India have exceptional variety in that department. The attack will be marshalled by off-spinners Deepti

and Shreyanka Patil, leg-spinner Asha Shobhana and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav.

But the Kiwis have a good blend of experienced and young players, who can lift them above such obstacles. Their talismanic skipper Sophie Devine, experienced all-rounder Suzie Bates along with veteran pacers Lea Tahuu and Leigh Kasperek form the crux of this New Zealand side. Add the exciting young all-rounder Amelia Kerr to the mix, and they have the wherewithal to spring a surprise or two in this tournament. But beyond them, the Kiwis are a bit green behind the ears and that could be their Achilles Heel.

**TEAMS:**

**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, Yastika Bhatia (subject to fitness), Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur, Dayalan Hemalatha, Asha Shobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil (subject to fitness), Sajana Sajeevan  
**Travelling reserves:** Uma Chetry (wk), Tanuja Kanwer, Saima Thakur  
**New Zealand:** Sophie Devine (c), Suzie Bates, Eden Carson, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Fran Jonas, Leigh Kasperek, Melie Kerr, Jess Kerr, Rosemary Mair, Molly Penfold, Georgia Plimmer, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuu.



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

PTI ■ LIMA (PERU)

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

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

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

of the first two positions — Kneeling and Prone. A strong finish in the Standing position allowed her to pip Norwegian Pernille Nor-Woll after the 40th shot to move up to third. Synnoeve and Caroline were having their own battle for top-two throughout the 45-shot final. Khushi wobbled again on the 41st shot with 9.1 which put her back down to fifth, but a brilliant 10.7 in the 42nd and

10.4 in 43rd ensured the bronze. In the team competition in junior women's 3P, the trio of Sakshi Padekar, Melvina Joel Gladson and Prachi Gaekwad, finished fifth with a tally of 1757. Anoushka Thakur also shot 585 in qualification, but 26 hits in the inner-10 ring meant she ended 11th. Sakshi, Melvina and Prachi finished 24th, 32nd and 41st respectively.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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



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

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

AP ■ COLUMBUS (OHIO)

Lionel Messi and Inter Miami have another trophy, along with home-field advantage throughout the Major League Soccer playoffs. Messi scored twice in the final minutes of the first half, goalie Drake Callender stopped a penalty kick in the 84th minute and Inter Miami beat the defending MLS Cup champion Columbus Crew 3-2 on Wednesday, wrapping up the Supporters Shield given annually to the team with the best regular-season record. It was Messi's 46th major trophy won for club or country, extending his record for the most by any men's soccer player in history. And it is the second he has won with Inter Miami, this Supporters Shield being added to the Leagues Cup trophy the Herons claimed shortly after Messi joined the club in 2023. "We knew this was a group that

could fight for this," Messi said. Luis Suarez also scored for Inter Miami, which will open a best-of-three first-round playoff series in the final weekend of October. If the team wins that series, it would have the right to host every match it plays the rest of the season - an Eastern Conference semifinal (scheduled for Nov. 23 or 24), the East final (Nov. 30 or Dec. 1) and the MLS Cup final on Dec. 7. "We have a nice opportunity to go down in history ... And now we think about what is coming," Messi told Apple TV after the match. "We have a great advantage in that we play all the games at home, which was what we were looking for. I think that we are very, very strong at home." Also still within reach for Inter Miami: the best MLS regular-season mark ever. Wednesday's win pushed Inter Miami's record to 20-4-8 this season, giving it 68 points. If the

club wins its final two matches - Saturday at Toronto and Oct. 19 at home against New England - it would finish with 74 points. New England has the single-season points record, finishing with 73 in 2021. Messi opened the scoring in the 45th minute, taking a long pass from Jordi Alba - his longtime teammate at Barcelona, the club with which Messi won 35 of his trophies - and splitting two defenders before somehow getting the ball past Columbus goalkeeper Patrick Schulte for a 1-0 lead. And about five minutes into first-half stoppage time, Messi struck again on a free kick from about 30 yards out. Schulte seemed fooled, and Messi squeezed the ball between the goalie and the near post for a 2-0 lead. "Dominant," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said. Diego Rossi scored in the first



minute of the second half for Columbus to cut the lead in half, but it didn't take long for Inter Miami to restore the two-goal cushion. Almost immediately after play resumed, Schulte was upended by one of his own defenders and Suarez sent a header into an empty

net for a 3-1 edge. Juan "Cucho" Hernandez's penalty kick in the 61st minute got Columbus within 3-2. But once again, the momentum didn't last for long. Rudy Camacho was sent off for his second yellow card in the 63rd minute, meaning the Crew

had to play with 10 men the rest of the way. Didn't matter. Columbus still created some big chances down the stretch. A deflected ball in the 76th minute got across the box and onto the right foot of Mohamed Farsi - but his shot was blocked by Callender, who was perfectly positioned to protect the lead. Then came more drama, when Inter Miami was called for its second handball inside the box — an automatic penalty kick — of the second half. Hernandez picked the left side of the net, but Callender made the save look almost easy. That save helped finish what Messi started. It was the fifth two-goal game of the MLS season for Messi, who now has 17 goals in 17 league matches this season. He's missed 15 of Inter Miami's MLS matches in 2024, either because of commitments to

Argentina's national team or the two-month absence that he needed to recover from a badly injured ankle - an injury that happened during his nation's run to the Copa America title in July. Inter Miami, in MLS play this season, is now 10-1-6 with Messi in the lineup. "Throughout the year we had many, many injuries, where we couldn't all be together ... But the group was getting the most out of every tough game," Messi said. The Crew and the LA Galaxy entered Wednesday still with a mathematical hope of passing Inter Miami in the race for the Supporters Shield, and Cincinnati was nine points back with nine points still possible. But now, they're all playing for second. "Dec. 7 is what we want," Martino said, referring to the date of the MLS Cup final.