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**WORLD 8**

I PLEADED GUILTY TO JOURNALISM FOR FREEDOM: ASSANGE

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MANE LEADS AIR RIFLE DOMINANCE WITH DOUBLE GOLD 11 SPORTS

## NO DIVINITY ON THE ROAD

SC to give guidelines on removing illegal religious structures



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will lay down pan-India guidelines on demolition of properties and any religious structure in the middle of a road, be it a 'dargah' or a temple, "has to go" because public interest is paramount. The SC reiterated that merely because somebody is an accused or even a convict cannot be a ground for demolition of property. A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said unauthorised construction made by any person, irrespective of his religion or belief, has to be removed. The Bench reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas which have alleged that properties, including those accused of crime, were being demolished in several states. The SC said its September 17 order, which had said there will be no demolition of properties till October 1 without its permission, will continue till it decides the matter. "Whatever we are laying down, we are a secular country. We are laying it down for all the citizens, for all the institutions, not for any particular community," the Bench said. "On the first day we had pointed out, if there is any religious structure on the middle of a road, may it be a

'dargah' or some temple, it has to go because public safety and public interest is paramount," it said, observing that there cannot be a different law for a particular religion. "We are going to make it clear that merely because somebody is an accused, or even somebody is a convict, can't be a ground for demolition," said the court. The SC made it clear that it will not protect any encroachment on public places, roads, footpaths, government lands, forests, water bodies and the likes. "Whatever directions we issue, it will be applicable pan-India," it said, adding, "We will take care to ensure that our order does not help the encroachers on any of the public places." During the hearing, the Bench observed that notices for demolition of properties be sent through registered post to the owners and it should also be displayed on an online portal so that a digital record is there. It also observed that judicial oversight may also be required over the correctness of order passed by the authorities. The Bench suggested there should be a time window of 10 or 15 days between the order of demolition and its implementation so that people can make alternate arrangement. "... it is not a happy sight to see women and children on the roads," the Bench observed, adding, if

demolition is done after 15 days, nothing is going to be lost. The SC was hearing the petitions filed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind and others seeking directions to various state governments to ensure no further demolition of properties of those accused in cases of rioting and violence takes place. The Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind had earlier filed a plea in the SC over the demolition of some buildings in Jahangirpuri area of the national capital.

## War in West Asia will hit fuel in India

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing geopolitical crisis in West Asia, and further escalation in the Israel-Iran-Lebanon conflict is likely to impact India soon. Industry insiders said it is certain that crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports will get dearer since the supply could hit both the international and domestic markets. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85 per cent of its requirement. "Our economy is too sensitive to oil price volatility and it directly affects



inflation, trade imbalance, foreign exchange reserves, and an acute fluctuation in rupee valuation. While the situation is precarious and both the government as well as business stakeholders are keeping a watch on the hourly crisis in West Asia, we are evaluating the current global oil flows as international oil prices could see an increase

anytime. For India it's a festive season and it heavily impacts us," an industry source explained, on conditions of anonymity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday spoke to his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu over the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Modi expressed his concerns about the escalating tensions

in West Asia, emphasising that "terrorism has no place in our world." According to media reports, crude oil futures on Tuesday declined 0.5 per cent to Rs 5,739 per barrel as participants trimmed their positions on low demand. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for October delivery fell Rs 3 or 0.5 per cent to Rs 5,739 per barrel with a business volume of 17,697 lots. Globally, West Texas Intermediate crude was trading 0.18 per cent higher at USD 68.29 per barrel, while Brent crude was trading 0.17 per cent up at USD 71.82 per barrel in New York.

## Record voter turnout in J and K



People wait in queues to cast their votes at a polling booth during the third and final phase of Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections, at Gurez valley in Bandipora district, J and K, Tuesday PTI

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir recorded an overall voter turnout of over 62 per cent in all three phases of the maiden Assembly polls, held after the Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A in 2019. The entire poll process was completed peacefully amid unprecedented security arrangements. However, the 2024 Assembly polls could not breach the previous best 65.91 per cent voter turnout recorded during the 2014 Assembly polls. In 2008, a 61 per cent voter turnout was recorded across Jammu and Kashmir. The highest voter turnout of over 66 per cent was recorded across 40 Assembly segments across seven districts on Tuesday. The first and the second phases witnessed 61.38 and 57.31 per cent voter turnout respectively. The first-time voters, belonging to the West Pakistani refugee community, Valmikis, and Gorkha community danced to the polling booths in jubilation and also distributed sweets as they exercised their right to franchise for the first time in the Assembly polls. In the Jammu region, 18 out of

24 Assembly segments (across Jammu, Samba, Kathua, and Udhampur districts) witnessed over 70 per cent voter turnout while only two assembly segments of Bahu and Jammu West witnessed less than 60 per cent polling till 5 pm. In Kashmir valley, only two Assembly segments of Gurez and Handwara witnessed over 70 per cent voter turnout while seven segments (across Bandipora, Kupwara, and Baramulla) witnessed over 60 per cent voter turnout. Five Assembly constituencies witnessed over 55 per cent voter turnout and 2 Assembly segments of Sopore and Baramulla witnessed less than 50 per cent voter turnout on Tuesday. Stakes were high for the Bharatiya Janta Party in the final round of polling across 24 Assembly segments. Compared to 2014, the 11 Assembly segments of Jammu district witnessed approximately eight per cent less polling in 2024. The significant drop in voter turnout may alter the poll results on seats that were witnessing close contests between the BJP and the Congress/National Conference. BJP is placed comfortably in the Udhampur district.

### Nation pays tribute to Gandhi ji and Shastri ji on their Birth Anniversary

On 2nd October, 2014  
Bapu's Dream became Nation's Resolve  
when Swachh Bharat Mission was initiated through the  
visionary leadership of the Prime Minister

2nd October 2024, Celebrating Glorious Decade of Swachh Bharat Mission

Let's make Swachh Bharat Diwas 2024 memorable  
Let us all come together today from 9 AM to 10 AM and  
contribute to cleanliness across the country

Swachh Bharat Diwas 2024  
Chief Guest - Narendra Modi, Prime Minister  
10 AM onwards, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

Over the last 10 years, under the exemplary leadership of PM Modi,  
remarkable public participation has transformed cleanliness into National culture,  
achieving numerous significant milestones

Ensuring a dignified life through the construction of 12 crore toilets	100% villages now Open Defecation Free	Solid and Liquid Waste Management Systems in villages as well
Waste being collected in 97% wards of the cities	Solid Waste Processing in cities increased from 18% to 78%	5,000 Waste Management Startups launched

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# LAC situation stable but sensitive amid India-China standoff: Army Chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh is stable but not normal and remains sensitive, Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi said here on Tuesday. His remarks came in the backdrop of continuing standoff between Indian and Chinese militaries in the region. Though a "positive signalling" is coming out from the diplomatic talks between the two sides, the execution of any plan depends on the military commanders on the ground, he said. In the entire gamut, the "trust" has become the "biggest casualty", General Dwivedi said at a curtain raiser event on Chanakya Defence Dialogue. "The situation is stable, but it is not normal and it's sensitive. If that be the case what are we wanting. We are wanting that the situation that was there pre April 2020 should be restored," he added. The military standoff between the two sides began in early May of 2020.

The full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points. "Till the time the situation is not restored, as far as we are concerned, the situation will remain sensitive, and we are fully operationally prepared to face any kind of a contingency," the Army Chief said. He listed several pending issues such as troops on ground, buffer zones along the LAC and resumption of patrolling by troops as planned. General Dwivedi also briefly touched upon the Indian military's overall approach towards China. "As far as China is concerned, it has been intriguing our minds for quite some time. And I have been saying that with China, you have to compete, you have to cooperate, you have to coexist, you have to confront and contest," he said. India and China held two rounds of diplomatic talks in July and August with an aim to find early resolution of outstanding issues in their standoff on the LAC in

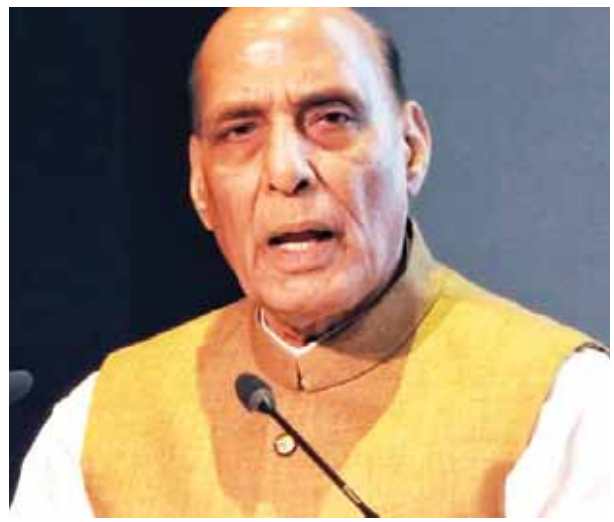


eastern Ladakh. "The positive signalling is coming from the diplomatic side, but what we need to understand (is that) the diplomatic side gives options and possibilities," General Dwivedi said. "But when it comes to the execution on ground, when it relates to ground per se; it is dependent on the military commanders on both sides to take those decisions," he said, responding to a question. The Army chief also referred to disputes in Depsang and Demchok and said all the pending issues are on the table. "Whatever one can imagine is on the table along the northern front and that includes Depsang and Demchok," he said. Asked about China's construction of villages along the frontier with India, the

Army Chief said that country is carrying out "artificial immigration" and "settlements". "No problem, it is their country," he said, adding India is also having "model villages" in border areas. "But more importantly, now the state governments have been empowered to put in those resources and this is the time when the army, state governments and supervision by the central government are all coming together," he said. The model villages that are being built now will be even better, the Army Chief said. He said there is no Chinese population close to the LAC and that is the reason Beijing is carrying out the "artificial immigration". The Army Chief also cited how the Chinese fishermen first came to the South China Sea and then the military arrived. Last month, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks in the Russian city of St Petersburg with a focus on finding an early resolution to the row. In the talks held on the sidelines of a conclave of

BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) nations, the two sides agreed to work with "urgency" and "redouble" efforts to achieve complete disengagement in remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh. In the meeting, Doval conveyed to Wang Yi that peace and tranquility in border areas and respect for the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are essential for return of normalcy in bilateral ties. The ties between the two countries nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas. The two sides have so far held 21 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks to resolve the standoff. India has been pressing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok areas. The two sides held the last round of high-level military talks in February.

# 30 lakh defence pensioners linked to SPARSH: Rajnath Singh



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said here out of a total of 32 lakh defence pensioners, 30 lakh have been successfully linked to the SPARSH (System for Pension Administration (Raksha)) portal. He made this observation during the 277th Annual Day celebrations of Defence Accounts Department (DAD) at Bharat Mandapam. While commending DAD's focus on technology adoption, the defence minister asserted that despite numerous challenges, the department has been successful in the implementation of this web-based system, which processes pension claims and credits the pension directly into bank accounts of defence pensioners without any external intermediary. He commended the efforts of DAD towards modernisation and strengthening of the country's defence ecosystem through optimum utilisation of resources, efficiency and transparency in accounting and adoption of latest technologies. He lauded the department for focusing on every little detail, which leads to necessary improvements in defence related policies and proposals. Reflecting on the progress achieved in the defence sector in the last few years,

Rajnath Singh stated that there was a time when acquisitions were mainly dependent on imports, and the positive impact of defence expenditure on the economy was very limited. He added that due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government's efforts to attain self-reliance, India is today seen as a defence exporter. The defence minister urged the DAD to prepare a roadmap to make the department a 'Centre of Excellence' in the field of defence finance and economics. He also batted for establishing a robust and comprehensive data management system that gives analytical reports to the government on the impact of defence expenditure on the country's economy, such as the contribution of defence vendors in revenue generation and employment generation. This will prove to be helpful in establishing a holistic policy regime, which would develop a sense of 'Whole of the Government approach', he added. Tracing its roots to the appointment of the Military Pay Master in 1747, the DAD has continuously re-invented itself to provide exemplary services to the Armed Forces, and in turn to the Nation, in the fields of Internal Audit, Accounting, Financial Advice and Defence Pensions Management.

# Arti Sarin appointed first woman DG of AFMS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, on Tuesday became the first woman officer to take over as the Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAfMS). The DGAfMS is directly responsible to the Ministry of Defence for overall medical policy matters which relate to the Armed Forces, defence ministry said here. Prior to assuming the appointment of 46th DGAfMS, the Flag Officer held the coveted appointments of DG Medical Services (Navy), DG Medical Services (Air) and Director and Commandant of Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune. She is an alumna of AFMC, Pune and was commissioned into the Armed Forces Medical Services in December 1985. She is an



MD in Radiodiagnosis from AFMC, Pune and Diplomate National Board in Radiation Oncology from Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, complemented with training in Gamma Knife Surgery from University of Pittsburgh. In a career spanning 38 years, the Flag Officer has held prestigious academic and administrative appointments including Professor and Head, Radiation Oncology, Army Hospital (R&R) and Command Hospital

(Southern Command)/AFMC Pune, Commanding Officer, INHS Asvini, Command Medical Officer in the Indian Navy's Southern and Western Naval Commands. The Flag Officer has the rare distinction of serving in all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces, having served as Lieutenant to Captain in the Indian Army, from Surgeon Lieutenant to Surgeon Vice Admiral in the Indian Navy and as an Air Marshal in the Indian Air Force. The Flag Officer has been recently appointed as a member of the National Task Force by the Supreme Court to formulate safe working conditions and protocols for medical professionals. She has been at the forefront of motivating young women to join the Armed Forces and is a shining icon for the Nari Shakti initiative of the Government.

# PM sends birthday greetings to former president Kovind



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday greeted former president Ram Nath Kovind on his birthday, and said he is widely respected for his service to society and con-

tribution to national progress. Kovind, who served as the President from July 2017 to July 2022, turned 79 on Tuesday. "Birthday greetings to our former President, Shri Ram Nath Kovind Ji. He is widely respected for his

service to society and contribution to national progress," Modi said in a social media post. "His insights into various subjects are also very enriching. Praying for his long and healthy life," the prime minister said.

# India to support Jamaica's development in key sectors: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Jamaican counterpart Andrew Holness prior to their meeting at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi on Tuesday. Photo By: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has been a "trusted partner" in Jamaica's development journey and it is ready to share expertise in a range of areas, including digital public infrastructure, biofuel, innovation and health with the Caribbean nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday. He made the remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness. In his media statement, Modi said he and Holness also discussed regional and global issues and agreed that all tensions and disputes should be resolved through talks and that both sides will continue to work towards ensuring global peace and security. India and Jamaica are unanimous that reform of all global institutions, including the UN Security Council, is necessary, he said. Modi said India has been a "trusted and committed" development partner in Jamaica's growth journey and it will remain so. "We are ready to share our experience with Jamaica in areas of digital public infrastructure, biofuel, innovation, health, education and agriculture," he said. In the defence sphere, we will move forward on imparting training and capacity building of Jamaica's armed forces, Modi said. The prime minister also identified organised crime, drug trafficking, terrorism as common challenges facing both nations. India-Jamaica relations are based on shared history, democratic values and strong people-to-people ties, he added. Holness arrived here on Monday. It is the first ever bilateral visit of a prime minister of Jamaica to India.

capable of giving a befitting reply to the country's enemies by striking them deep into their territory. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are committed to equip IAF with most advanced aircraft/platforms and make them more capable through the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative," he said. The defence minister extended his best wishes to the air warriors, who will be part of the rally that would traverse through tough and varied terrains. The formal flag-off will take place on October eight from Thoise, which is one of the world's highest altitude air force station at 3,068m above mean sea level. The air warriors will halt at Leh, Kargil, Srinagar, Jammu, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Agra, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Darbhanga, Bagdogra, Hasimara, Guwahati, Tezpur and Dirang, before concluding the rally in Tawang on October 29, 2024.

# Experts urge NAT to enhance blood donation safety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As India grapples with a persistent blood donation deficit, experts have advocated for the mandatory implementation of Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) to enhance the safety of patients in need given that the rate of infections is higher in replacement donors. NAT is an additional blood safety measure in addition to ELISA screening method as it directly detects the genetic material (RNA & DNA) of the infecting organism or viruses namely HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in reducing their window periods. On the National Voluntary

Blood Donation Day marked on October 1, the experts also stressed on an urgent call to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation and the pressing need for voluntary contributions. "Voluntary blood donation has seen growth, yet we still have a significant gap in meeting national demand," said Dr RishiRaj Sinha, Transfusion Medicine Specialist at AIIMS Delhi. Anubha Taneja Mukherjee, Member Secretary of the Thalassemia Patient Advocacy Group, emphasised that many people are unaware of the urgent need for blood, which affects their motivation to donate.



Despite a potential donor base of 402 million people, India consistently falls short of the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation of 1 per cent of the population donating blood.

India requires approximately 14.6 million units of blood annually but faces a shortfall of around one million units. This gap is attributed largely to myths and misconceptions about blood donation, particularly concerns over

contracting infections like HIV, as well as a general lack of awareness about the needs of patients requiring regular transfusions, said the medicos. To address the safety concerns surrounding blood supply, especially for patients needing frequent transfusions like those suffering with blood disorders such as hemophilia and thalassemia, experts favoured the NAT. For instance, thalassemia patients often need transfusions every 15 to 20 days. "This (NAT) highly sensitive testing method can detect even minute amounts of viruses in donated blood, significantly improving the

safety of transfusions," said Dr Sinha. He explained that while all donated blood undergoes testing, NAT offers a crucial enhancement by reducing the risk of transmitting infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C through early detection. VK Khanna, Director of the Institute of Child Health Preeti Tuli Thalassemia Unit at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi too agreed that implementing NAT testing would particularly benefit patients with conditions requiring regular transfusions, such as thalassemia, sickle cell disease, and cancer.

# Defence Minister flags off car rally to celebrate IAF's 92nd anniversary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday here flagged off 'Vayu Veer Vijeta' car rally from the National War Memorial to mark the 92nd anniversary of the Indian Air Force (IAF). With the send-off, over 50 air warriors, including women, have left for Thoise in Ladakh, from where they will undertake an expedition to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, covering a total of 7,000 kms across nine States/Union Territories (UTs). The rally will also witness the participation of former Air Force Chiefs in different legs. Speaking on the occasion, the defence minister lauded the air warriors for serving the motherland in difficult circumstances with bravery, dedication and patriotism. "IAF has achieved significant feats in its bid to protect the country and its people. It is

The aim of the rally is to raise awareness among the people about the glorious history of IAF; the deeds of valour of the air warriors in different wars and rescue operations and attract the youth to serve the motherland. The defence minister stated that during the car rally, the air warriors will hold interactions with the youth at schools and colleges in various States/UTs, exuding confidence that the exchanges would motivate the young ignited minds to join the Armed Forces and lead the life of pride and honour. Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, former Chiefs RKS Bhadauria (Retired) and A Y Tipnis (Retired) and other senior officials of IAF were present on the occasion. The rally has been organised by IAF in coordination with the veterans of Uttarakhand War Memorial. The Adventure Cell of IAF is leading and coordinating the rally.

# IIT Madras innovates laser heating for retinal drug delivery

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a ray of hope for millions suffering from retinal disorders in the country, researchers at IIT Madras have developed a groundbreaking method to enhance drug delivery directly to the retina by utilising mild laser heating. The innovative approach promises to significantly improve the efficacy of treatments administered through eye injections. Published in the peer-reviewed Wiley Heat Transfer journal, the research focuses on overcoming the challenges posed by the gel-like vitreous humour in the eye, which is often replaced by less viscous fluids after retinal laser surgery. Traditional methods of drug delivery rely on slow natural diffusion, which can take hours or even days for drugs to reach effective levels at the target site. Prof. Arunn Narasimhan, Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT Madras, designed an experiment using



a glass eye mimic geometrically similar to the human eye, water, and silicone oil for the vitreous liquid and a heater to simulate laser heating. The researchers injected a dye as a drug mimic at specific points in the vitreous region of the eye, and measured concentrations at different retinal locations with and without heating the vitreous liquid. Remarkably, while natural diffusion alone took 12 hours to achieve effective concentration, the application of mild heating reduced this time to just 12 minutes. "While with natural diffusion alone, the drug mimic took 12 hours to achieve effective concentration at the target region of the retina, heating

the vitreous liquid reduced it to just 12 minutes," said Shirinvas Vibuthu, Graduate Student, at IIT Madras. This research is particularly vital for the estimated 11 million individuals in India affected by retinal disorders. Since the retina is the region of the eye that contains blood vessels and nerves, such treatments must be performed carefully and with precision, the team said. "Using glass-eye experiments and bioheat simulations to analyse invasive treatments in the human eye, we have shown that mild targeted heating can enhance drug delivery to the retina. The medical community needs to take this further and implement it in treatments of retinal diseases," Narasimhan said.

# Doctors resume cease work following threats, attacks

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Junior doctors of Bengal demanding "justice for Abhaya" --- the lady doctor who was on August 9 raped and murdered inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital --- and better security in Government hospitals resumed cease work from Tuesday alleging the promises made earlier by the State in support of their demands had not been fulfilled. The second phase of cease work begins barely within a fortnight of the first phase when the agitating doctors called off their strike following talks with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who reportedly assured them of all cooperation that included creating right kind of working environment inside the hospitals. The resumption of cease work comes after attacks over the past one week on junior doctors in three State-run medical colleges.

"We were hopeful that after our talks with the Chief Minister and following that the Chief Secretary concrete measures would be taken to ensure safety and security of the doctors inside the hospitals ... but while the Government is claiming in the Supreme Court that major steps have been taken things seem to be running in a snail's pace ... our colleague in RG Kar Medical College was raped and murdered due to this slack security system ... despite such a big incident and words given by the Government there has been three to four attacks at Sagor Dutta Medical College, CNM Medical College, Rampurhat Medical College and today at Burdwan Medical College ... whereas the Government is indifferent ... so we had no other way but to return to the cease work," said Dr Kinjal Nanda one of the



leaders of the Joint Platform of Junior Doctors. Doctor Debashis Haldar said one of the leaders of the movement also said how "we were left with no option but to cease work as despite assurances given by the Chief Minister we

are being attacked whereas the administration is sitting idle ... if this continues then how far away is a second RG Kar like incident." When asked about the removal of senior officers including the former Kolkata Police Commissioner and two

Directors of Health following talks with the Chief Minister, Dr Aniket said that "those were not the entire list of demands ... they were only some preliminary steps that we had asked for." He also pointed out at how

senior politicians and MLAs like Humayun Kabir of Murshidabad were publicly threatening the doctors with dire consequences everyday should they not stop their agitation, saying "we have come to treat and serve people ... we have come to learn as junior doctors and not to die at the hands of hoodlums." A list of ten demands presented by the doctors read: 1. Abhaya's demand for justice should be addressed without delay, avoiding any extended judicial proceedings, The Health Ministry needs to be held accountable for administrative failures and corruption, and should promptly remove the Health Secretary from their role. 2. A state-wide centralised referral system must be swiftly introduced in all hospitals and medical institutions. 3. Each medical college and hospital should implement a

digital system to monitor bed vacancies. 4. Task forces, with elected junior doctor representatives, must be established in all hospitals and medical colleges to oversee the installation of CCTVs, on-call rooms, and bathroom facilities. 5. Police presence in hospitals should be strengthened by hiring permanent male and female officers, rather than relying on civic volunteers. 6. Immediate action is needed to fill all vacant positions for doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers in hospitals. 7. Investigative committees must be set up in each medical college to probe individuals involved in threat activities, with a state-level inquiry committee also formed. 8. Student council elections must be conducted in all medical colleges without delay, with recognition of RDAs and elected student and junior doctor

representation in decision-making bodies. 9. Immediate investigation is required into the widespread corruption and disorder within the West Bengal Medical Council (WBMC) and the West Bengal Health Recruitment Board (WBHRB). While there was no immediate response from the Chief Minister senior TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said that he hoped "good sense will prevail and the doctors will return to work as they also do not want people to die ... by resuming their cease work they will only harm the common people and none else." Meanwhile, the joint forum of doctors have called for a Mahamichi or a Grand rally on Mahalaya day --- or the day when Devi Paksha sets in according to the Hindu calendar --- in demand for Justice for Abhaya or the RGKMCH victim.

## Cyber attacks have emerged as major threat to national security: President Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said here cyber attacks have emerged as a major threat to the national security and the civil services and armed forces must join hands to create a secure nationwide system capable of thwarting them. She said the country's security concerns extend beyond preservation of territorial integrity and encompass other areas of national well-being such as economic, environmental, energy security, and cyber security related issues. "Addressing these concerns requires intensive research, and calls for a holistic approach in dealing with these wide-ranging issues," the president said addressing faculty and course members of 64th National Defence College course, who had called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. President Murmu said cyber attacks have emerged as a major threat to the national security. Dealing with and countering cyber attacks requires high-end technological intervention as well as robust digital infrastructure



along with a well-trained and specialised human resource, she said. "It is an issue that affects the entire governance framework of the country across all sectors. This is one of the areas where our civil services and armed forces must join hands to create a secure nationwide system capable of thwarting such attacks," the President said. She said huge amounts of data and sensitive information are available in the governance systems "which cannot be left unsecured" and urged them to understand

the gravity of this issue besides taking concrete measures to address it. President Murmu said the role of the armed forces has expanded far beyond traditional military matters and that the future conflicts will require a multi-state, multi-agency approach. "One of the major bottlenecks in achieving the goals is that various organisations and departments work in silos. On one hand, achieving the larger goals become difficult while on the other hand, similar jobs are performed by different departments thus cre-

ating a resource crunch," the president said. She said it has also been observed that officers working in the same department also keep performing overlapping tasks due to systemic gaps or lack of clear delineation of jobs. "This course, therefore, makes an important contribution in preparing the officers for enhancing cooperation to perform efficiently," President Murmu told the faculty and course members. The NDC course is aimed at providing a holistic view of contemporary economic, political and related aspects with particular emphasis on security issues to the participants drawn from different disciplines -- including those from Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers among others. Visits to important military stations and frontier posts and some foreign countries form an integral part of the course curriculum. She said the dynamic global geo-political environment poses numerous challenges. "The fast pace at which events have unfolded in the recent past, could not have been

foreseen perhaps a decade earlier. Thus, all officers, whether from civil services or defence services, must be aware of the challenges and vulnerabilities they face, and the strengths that can help deal with such challenges," the president said. Addressing the faculty and course members, she said technology is advancing rapidly and it is imperative to keep pace with it. "Whether it is artificial intelligence, data science, machine language processing or blockchain, you have to be aware of these technologies and should utilise them in your departments for creating a more efficient, transparent and productive work culture," the President said. She said innovation is another factor that will keep the officers future ready. "Each nation is guided in its actions by its national interests and objectives. Sometimes, you have to face unforeseen situations and crisis. For you to be always prepared for dealing with such situations, it is necessary to be innovative, resourceful and open to collaborations," the president said.

## HAL delivers first AL-31FP engine for Su-30MKI aircraft to IAF



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has handed over the first AL-31FP Aero Engine, manufactured under the 240 engine contract, to the Indian Air Force at Koraput in Odisha. The contract for 240 AL-31FP Aero Engines for Su-30MKI aircraft was signed on September nine, Bengaluru-headquartered HAL noted in a statement on Tuesday. It also said these engines would be deliv-

ered in eight years. The statement said Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar lauded HAL's efforts in delivering the first engine within weeks of signing the contract. "This key milestone reflects HAL's aero engine manufacturing competency and dedication to support the Su-30MKI fleet of IAF. It is very heartening to see that Koraput Division has mastered cutting edge technologies of aero engine manufacturing and has set up required infra-

structure to match with the global OEMs," he said. Chief of HAL D K Sunil said "During this entire engine manufacturing process, we aim to engage Indian industries from present level of work share from 40 per cent to more than 50 per cent in next two-three years and help in employment generation." Sukhoi Engine Division, Koraput, was created by HAL for manufacture of engines of Su-30MKI aircraft from raw material stage to final engine, it was noted.

## BJP, Congress engage in war of words over Wangchuk's detention

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP and Congress engaged in a war of words on Tuesday regarding detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and several others accompanying him at the Delhi border on Monday. While Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi slammed the government for the action terming it as "unacceptable," the BJP described the Congress' condemnation of the detention as "hypocrisy in extreme". Rahul Gandhi also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have to listen to Ladakh's voice. Wangchuk and more than 100 people from Ladakh, who had marched to Delhi demanding that the union territory be included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, were detained at the capital's border on Monday for violating prohibitory orders and taken to



different police stations. Asked about the Congress' reaction, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar said, "I don't know the facts. I will have to check the facts." "If Rahul Gandhi has a comment to make, why (does) he maintain a conspicuous silence when cartoonists are lifted in Kolkata and a satirist is jailed in Tamil Nadu," Shankar asked, adding that the Congress leader's reaction to Wangchuk's detention was "hypocrisy in extreme". A Jadavpur University profes-

sor and his neighbour were arrested in West Bengal in 2012 for posting on social media a cartoon showing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. In 2017, a freelance cartoonist was arrested in Tamil Nadu for allegedly depicting the then chief minister K Palaniswami in an obscene manner in a caricature. "The detention of Sonam Wangchuk ji and hundreds of Ladakhis peacefully marching for environmental and constitutional rights is unacceptable," Rahul Gandhi said in a social media post. The former Congress chief also asked why elderly citizens were being detained at Delhi's border for standing up for Ladakh's future. "Modi ji, like with the farmers, this 'Chakravyuh' will be broken, and so will your arrogance. You will have to listen to Ladakh's voice," Rahul Gandhi said.

## Congress leaders' families are engaged in land grab: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a row over MUDA site allocation case in Karnataka, the BJP on Tuesday raised the issue of allocation of a land to a trust run by AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge's family in Bengaluru, alleging that the Congress leaders' families are engaged in "land grab". Addressing a press conference here, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad alleged that the Congress government in Karnataka has allocated 5 acres of land to Siddhartha Vihar Trust, run by Kharge's family, under "suspicious circumstances" and demanded a "transparent and honest" reply from the Congress president to the questions being raised on the issue. "It's surprising that the Siddaramaiah government allocated the 5-acre land to the trust in a high-tech defence area in Bangalore for setting up an R&D facility," he said. "And the interesting thing



about it is that this 5-acre land was given (to the Kharge family-run trust) within a few days of framing of the rules for (setting up of) R&D facilities in the area," the former Union minister added. Prasad said this matter has reached Lokayukta in Karnataka and it is also pending with the court. "Court will

do its work. But when there are so many suspicious circumstances surrounding this entire fast-track allotment, Kharge ji will have to reply. He is Congress president and also leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha," he said. The BJP expects a transparent and honest reply from the Congress president, he added.

Prasad said the BJP does not have any problem if a land is allocated to a 'genuine trust for genuine purpose in an authentic manner'. "But the way the political leaders' families are engaging in land grab movement in the garb of trust, it is wrong. We vehemently condemn it. It's a serious issue," he said. "We

hope that action will be taken on this," he added. The BJP leader alleged that such land deals become "rampant" in the state wherever the Congress comes to power. "Today a serious question is being raised as to why the Congress government and its leaders have great fascination for land deals," he said, adding, "Have some of their leaders become property dealers?" On the MUDA site allocation issue, the BJP leader said the case is being investigated "honestly." Karnataka Lokayukta police has registered a case against Siddaramaiah on the directions of a special court in connection with the alleged irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allocation. The Enforcement Directorate has also booked the chief minister, his wife Parvathi and some others in a money laundering case linked to the land allotment case, taking cognisance of the Lokayukta FIR.

## Travelers to soon share experiences at tourist hotspots using QR codes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Soon, travelers will be able to share their experiences at popular tourist hotspots and destinations, such as monuments, by scanning strategically placed QR codes at airports and railway stations nationwide. Aiming to actively engage the travelers in the growth of India's tourism sector, the Union Tourism Ministry is in the process of introducing such an innovative feedback mechanism. "Feedback and ratings of experiences by travelers will be collected by enabling them to scan a QR code placed at relevant points at airports and railway stations, spending around 30 seconds to rate



their tourist experience and provide any feedback," explained an official from the Ministry.

He added that this feedback will be real-time and dynamic in nature, allowing the Ministry to address issues

proactively in collaboration with various stakeholders. This will also prove to be a rich source of data and insights for tourism development. "By installing the QR codes provided by the Union Ministries of Tourism, Civil Aviation, and Railways, they are collaborating to set up these mechanisms at airports and railway stations across the country, so that over time, they become a reliable source of insight and information for tourism policy and strategy." Operators in the tourism industry have supported this innovative approach. Rajnish Kaistha, Senior Vice President at the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), said that it will not only enhance the visitor experience but also

enable businesses and authorities to make data-driven improvements. "By actively involving tourists in the development process, the initiative is expected to foster greater collaboration between stakeholders, leading to a more responsive and dynamic tourism environment," he said. Ritu Jain, Director of Coterie Tours Private Ltd, concurred, saying that with real-time feedback, the government can address concerns of the stakeholders swiftly, ensuring that every traveler's voice is heard. "This proactive strategy promises to enrich the tourism landscape in India, making it more appealing and accessible for both domestic and international visitors."

## Israel's move to set up shell company to send explosive pagers to Lebanon masterstroke: Army Chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Anupendra Dwivedi on Tuesday termed the move by Israel as a "masterstroke" to set up a shell company that manufactured the explosive pagers sent to Lebanon. It was aimed to derail Hezbollah. Making this assertion here, he also said the move required years and years of preparation by Israel. Speaking at the Chanakya Defence Dialogue, the Army chief "the war does not start the day you start fighting, it starts the day you start planning." Israel has now shifted its military focus from the Gaza Strip to its northern border



with Lebanon, where it has targeted Hezbollah and killed its chief Hassan Nasrallah and several top commanders. "Israel has done something different. Israel had decided that Hamas was their primary target. So, Israel first wiped out Hamas and then focused on the other side (Hezbollah). The shell company that was created for the pagers was

something of a masterstroke by Israel," General Dwivedi said. Last month, multiple explosions of Hezbollah members in Lebanon killed nearly 40 and left over 3,000 injured. Asserting the need for various levels of inspection at the technological level, General Dwivedi said India needed to be "watchful" of supply chain interruptions. "Supply chain interruption, interception is something we have to be very watchful of. We need to have various levels of inspection at the technological level as well as the manual level to make sure such things do not get repeated in our case," the Army chief said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Saving Ladakh

Sonam Wangchuk's foot march highlights the urgent need for ecological protection and local autonomy of Ladakh

Ladakh, a region known for its breathtaking landscapes and unique culture, is now under threat from an ecological disaster. Climate change and unchecked development are eroding its delicate environment, pushing it towards a tipping point. In the face of this growing crisis, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has emerged as a key figure in the fight to protect Ladakh. Recently, he, along with over 100 supporters, embarked on a foot march from Leh to New Delhi to demand concrete steps for safeguarding Ladakh's fragile ecosystem and securing the region's autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, upon reaching Delhi's Singhu border, Wangchuk and his supporters were detained by the police for violating prohibitory orders. Despite this setback, the march has already sparked widespread attention and support for his demands. Ladakh's environment is one of the most sensitive in India. Nestled in the Himalayan range, the region is already witnessing alarming impacts of climate change. Melting glaciers, shrinking water sources, and unpredictable weather patterns are threatening not only the ecosystem but also the livelihoods of the local population.



The rapid melting of glaciers is particularly concerning as they are the primary source of water for the region. This has caused Ladakh to face a severe water crisis, with rivers and streams drying up at an unprecedented rate. Unchecked tourism and infrastructure development further exacerbate the issue. Waste management remains a significant challenge, and the increasing construction of roads and buildings has disrupted the natural landscape. Wangchuk, who is known for his innovative environmental solutions like the 'Ice Stupa' project, has been vocal about the need for sustainable development in Ladakh. His demands are not only about preserving the environment but also about giving the local people the power to manage their resources and protect their cultural identity. One of his primary demands is to include Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Sixth Schedule provides special protections and autonomy to certain tribal areas in India, allowing them to preserve their culture, manage their resources, and have law-making powers over local matters. Ladakh, with its predominantly tribal population and distinct cultural heritage, has been seeking similar protection. The people of Ladakh in general have expressed disappointment with the current governance structure, which is led by a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the central government. Right now the people of Ladakh have a limited say in decision making. Granting Ladakh Sixth Schedule status would empower its people to make decisions that are in line with their unique environmental and cultural needs. It would allow them to enact laws that protect their fragile ecosystem, manage resources more effectively, and ensure sustainable development. The people of Ladakh are making their voices heard. Now, it is up to the government and the rest of the nation to listen and take meaningful action.

Less than the size of our Gorkha Brigade. The Navy and Air Force together make another 70,000 warriors but all field state-of-the-art equipment including conventional and strategic forces which are the best in Europe. The military component of the Indian High Commission in Aldwych has been downsized from three officers to just one with a Naval Commodore holding the fort instead of the Army Brigadier. Returning to my trudge on the tarmac along Whitehall Avenue, the old MoD has become Raffles Hotel, RUSI next door nattered and a few meters ahead are bronze statues of leaders who won fame in India: Field Marshals Slim, Auchinleck, and Allanbrooke. Another Indian famous is the Duke of Wellington honoured in Trafalgar Square and Wellington Corner. The Brits nurture the military and that's one reason they are respected. Thoughts that wafted during the walk in the woods. We must learn.

### PICTALK



A view of Humayun's Tomb, a UNESCO world heritage site, in New Delhi

# Walking through the woods in UK



ASHOK K MEHTA

Suspension of winter fuel allowances, Starmer's push to reset relations with Europe, and the forgotten legacy of the Gorkhas are echoing in the woods of the UK

Hadlow Stair is a village in Tonbridge Kent, UK, with the Old Hadlow Road leading to it. Tonbridge is a poorer cousin of the historic Tunbridge Wells but a great place for a walking-talking vacation this September when the sun broke through the clouds permitting invigorating small walks. Hadlow Stair is the perfect escape from rain-spoilt London, just 40 minutes away by train to Charing Cross in Trafalgar Square. Ordinary Brits have been stunned by the new Labour, suspending Pound 200 winter fuel allowance to pensioners, ostensibly to fill the Pound 22 bn deficit left by the Tories though inflation is below 3 per cent. In the village, most read newspapers only on the weekend: the talk is about Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon and Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife accepting gifts. Former civil servant Sue Gray who sort of out Boris Johnson for his indiscretions during the pandemic is now the chief advisor to Starmer with a pay package of Pounds 180,000, surpassing the wages the PM gets. Modernising Britain's Continuous Sea Deterrence as well as upgrading its nuclear submarines from Vanguard to Dreadnought class is also underway. Peers in the House of Lords warned that 2.5 per cent on defence spending (at present 2.3 per cent) may not be enough to meet the challenges and fix the military.

Here too, there is a Pound 10 bn hole which is proposed to be filled up by taxes. India's spending is below 2 per cent with immeasurably bigger threats. But who cares! All this and more, John Lawson, my walking companion shares with me. Amongst all the walks the one in the undulating woods nearby is most enjoyable as John takes myriad routes and detours along the soggy earthy soil. You can do a dozen different trails here and not know they are in the same woods. Go south from Hadlow Road past the Scottish St Andrews Church across fields and through apple orchards with apples to eat and apples to cook. But there are no pickers due to Brexit, laments John.



The Chinese have invented an apple-picking machine which is yet to make its commercial debut. Here, in the fields too, John has manufactured several walking trails - the special one is along the Medway river to Tonbridge town which has everything from Marks and Spencers to Waitrose and Sainsburys to Kathmandu Valley and Dalchini restaurants to Humphrey and Bean Pub where we were privy to a brawl. There is also the Tonbridge Castle. My favourite walk though is through the Higham Woods. This I did every morning, meeting making friends with people walking their dogs. Every house here has a cat or a dog or even a horse! Almost every afternoon John and I did serious walking bringing the milometer to roughly 120 plus miles in 12 days. In his spare time, John moves auto parts and trucks in the UK and Europe where too, Brexit means cost and time overruns. At the Labour Party annual conference, Starmer said he wants to reset relations with European Union and make Brexit work with the EU reset. The biggest applause at the conference was reserved for the Home Secretary, who decried the recent racial riots. Migrants continue to sail



THE PLAN TO RAISE A THIRD BATTALION OF GORKHA RIFLES WAS ABANDONED THOUGH THREE GORKHA COMPANIES WERE RAISED FOR THE SPECIAL FORCES. ALDRERSHOT IS WHERE RETIRED GORKHAS ALLOWED RESIDENCY IN BRITAIN LIVE, WHILE THE BATTALION IS FURTHER SOUTH

across the Channel and since Rwanda is a closed issue, they will be settled in Britain. I've been travelling to the UK since the 1970s and can say this: Indian or Asian or coloured are no longer looked down upon even though many of the menial jobs are still being done by them. I was horrified to learn that there is a Gorkha Cleaning Company in Kent. The Gorkhas, the Brits once worshipped in battle are all but forgotten except by the likes of Joanna Lumley. This became more evident in London where along a side lane from Whitehall Avenue resides the life-sized stone statue of the eternal Gorkha soldier. The plan to raise a third battalion of Gorkha Rifles was abandoned though three Gorkha companies were raised for the Special Forces. Aldershot is where retired Gorkhas allowed residency in Britain live, while the battalion is further south. The other battalion is in Brunei for which the Sultan pays. Sadly, very few recognise the badges of the Gorkha Regiment any more. Why blame the Brits when we have offered the poor choice of Agniveer to Nepali Gorkhas who stopped joining five years ago? The British Army is 70,000 (with a reserve of 30,000) soldiers and Infantry

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; The views expressed are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### WEST ASIA TURMOIL

Madam — Apropos, 'West Asia on fire' (September 30). Israel which had vowed 'enough is enough' in the aftermath of a brutal terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7 last year, has dealt a body blow to Hezbollah, the most powerful militant and political force in Lebanon, by eliminating its head Hassan Nasrallah, who had been a global figurehead of anti-Israeli resistance for decades. He had been a prime target of Israel since the last Lebanon War of 2008. Now, Hezbollah, considered the vital part of the Axis of Resistance, is leaderless and thus rudderless. However, Nasrallah's demise may only keep Hezbollah lying down for a while. It cannot be written off. Wounded but not destroyed, it may not be long before Hezbollah tries to avenge Nasrallah by raining a barrage of missiles on Israel to keep its people from returning to the northern region. Netanyahu stakes his political fortunes on this. Meanwhile, with thousands of its citizens fleeing northern Israel in wake of Hezbollah strikes, Israel's main task remains unaccomplished. Its bombarding Lebanon may go on till Netanyahu gets war-weary and domestic pressures mount or until breakthrough on the hostage issue. It is an opportune time for the international community should it desire to prevail upon Tel Aviv to agree for ceasefire. But peace is unlikely to return to Gaza till Hamas frees hostages and a ceasefire is reached.

N Sadasiva Reddy | Washington

#### NON BJP STATES WITHDRAW CBI CONSENT

Madam — Karnataka has joined the long list of states that have withdrawn general consent to the CBI to conduct investigations relating to corruption, economic offences and crime or violence in that particular state. The Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, under which the CBI was setup, has defined general consent and

#### Women education empowers India



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar made insightful remarks on the significance of women's education. He said that a developed India is incomplete without women's empowerment, which is a powerful reminder of the crucial role they play in our society. Women constitute a substantial portion of our

population, and their active participation in all spheres of life is essential for holistic development. By investing in women's education, we not only unlock their individual potential but also empower their families and communities. Educated women are more likely to make informed decisions regarding health, nutrition, and child-rearing, leading to healthier and more prosperous families. Moreover, women's education is a catalyst for economic growth. When women have access to education and employment opportunities, they contribute to the workforce, boost GDP, and reduce poverty. Their participation in decision-making processes ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more inclusive and equitable policies.

Fiza Fatima | Hyderabad

#### POTHoles OF CORRUPTION

Madam —No matter which party is in power, the conditions of the roads all over the nation are pathetic. It requires no rocket science to understand why this is happening. Corruption is the root cause as inferior quality materials are used due to cuts taken by everybody from top to bottom in passing tenders and clearing bills. Therefore, it is hard to be enthused about the promise of pothole free roads by the CM of Delhi Atishi Marlena. Accidents caused by bad roads have come at a great cost including injury and sometimes fatality with no accountability fixed for the loss, what is worse, it is not just potholes but literally craters the vehicles are expected to navigate. Recently, there was a container truck that was completely swallowed by the road. This despite the vehicle owners being made to pay all kinds of taxes for permission to park their vehicles on such roads!

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Remembering Gandhi: A journey of justice and simplicity

Gandhi's transformative journey, which began with racial discrimination in South Africa, helped shape his lifelong pursuit of justice, equality and nonviolence



RAJDEEP PATHAK

On September 11, 2024, Union Minister for Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, inaugurated a restored railway coach at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi. This coach, donated by the Ministry of Railways and painted in brown with a "III" marking for third class, represents Mahatma Gandhi's simple lifestyle and his close relationship with the Indian railways. A life-size sculpture of Gandhi stepping off the train further emphasises his connection with the masses. Organised by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, the exhibition offers an immersive experience of Gandhi's rail journeys. Shekhawat, in his address, highlighted how Gandhi turned the freedom struggle into a mass movement, remarking that the coach will inspire future generations to uphold the values of justice, equality, and peace for which Gandhi stood.



A key moment occurred on June 7, 1893, in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, when Gandhi, then a young barrister, was forcibly removed from a first-class train compartment despite having a valid ticket. This act of racial discrimination left a lasting impact on Gandhi and ignited his lifelong dedication to justice and nonviolent resistance. He often referred to this incident as the turning point that set him on the path toward becoming the Mahatma. Gopal Krishna Gandhi, Gandhi's grandson, poignantly reflected on this moment. He wrote that when Gandhi was thrown off the train, an Indian fell, but when Gandhi rose, both India and South Africa rose with him. The experience transformed Gandhi, turning a personal

humiliation into a public cause. What began as a lawyer's indignation became a revolutionary's commitment to human justice. His later train journeys in South Africa, including those to Johannesburg and Pretoria, deepened his understanding of racial discrimination in the railway system. Gandhi confronted railway officials and managed to negotiate some concessions for Indian passengers, marking the beginning of his use of negotiation and protest as tools for change. Upon returning to India in 1914, Gandhi's relationship with the railways grew stronger. He followed the advice of his mentor, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, by traveling in third-class compartments to stay connected with India's impoverished masses. For

Gandhi, trains were a means to engage with ordinary people and understand their struggles firsthand. The challenging conditions he faced—overcrowded compartments, unsanitary surroundings—only strengthened his resolve to fight for social justice. His decision to travel third class symbolised his commitment to egalitarianism and helped transform the freedom struggle into a mass movement that resonated with the broader population. Gandhi traveled by train from Calcutta to Delhi and stayed at Birla House where he spent the last 144 days of his life. During this time, he tirelessly worked for peace amidst the communal violence of Partition. His assassination in January 1948 ended a life devoted to nonviolence and service to humanity. As we celebrate Gandhi Jayanti today as the International Day of Nonviolence, we are reminded of Gandhi's self-sacrifice, dedication, and compassion. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN

## SLEEP, SPIRITUALITY AND THE MODERN MIND

Reclaiming quality sleep requires reconnecting with spiritual practices



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

In the famous poem "Childhood", Ravindra Nath Tagore bemoans the loss of innocence as a child grows up. One thing we can all agree that to sleep like a child is a great asset. But as we grow up our minds begin to play havoc with our sleep. Before I go any further let us understand the basics of sleep. Sleep is one of the most important biological functions and inadequate sleep can cause many problems. Sleep is the time when the body rejuvenates itself. Sleep restores physical well-being and removes fatigue related to emotional activities.

Our brains are beehives of activities during sleep, including the time when one is dreaming. How much sleep is required? It depends on each individual according to age, type of activities, level of activities, etc. Lord Krishna has mentioned sleep as one of the four activities, which must be appropriate. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 6.17) We need sleep excellence. What does the modern man do? There are three types. One cuts on sleep and another cannot fall asleep and resorts to drinks and drugs.

The third sleeps too much wasting precious human life. Taking up the busy ones, they have no respect for rules made by God – the Creator of our bodies. They feel that they can do with less sleep and nothing adverse will happen. But they get harmed in many ways.

The first causality is the energy level; it goes down. Physical health is affected in many ways, but it takes a long; one feels that he is fine until hit by some serious health problem. Performance declines; cognitive ability reduces; memory consolidation is affected as does mental health. You cannot copy someone else, because, as stated earlier,



er, it is, person specific – a bodily necessity. The second group suffers no less, if anything substantially more in the long term.

One thinks that he can order the body to sleep whenever one wants. Have you tried to postpone sleep? What happens? Circadian rhythms are 24-hour cycles that are part of the body's internal clock. Its primary function is sleeping and waking.

We cannot take charge; it controls us. So what does the modern man do? He resorts to artificially induced sleep by taking drinks and drugs. We all know what drinks do to our liver. And drugs are similarly harmful to the brain. Both are habit forming. One is stuck once this is continued over some time. Why is one unable to fall asleep, when bodily and mentally tired? Because we have allowed our minds to take charge of our lives.

We have unlimited desires for a sense of enjoyment, power, fame, etc. We are being driven by emotions like lust, greed, anger, hate, etc. By the way, drinks and drugs do not stop bad and scary dreams from coming, which leave a very bad feeling upon waking up.

The third kind harms oneself in more ways than one by making sleep one's shelter. Let us come to our senses. Shelter is available in God. There are simple spiritual practices, which connect one to God. He will help us curb our wrong tendencies, as only God can. But one has to first accept that one is wrong; one has to give up overblown ego.

It is quite strange that a small, ignorant and helpless soul has such a big ego. What is the conclusion? There is only one shelter, as instructed by Lord Krishna. You will get plenty of sleep and of good quality too sans bad dreams.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

## Transforming lives of the Indian farmers



SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

Through modern infrastructure, expanded credit support, and sustainable farming methods, PM Modi's policies are revolutionising Indian agriculture

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's deep concern and sensitivity towards farmers is visible in the decisions, policies and plans taken for the farming community. Transforming the lives of our food providers (Annadata) is the first and foremost goal of our Prime Minister. This is the reason why agriculture and farmers remained the top priorities in the first 100 days of the third term of the NDA government. Under his leadership, the government is making unprecedented efforts for the empowerment and upliftment of the agriculture sector. We are committed to increasing farmers' income, which is reflected in schemes such as the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), and PM AASHA. Post-harvest losses in India are a major challenge, which threatens the production capacity of the agricultural sector and it also adversely impacts the hard work put in by lakhs of farmers. According to the latest estimates, about 16-18 per cent of the total food production is affected every year in India due to this.

These losses can be attributed to various stages of agriculture such as harvesting, threshing, storage, transportation and processing. Lack of proper storage, cold chain, inadequate processing units, and lack of efficient logistics contribute to these huge losses, as a result of which the overall food security of our country gets affected.

Keeping all these factors in mind, the Modi government is working with renewed enthusiasm towards strengthening this. Under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is making efforts to take the research of scientists from lab to land, due to which the cost of production has reduced considerably and profits have increased for farmers. The Prime Minister with a visionary approach launched the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) way back in July 2020 as a transformative initiative under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. Its objective is to increase the income of farmers and address post-harvest management issues through farm assets to reduce food wastage. These challenges have to be addressed by promoting new projects and new age technologies. Under AIF, banks provide interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum with an interest cap of 9 per cent and financial institutions will provide loans up to Rs 2 crore with credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises) for loans. Through this initiative, the government aims to not only increase production to preserve quality and quantity, but also help farmers access markets more efficiently, and as a result, their income will also increase.

Due to the able leadership of the Prime Minister, the benefits of the scheme, till August 2024, the amount sanctioned under this scheme has crossed Rs 47,500 crore. Of this, more than Rs 30,000 crore has already been disbursed for various projects. Notably, 54 per cent of the projects that were sanctioned are linked to farmers, cooperative societies, agricultural production organisations and self-help groups (SHGs), which is in line with the Prime Minister's vision. It reflects the strong participation of farmers in providing farm-gate level infrastructure. Prime Minister Modi is very committed towards strengthening farm gate infrastructure to solve the major problem post-harvest losses in agricultural produce. He prioritised the development of infra-



structure in storage (dry and cold), transportation, etc., so that farmers could be protected from such crop loss. In terms of dry storage, in comparison to food grain production, India has an infrastructure in terms of 1,740 lakh metric tonnes of storage capacity, and at present, there is a shortage of 44 per cent in the storage capacity for the overall grain production in India, which is very concerning.



THE PRIME MINISTER WITH A VISIONARY APPROACH LAUNCHED THE AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (AIF) WAY BACK IN JULY 2020 AS A TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVE UNDER THE 'ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT' INITIATIVE

Similarly, for horticulture produce, about 441.9 lakh metric tonnes of cold storage is available in India, while the cold chain capacity is only 15.72 per cent of the production of fruits and vegetables in the country. AIF initiative has helped bridge the storage capacity gap by approximately 500 lakh metric tonnes. Contributing to saving about Rs 5,700 crore post-harvest losses for the nation. Furthermore, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the development of proper cold storage facilities has reduced the loss of horticulture products by 10 per cent, due to which 3.5 lakh metric tonnes of produce is being secured post harvest and about Rs 1,250 crore is being saved every year. This commitment of the Prime Minister towards the agriculture sector and farmers will not only ensure economic empowerment but also raise their standard of living. Under the guidance of the Prime Minister, the AIF is providing new impetus to the growth and development of agricultural infrastructure. As of August 2024, as many as 74,695 agriculture infrastructure-related initiatives across the country have been approved under AIF. These include 18,508 custom hiring centres, 16,238 primary processing centres, 13,702 warehouses, 3,095 sorting and grading units, 1,901 cold stores and cold chains, and 21,251 other types of infrastructure facilities. These 74,695 projects have attracted a total investment of Rs 78,702 crore in the agriculture sector since 2015, which marks significant progress in the sector. Prime Minister Modi has encouraged entrepreneurship among farmers, as approximately 50,000 new agricultural enterprises have been set up in the country. These efforts have helped create more than 8,00,000 employment opportunities, and this number will only increase in the future, eventually leading to the creation of 2.5 million jobs, directly or indirectly. The Prime Minister's welfare policies have brought about positive changes in the working style of farmers. The creation of advanced infrastructure on farms has facilitated farmers to sell directly to a wider consumer base, thereby enhancing price realisation and increasing their overall income. Due to modern packaging and cold storage systems, farmers can time their market sales more strategically, resulting in better value realisation. On average, this infrastructure initiative has enabled farmers to get 11-14 per cent higher prices for their produce. Prime Minister Modi's policies will not only encourage the development of agricultural infrastructure but also reduce credit risk. Through credit guarantee support and interest subvention, lending institutions can give loans with minimal risk, thereby helping their customers. This helps in expanding their base and portfolio diversification. Significantly, this fund is involved in the creation of agricultural infrastructure in collaboration with the refinancing facility of NABARD, reducing the effective interest rate for Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) to 1 per cent.

This has brought significant benefits to thousands of farmers associated with such PACS. Under AIF, 9,573 PACS projects have been approved with a loan amount of Rs 2,970 crore to date by NABARD. In an important step under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the central government has approved the progressive expansion of the ambitious Agriculture Infrastructure Fund scheme, making it more inclusive and substantially more influential. The make agriculture a profitable business we have come up with a six-point strategy to increase the income of farmers, such as increasing production, reducing the cost of farming, fair prices for production, providing the appropriate amount of relief during natural disasters, diversification of agriculture and natural farming.

At present, some promising projects for agricultural asset development, such as hydroponic farming, mushroom cultivation, vertical farming,

aeroponic farming, polyhouse and greenhouse, are reserved for only farmer groups and collectives. Now by expanding the scheme coverage to include integrated processing projects, farmers will get better prices for their produce through the creation of integrated processing plants, which include both primary and secondary processing. In addition to this, component A of PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan) Yojana provides the facility for the installation of solar power plants up to 2 MW on barren, fallow, cultivable, pasture or marshy lands, and it can be easily converged with the AIF scheme. This strategic convergence will help individual farmers and empower farmer groups, enhancing their role from being 'Annadata' (food givers) to 'Urjadata' (energy providers). The dedicated credit guarantee cover window, which was exclusively kept for FPOs, i.e. NAB Sanrakshan Trustee Company Private Limited, will remain open for AIF beneficiaries as well, where they will be eligible for guarantee fee reimbursement. These changes will increase processing capabilities, diversify food production, and increase and improve the quality of the yields.

They will increase the shelf life of the produce, boost transport capacity and improve rural supply by linking it to the urban demand. Additionally, these changes will help in generating rural employment opportunities. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is making a significant contribution towards the development of the agriculture sector and empowerment of Indian farmers, by providing a sustainable solution. Due to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, even the minutest problems faced by farmers are being resolved, intense communication and combined efforts have brought a new dawn in the context of farmers' welfare, and this will prove to be a key milestone to fulfil the dreams of a developed agriculture sector of a 'Viksit Bharat'.

(The writer is the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development; views are personal)

## Navigating manufacturing landscape: Bridging growth, disparities, and industrial ambitions

India stands as the world's fifth-largest manufacturing powerhouse, generating nearly \$560 billion in goods annually

India is the world's fifth largest manufacturing powerhouse producing nearly 560 Billion Dollars' worth of goods per year but our share in global manufacturing output is below 3 per cent. And the share of manufacturing in India's Gross Value Added (GVA) is stuck at just 17 per cent, not far ahead of the share of agriculture. It is often stated that India seems to be transitioning directly from a primary sector-dominant economy into one dominated by the service sector.

The question often asked is whether manufacturing is going to play its part in India's often paradoxical and counter-intuitive growth story. However, one element of India's industrial landscape is quite predictable. The concepts



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

of growth poles first propounded by the French Economist Perroux along with its accompanying concepts of the inevitability of unbalanced regional growth in industrial clusters, with an agglomeration effect that will accentuate regional diversity, seems pretty close to India's development experience. Thus, even where India had set up new industrial townships in

places like Rourkela, Bokaro or even Jamshedpur in an earlier era, these do not appear to have led to broader regional development, with the nearby hinterland areas remaining under-developed for the most part.

The broader issue of regional disparities that have emerged in India has been sought to be addressed institutionally by the various Finance Commission's devolution formula which gives overwhelming weightage to per capita income and, therefore, ensures higher resource flows into backward areas.

The market, on the other hand, has responded to these disparities by the movement of migrant labour to the faster growing parts of the country, with the migrant labour being

the unsung hero of the construction and manufacturing growth in these areas. The concepts of growth poles and growth centres are now being supplemented by the phenomena of port-led industrial growth with major ports, old and new, serving as growth centres in many countries. The National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) takes on the challenges of accelerating India's manufacturing growth, creating multiple industrial growth foci and linking industrialisation to transport nodes, head-on.

The NICDP has focused on the development of industrial townships adjacent to 11 key transport corridors. Eight such townships had been approved till the current



year, four of which are shovel-ready with the industrial plots being allotted, and four others are being implemented with trunk infrastructure being set up. As against eight projects implemented or under implementation over the last 17 years, the Government has recently approved twelve such smart industrial cities in 10 States, at one go, with a big bang approach which is characteristic of PM Modi's style which focuses on Speed and Scale.

All these sites have been validated using the geospatial data on the PM Gati Shakti National Platform to minimise disturbances to existing habitations and ecology, with prioritisation to availability of land parcels with the State Governments, covering land of relatively lesser agricultural value, with proximity to major transport modes for multi-model connectivity.

A new aspect of using PM Gati Shakti to not only ensure the enhancement of transport infrastructure for improved connectivity but also to combine such network planning with an area planning approach by asking States to start filling social infrastructure gaps (schools, Anganwadis, ITIs, accommodation) concurrently with pro-

ject implementation, has been initiated.

This combination of transport network planning and area planning should lead to these green field industrial cities getting plug and play infrastructure and multi-model transport links ahead of demand for the private sector and particularly for foreign investors who wish to participate in India's growth story. It may be recalled that India's Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) ranking had improved from 143 in 2014 to 63 in 2020, in the last year that such rankings were published by the World Bank. While contract compliances and improvement are linked to the broader issue of judicial reform, the NICDP programme will substantially address, along with

parallel initiatives by the States, the issues of land availability and its transparent administration, for any investors seeking industrial sites in these cities. The NICDP Programme also de-risks the investor from one key compliance burden that new investors are concerned about, the issue of environmental clearances by ensuring that full environmental clearance for the entire township is already in place and is backed up by a full spectrum of utility services like power, sewage and waste treatment, roads etc., in a smart city with state-of-the-art infrastructure and digitized grievance redressal mechanisms.

(The writer is former Secretary, DPIIT and currently OSD, Ministry of Defence; views are personal)





# School bus in Bangkok catches fire, more than 20 feared dead

**AP ■ BANGKOK**  
A bus carrying young students with their teachers caught fire in suburban Bangkok on Tuesday, with more than 20 of those on board feared dead, officials and rescuers said. The bus was carrying 44 passengers from central Uthai Thani province for a school trip in Ayutthaya and Nonthaburi provinces, Transport Minister Suriya Junggrungkit told reporters at the scene. Videos posted on social media showed the entire bus engulfed in fire with huge

plumes of black smoke pouring out as it stood on the side of the road. Bodies were still inside the bus hours after the fire. The students on the bus were reported to be in elementary and junior high school. Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said officials could not yet confirm the number of fatalities because they had not finished investigating the scene. He said the driver survived but appeared to have fled and could not yet be found. Anutin had earlier said 25 were feared dead, but Piyalak Thinkaew, a rescuer of the Ruamkatanyu Foundation

told reporters later that two more survivors had been found, reducing the number of those still missing to 23 — three teachers and 20 students. Rescuers and officials were able to access the bus hours after the fire was put out. Piyalak said they were still unable to identify the bodies, most of which were found in the middle and back seats, leading them to assume that the fire started at the front of the bus. Thai media reports and rescuers said the bus was heading to Nonthaburi when the fire started around noon in Pathum Thani province, a

northern suburb of the capital. A rescuer at the scene told Suriya that the fire likely started after one of the tires exploded and the vehicle scraped against a road barrier. Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra offered her condolences in a post on social media platform X, saying the government would take care of medical expenses and compensate the victims' families. The patRangsit Hospital, which is located near the scene, said in a news conference that it admitted three young girls, one of whom suffered burns to the face, mouth and eye.

# Road ahead may be stormy, Xi warns as China celebrates 75th National Day

**PTI ■ BEIJING**  
China celebrated its 75th National Day Tuesday, with President Xi Jinping issuing a stern warning that the road ahead for the Communist nation won't be smooth as it is weighed down by economic headwinds coupled with intensifying rivalry with the US and growing tensions with neighbours, including India. A large number of people attended the ceremonial flag hoisting at the sprawling Tiananmen Square in Beijing on Tuesday to celebrate the National Day as the country shut down for a week-long holiday.

Other than this, there were no festivities nor grand military parades displaying China's military might like in the 60th and 70th anniversaries of the National Day, but a rallying call from Xi asking people to prepare for hard times. "The road ahead won't be smooth and flat, there will be difficulties and obstacles. [We] might face high winds and rough

seas, even stormy seas," Xi said at a banquet on the eve of the anniversary as China tries to regain economic momentum amid an increasingly challenging set of geopolitical headwinds. "We must be vigilant in times of peace, plan ahead, and rely closely on the entire (Communist) Party, the entire army, and people of all ethnic groups across the country," he said. "No difficulties can stop the Chinese people from moving forward," he said. Heading the

Party, the military and the Presidency, 71-year-old Xi is currently in his unprecedented third five-year term and expected to continue life-long in power. The People's Republic of China (PRC) was formed in 1949 after the Communists headed by Mao Zedong seized power in the civil war while the nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan, which over the years emerged as the self-governing island adhering to a democratic system. But 75 years on Taiwan's integration with the mainland continues to be an unfinished agenda for China's Communist Party, especially for Xi, who has been vowing to reunify it with China.

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Public Notice  
The General Public is hereby informed that my client Mr. Ratan Kumar Sharma S/o Sh. R. P. Sharma and his wife Mrs. Rajni Sharma R/o A-3/4-D, Green Apartment, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-63 have severed all relations with their son Udit Sharma and his wife Himanshi Sethi due to her bad habits and bad conducts as well as being out of control of my clients in all manners. My above named clients have also disowned and debarred their son and his wife from their movable and immovable properties. Anybody dealing with Udit Sharma and his wife Himanshi Sethi will do so at their own risk and responsibility and my clients will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Udit Sharma and his wife Himanshi Sethi. SANJEEV DWIVEDI (ADVOCATE) 48, Gajanan Block, Tiz Hazari Courts, N-D-54

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Public Notice  
Be it known to all that my client Sh. Bahadur S/o Sh. Pardehi, R/o G-73, Block-G, Saurabh Vihar, Jaitpur, Badarpur, New Delhi 110044 hereby debars his son Mr. Anand Kumar from all his movable & immovable properties and has severed all his relations from them. Anybody dealing with them in any manner shall be doing so entirely at his/her cost, risk & consequences & under no circumstances my client shall be liable for their acts. T.S. VARUN (Advocate) Mob.: 9891588500

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Public Notice  
The Annual General Body Meeting of JAMIA-TUL-BANAT-AL-ISLAMIA (Educational & Social Society) Registered under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860, is going to be held on 27.10.2024 at the Madarsa premises Plot No. B-112, Zayed College, Shaheen Bagh, Street No. 07, to consider the following agenda: 1. To confirm the Minutes of the last Meeting. 2. Discussion on ongoing situation of the society and other legal steps. 3. To discuss the auditor report and income & expenditure report with balance sheet for the financial year 2023-24. 4. To elect the members of the society and confirm the membership of the applicants. 5. To consider the annual report of the society. 6. To appoint the auditor of the society. 7. Any other matter with the permission of the chair. All the members of the Society i.e Life Members General Body Members are requested to attend the meeting positively. N.B. Kindly bring your identity card. (Chairman of Managing Committee)

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**VARIOUS TYPES OF BRIDGE RELATED WORKS**  
E-Tender Notice No. DCBL/12/2024/MLG, dated: 28-09-2024. Open E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No.: DCBL212024MLG: Name of works: 3-D scanning of River bed in identified bridges of N.F. Railway under Dy. CE/BR-Line/Malgaoan. Approximate Tender Value: ₹2,89,08,960.90; Bid Security: ₹2,82,600.00; Tender No.: DCBL232024MLG: Name of works: Supplying, Installation, Testing and commissioning of Intelligent Water Level Monitoring Instruments (WLM) for two years for identified Important/Major bridges under Dy. CE/BR-Line/Malgaoan. Approximate Tender Value: ₹1,90,59,101.7; Bid Security: ₹2,45,300.00; Tender No.: DCBL252024MLG: Name of works: Under water inspection in identified bridges by ROV. Approximate Tender Value: ₹66,41,899.23; Bid Security: ₹1,32,800.00; Tender No.: DCBL262024MLG: Name of works: Portable Train Detection and Alarm system in identified bridges of N.F. Railway under Dy. CE/BR-Line/Malgaoan. Approximate Tender Value: ₹52,80,000.00; Bid Security: ₹1,05,600.00; Tender No.: DCBL272024MLG: Name of works: Assessment of fatigue load at 09 major bridges (Br. No. 44UP, 73UP, 32UP, 3UP, 40UP, 59DN, 209, 293DN & 270DN) by doing instrumentation and REM analysis as per relevant Railway codes. Approximate Tender Value: ₹5,45,69,997.00; Bid Security: ₹4,22,900.00; Tender No.: DCBL282024MLG: Name of works: Assessment of the strength of the Pier & Abutment with RDSO standard of 25T loading-2008 standard PSC Slab. Approximate Tender Value: ₹4,15,900.00; Date of closing of Tender: 21-10-2024 at 15.00 hrs. Date of Opening of Tenders: 21-10-2024 at 15.05 hrs. at office of the Deputy Chief Engineer/Bridge-Line/Malgaoan, Guwahati-781011 (Assam). For Details please visit [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
Dy. CE/BR-Line/Malgaoan

**ENGINEERINGWORKS OVER LUMDING DIVISION**  
Tender Notice No.: 29 of 2024, Dated: 27-09-2024; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: DENGHY-17-2024; Name of Work: At New Guwahati-Special repairs to Railway staff quarters of running staff under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/ New Guwahati (100 Units); Tender Value: ₹1,48,33,870.96/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,24,200/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-18-2024; Name of Work: At Guwahati-Repairing of station building, platform surface, PP shed, repairing and painting of CDO office building, repairing of road from parcel office to CDO office, repairs to leaky roof of AC Sick line shed and other miscellaneous works at New Guwahati. Tender Value: ₹1,35,47,958.70/-; Earnest Money: ₹2,17,700/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-19-2024; Name of Work: At Pandu-Through repairs to 32 unit Type-II DS building No. 67, 69, 70, 38 (All 8 units) at Rest camp (32) units under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/Pandu. Tender Value: ₹59,95,905.31/-; Earnest Money: ₹1,19,900/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-20-2024; Name of Work: At New Guwahati-Maintenance of service building under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/New Guwahati. Tender Value: ₹67,93,266.64/-; Earnest Money: ₹1,35,900/-; Tender No.: DENGHY-21-2024; Name of Work: Repair work at Kamakhya station & nearby service building like CDO office, pitline, sickline, laundry room etc. Tender Value: ₹79,58,014.85/-; Earnest Money: ₹1,59,200/-; Date & time of closing/opening of tender at 13:00 hrs. on 21-10-2024. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
Divisional Engineer/GHY, Malgaon

**NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, PATNAGARH**  
Ph. No.-06658-222247 e-mail- nac\_ptg@yahoo.co.in web-site- [www.nacpatnagarh.in](http://www.nacpatnagarh.in)  
C-689 Letter No. ....1882/ Dated: ..26/09/2024  
1 Contingend Financial Bid  
For providing smooth sanitation services, the Tender committee has decided that each bidder must quote his rate not less than 3.85% and not more than 7% on T & P and Contractor Profit only, unless bid shall be rejected. Also, wrong computation in finance bid will be liable for rejection.  
For reference Estimate is enclosed.  
Detastimate for sweeping of streets, collection of garbage, cleaning of drains & lifting of garbage from Ward No. 1 to 15 of Patnagarh NAC  
Population as per 2011 census 21024  
Current Population (Approx.) 27000  
Total nos. of labour required (88) Nos.  
Length of drain 25km  
Length of Road 38 km  
No. of Households 5528  
No. of commercial units, Govt. and private institutions  
Sl No Details Required Labour Rate No. of Days Cost (In Rs)  
1 Sweeping of Road (Lane/By-lane) as per requirement, bush cutting and shifting of dead animals, transportation of solid waste. (Un-Skilled) 4 500.00 1 2,000.00  
2 Labour (Semi-Skilled) Supervisor 4 500.00 1 2,000.00  
3 Labour (Semi-Skilled) Driver 4 550.00 1 2,200.00  
3 TOTAL 88 40,200.00  
4 EFF (13%) 526  
5 ESI (3.25%) 106.5  
6 Tools & Plants and Contractor profit (5% + 5% = 10%) 4,620  
7 Vehicle (Tractor) with driver along with fuel 1 851.20  
Tractor (Detained hour 8 hrs & working hours 6 hours) @ 357.55 per hour.  
8 GRAND TOTAL (Per Day) 59,333.70  
9 Annual cost 365 Days 2,16,56,801.00  
Executive Officer NAC Patnagarh  
OIPR-13102/110005/2425

# South Korea unveils its most powerful missile

**AP ■ SEOUL**  
South Korea unveiled its most powerful ballistic missile and other weapons that could target North Korea during a massive Armed Forces Day ceremony on Tuesday, as the South's president warned the North's regime would collapse if it attempts to use nuclear weapons. South Korea's weapons displays and warning against North Korea came after its northern rival recently rose regional animosities by disclosing its uranium-enrichment facility and test-bed missiles ahead of the US presidential election in November. "If North Korea attempts to use nuclear weapons, it will face the resolute and overwhelming response of our military and the (South Korea)-US alliance,"

President Yoon Suk Yeol told thousands of troops gathered at a military airport near Seoul. "That day will be the end of the North Korean regime." "The North Korean regime must abandon the delusion that nuclear weapons will protect them," Yoon said. During the ceremony, the South Korean military displayed about 340 military equipment and weapons systems. Among them was its most powerful Hyunmoo-5 ballistic missile, which observers say is capable of carrying an 8-ton conventional warhead that can penetrate deep into the earth and destroy underground bunkers in North Korea. It was the first time for South Korea to disclose that missile. The United States flew a long-range B-1B bomber during the

ceremony in an apparent demonstration of its security commitment to its Asian ally. South Korea also flew some of its most advanced fighter jets. Later Tuesday, South Korea paraded its troops and weapons through the streets of Seoul, the country's capital, as part of efforts to boost military morale and demonstrate its deterrence capabilities against potential North Korean aggressions. Since taking office in 2022, Yoon, a conservative, has put a stronger military alliance with the US and an improved trilateral Seoul-Washington-Tokyo security cooperation at the centre of his security policies to cope with North Korea's advancing nuclear programme. In recent years, North Korea has performed a provocative run of missile tests and threatened to use

nuclear weapons preemptively in potential conflicts with South Korea and the United States. Last month, concerns about North Korea's bomb programme further grew after it published photos of a secretive facility to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. It was North Korea's first unveiling of a uranium-enrichment facility since it showed one at the country's main Yongbyon nuclear complex to visiting American scholars in 2010. South Korean officials say North Korea will likely try to further dial up tensions with high-profile weapons tests ahead of the US election to increase its leverage in future diplomacy with a new US government. Experts say North Korea likely thinks an expanded nuclear arsenal would help it win bigger US concessions like extensive sanctions relief.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
OPEN TENDER NOTICE  
The Divisional Engineer-I, Northern Railway, DRM Office, Delhi Division, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055, for and on behalf of the President of India invites sealed open electronic tenders for under noted work-  
S. No Name of Work Approx Cost of Work Earnest Money to be deposited Completion period Date of opening  
01 Providing and fixing single piece spring inserted reusable seize nut for size M-25 lock nut M-25 for fish plate bolt over D.I. Division. (Cost is inclusive of GST) Rs 8,171,136.40 Rs 1,63,400 12 Months 22.10.2024  
The tender is to be submitted through railway website <https://ireps.gov.in> The tenders can be submit on website up to 15:00 hrs. on 22.10.2024 and shall be opened there after. No: 128-W/SR/DEN-C/NIT-15-2024-25-WC Date:- 01.10.2024  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 3048/24

**E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2024**  
E-Auction programme for Sale of Railway Scrap material under jurisdiction of Dy.CMM/NFR/New Jalpaiguri for the month of OCT 2024 is hereby fixed as under:  
SN Month Date Fixed  
1 OCTOBER 2024 07-10-2024  
Interested bidders are advised to bid through IREPS website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) for registration, training, participation in e-auction. Dy. CMM, New Jalpaiguri  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**GOVERNMENT OF GOA**  
National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme. Directorate of Health Services, Campal, Panaji, Goa 403 001.  
Phone: 0832-2225837, Fax 0832-2222037 Email: [nvbdepgoa@gmail.com](mailto:nvbdepgoa@gmail.com)  
No: DHS/NVBDCP/CYP/2024-25/636 Dated: 17/10/24

**TENDER NOTICE**  
Sealed tenders are hereby invited by National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme for supply of Cyphenothrine 5% EC (300 litres).  
The tender forms with terms and conditions may be purchased from the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme, Directorate of Health Services, Campal, Panaji Goa on all working days during office hours on payment of Rs. 1000/- (Rupees one thousand only) (Non-refundable) till 03.00 pm on or before 14/10/2024. The tenders will be opened on 17/10/2024 at 3.30 pm in the office of NVBDCP- DHS.  
(Dr. Kalpana Mahatme)  
D1/Adv/991/2024 Dy. Director, NVBDCP, DHS

**ELECTRICAL TRD WORKS AT ALIPURDIA DIVISION**  
E-Tender Notice No. AP-EL-TRD-05-24-25-RT2. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. AP-EL-TRD-05-24-25-RT2. Name of work: Electrical TRD works in connection with OHE modification work for provision of additional goods line at Dhugguri for simultaneous loading, unloading and handling and holding two rakes at a time. Tender Value: ₹90,49,521.03/- Earnest Money: ₹1,81,000/- Date & time of closing of tender: 15.00 hrs. of 21-10-2024 & opening at 15.30 hrs. of 21-10-2024 at DRM/Elect (TRD)/Alipurduar Jn. office. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
Sr DEE/TRD, OP & GS, Alipurduar Jn.  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
DECLARATION ABOUT CRIMINAL CASES  
(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)  
Name and address of candidate: RABIA KIDWAI at 1081-P, Sector-47, Gurgaon District Gurgaon-122108  
Name of political party: AAM AADMI PARTY  
Name of Election: Haryana Legislative Assembly Election- 2024  
Name of Constituency: 79 -NUH  
I, RABIA KIDWAI (name of candidate), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:  
(A) Pending criminal cases  
Sl. No. Name of Court Case No. and dated Status of case(s) Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)  
1. SAKET COURT DELHI C.C No. 41418/2019 PENDING 2019 SECTION OF U/P 138 INDIAN PENAL CODE ACT  
(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences  
Sl. No. Name of Court & No. date(s) of order(s) Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed Maximum Punishment Imposed  
NA NOT APPLICABLE NOT APPLICABLE NOT APPLICABLE  
\*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

**verka**  
Har Din Da, Har Din Da  
THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD. SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX No. 0172-5041812,66  
Notice Inviting Tender [www.verka.coop](http://www.verka.coop)  
e-Tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-  
Sr. No. Name of Work/Item Period/Tentative Qty  
1. For Verka Mohali Dairy Hiring of agency for packaging of dahi pouch/ cups/ matkas, lassi pouches, kheer cups, ghee, paneer and yoghurt packaging and recombination of white butter and reconstitution of SMP. As per day to day requirement of Market  
2. For Verka Bathinda Dairy Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Wifi & LAN networking infrastructure complete in all respects for Verka Bathinda Dairy. 01 complete job  
3. For Verka Ludhiana Dairy a) Hiring of passenger vehicles Innova crysta without driver for minimum running of 2000 kms per month on lump sum basis. 01 No. b) Pest control service, DIET (GADVASU) and MCCs which include control of flies, mosquitoes, lizards, rodent etc. Annual/One job  
4. For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Lifting/Sale of Paneer whey from Verka Jalandhar Dairy. Annual b) Labour contract for loading/unloading of milk products (SMP/WMP, Dairy Whitener, White Butter, Ghee, Pio etc) and empty tins, cartons, jars etc. Annual  
5. For Verka Sangur Dairy Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Wi-Fi, LAN networking infrastructure complete in all respects for Verka Sangur Dairy. -  
6. For Verka Cattle Feed Plant, Bhatian (Khanna) a) Transportation of Molasses from The Budhneval and The Morinda cooperative sugar mills Ltd. to Verka cattle feed plant, Bhatian (Khanna). Annual b) Disposal of old bardana (Jute & P.P Bags). Annual  
NOTE:  
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. [www.verka.coop](http://www.verka.coop) & e Tendering portal i.e. [eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://eproc.punjab.gov.in).  
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.  
NA/12/25746/2023/38151 Dated CHD : 10/10/2024 Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

# India's manufacturing growth hits eight months low in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector growth fell to an eight-month low in September amid softer increase in factory production, sales and new export orders, a monthly survey said on Tuesday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from 57.5 in August to 56.5 in September, registering the weakest pace of growth since January. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "Momentum in India's manufacturing sector softened in September from the very strong growth in the summer months. "Output and new orders grew at a slower pace, and the deceleration in export demand growth was



especially evident as the new export orders PMI was the lowest since March 2023," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said. The September PMI data revealed a mild setback in manufacturing growth across India. For the third straight month, rates of expansion in factory production and sales receded. Morevoer, international orders rose at the slowest pace in a year-and-a-half.

On the price front, there were moderate increases in input costs and selling charges. As a result of rising purchasing prices, as well as greater labour costs and favourable demand conditions, Indian manufacturers marginally increased their charges in September. According to Bhandari, input prices rose at a faster rate in September, while factory gate price inflation eased,

intensifying the compression on manufacturers' margin. "Weaker profit growth might have an impact on companies' hiring demand, as the pace of employment growth slowed for a third month," Bhandari noted. Hiring growth also receded in September, reflecting a reduction in the number of part-time and temporary workers. Going ahead, the overall level of business confidence fell to its lowest since April 2023. Around 23 per cent of Indian manufacturers forecast output growth in the year ahead, while the remaining firms predict no change. The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

# Car sales fluctuate in September

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian automotive market has showcased a diverse performance among key players in September, reflecting varying consumer preferences and market conditions. Talking about the stats, Mahindra & Mahindra reported a notable 24% surge in SUV sales, achieving 51,062 units compared to 41,267 units in the same month last year. The company also saw overall sales, including commercial vehicles (CVs) and three-wheelers, rise 16% year-on-year to 87,839 units. As the festive season approaches, Mahindra is also set to launch the much-anticipated Thar RoXX on October 3. Conversely, JSW MG Motor India experienced an 8% decline in retail sales, with only 4,588 units sold compared to 5,003 units in September 2022. The automaker noted that new energy vehicles (NEVs) accounted for 49% of their total sales, emphasizing a shift in consumer interest amidst market challenges.



Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported a 14% increase in wholesales, reaching 26,847 units, up from 23,590 units last year. The brand's success is attributed to significant growth in its SUV, MPV, and small car segments, bolstered by strategic operational improvements that reduced waiting periods for popular models. Hyundai Motor India faced a 10% dip in total sales, down to 64,201 units from 71,641 units in the previous year. Domestic dispatches also fell by 6%, with exports down 25%. The

company noted that SUVs now comprise 70% of its overall sales and introduced new models to attract consumers during the festive season. In addition the domestic dispatch of vehicles to dealers saw a 6 per cent dip to 51,101 units last month from 54,241 units in the year-ago period. Finally, Maruti Suzuki India showcased a slight 2% increase in total sales, reaching 1,84,727 units, up from 1,81,343 units a year prior. Sales of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tour S and WagonR, however, declined to 60,480 units as compared to 68,551 units in the year-ago month. However, domestic passenger vehicle sales declined by 4%, despite growth in utility vehicle sales. Exports showed positive momentum, rising to 27,728 units from 22,511 units last September. Overall, the fluctuating sales figures reflect a complex landscape in the Indian automotive market, influenced by consumer trends, economic conditions, and the approaching festive season.

# Andhra Pradesh notifies new liquor policy

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has notified a new liquor policy, allowing private retailers to sell spirits on the lines of Haryana and others with the state expecting to rake in Rs 5,500 crore revenue. In a complete overhaul of excise policy based on best practices from other states, Andhra Pradesh has decided retail sales of liquor through 3,736 notified private shops across the state. The new policy will take effect from October 12, 2024, as per the notification dated September 30, 2024. The permission to sell IMFL (Indian-made foreign liquor) and FL (foreign liquor) will be granted to private persons or entities through a selection process, the notification said. The period of licence for



selling IMFL and FL by shops shall be from October 12, 2024 to September 30, 2026, it added. Out of the total number of shops to be licensed in 2024-26, as many as 3,396 will be in the open category, while 340 shops will be reserved for allocation to 'Geetha Kulalu'

(a toddy tapping community) with a view to empower them and promote equity and social justice. The selection process for granting licence will be through a draw of lots and an applicant can apply for more than one shop. There shall be no restriction on the number

of shop licences a person can hold, it added. Applicants will have to deposit a non-refundable fee of Rs 2 lakh for each shop. As per the notification, the retail excise tax (RET) ranges from Rs 50 lakh for locality with population of 10,000 to Rs 85 lakh per annum for a

municipality or municipal corporation having population above 5 lakh during the fiscal 2024-2025. It will be increased by 10 per cent for 2025-26. The overall exercise is estimated to result in the state government raking in Rs 5,500 crore. The RET per annum shall be paid in six equal advance instalments as applicable for each year during the licence period 2024-26. As per the notification, the retailer margin will be 20 per cent on issue price across all categories of IMFL and FL, including beer, wine and RTDs (ready to drink). For the premium stores, the notification said, "In order to provide an enhanced and high-end retail experience within the state of Andhra Pradesh, a total of 12 Premium Store Licenses shall be granted as a separate

category." These premium stores shall be strategically located across major municipal corporation cities namely Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Kakinada, Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapur or any other city as notified by the state government from time to time, it added. A cabinet sub-committee of the state government had studied the excise policies of states such as Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and also took extensive feedback from key stakeholders, before framing the latest policy. It had assessed the performance of the existing policy with respect to public health impact and other critical metrics including revenue generation efficiency, the state government said.

# SEBI to enhance F&O regulations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi is expected to take measures regarding the Futures and Options (F&O) segment very soon, in a bid to enhance investor protection, its senior official said on Tuesday. In addition, Sebi has urged the government to introduce tax breaks for subscribers of municipal bonds, which are crucial for funding infrastructure development. The regulator will make a case for a tax break for municipal bonds during a meeting with the finance commission, the regulator's whole time member Ashwani Bhatia said here. Since 1997, municipalities have raised Rs 2,700 crore through bonds for infrastructure projects. Talking about F&O, Bhatia said, "Sebi is very soon going to do something about F&O. Study has come (recently)". The regulator, in its consultation paper recently, proposed seven measures to tighten the rules for index derivatives-- revise the minimum contract size and require upfront collection of option premiums intra-day monitoring of position limits, rationalisation of strike prices, removal of calendar spread benefit on expiry day and increase in near contract expiry margin. If implemented, these measures



would help in improving risk management and increase transparency in the derivatives market. In its consultation paper, the regulator had suggested to revise the minimum contract size for index derivatives in two phases, considering market growth. In phase 1, the minimum contract value at the time of introduction should be between Rs 15 lakh and Rs 20 lakh. After six months, phase 2 will raise the minimum value to between Rs 20 lakh and Rs 30 lakh. The current minimum contract size of Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh was last set in 2015. A recent study by Sebi revealed that 93 per cent of over 1 crore individual F&O traders incurred average losses of around Rs 2 lakh per trader (inclusive of transaction costs) during the three years from FY22 to FY24. The aggregate losses of individual traders exceeded Rs 1.8 lakh crore over the three-year period between FY22 and FY24.

# CAG: Development of hinterland essential for India's goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Without the development of hinterland, India cannot become Viksit Bharat or a developed nation by 2047, Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu said on Tuesday. Noting that decentralisation of power has not taken to the extent it should have happened, he said, gram sabha or rural bodies are yet to get its due importance in the federal structure. "Without the development of grassroots level at the local level, we cannot achieve

Viksit Bharat. More than 50 per cent people live in rural area, and until their governance, their development, their administration, their resources are not augmented, we will not be able to reach (Viksit Bharat goal). As our prime minister says that if everyone take one step, we will have 1.4 billion steps... That is why Jan Bhagidari is important," he said. There are about 2,60,000 panchayats and 7,000 urban local bodies in the country. He emphasised the need for strengthening of local bodies

so that efficiency of government schemes are achieved and the sooner it happens, the better it is for the country. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be achieved without strengthening local bodies, he said, adding, that accounting and auditing play important roles in flow of funds to the local bodies. With regard to urban local bodies, the CAG said, municipal corporations cannot be given permission to raise resources from market if they have not followed proper accounting norms.

# Lenders recover ₹ 3.5 lakh crore through IBC: IBBI Chairperson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lenders have recovered Rs 3.5 lakh crore through resolution of stressed assets under the insolvency process in the last eight years, a period during which NCLT approved 1,000 resolution plans, IBBI Chairperson Ravi Mital said on Tuesday. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) provides for a market-linked and time-bound resolution of stressed assets. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) are key



institutions in the IBC ecosystem. In the last two years, NCLT has cleared 450 resolution plans. This accounts for 45 per cent of the 1,000 such plans approved in the last eight years, Mital said at a function to mark the eighth foundation day of the IBBI. According to him, Rs 3.5 lakh crore has been recovered

directly by lenders, of which Rs 1 lakh crore was in the last two years. Under the IBC, the recovery is about 84 per cent of the assets' fair value, as per official data. Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said a continuously improving and evolving bankruptcy system is important for economic growth.

# Digi Yatra to be made available in regional, international languages

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Digi Yatra, which seeks to provide seamless movement at airport check points, will be made available in regional and international languages, according to a senior official. The facility is now available at 24 airports and is expected to be rolled out at 4-5 more airports in the coming months. Digi Yatra Foundation CEO Suresh Khadakbhavi on Tuesday said a pilot project is likely by June next year for connecting two countries with Digi Yatra. Under the pilot project, foreign citizens will be able to use Digi Yatra. Speaking at the CAPA India Digital Aviation Summit in the national capital, Khadakbhavi said a campaign will be started to sensitise passengers about the facility. While Digi Yatra is slowly gaining traction, concerns have been expressed in various quarters about the privacy of data of the passengers. He said Digi Yatra will be made



available in regional and international languages. Based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), Digi Yatra provides for contactless, seamless movement of passengers at various check points at airports. A not-for-profit entity, the foundation is the nodal agency for Digi Yatra, which was introduced in December 2022. The shareholders of the foundation are Airports Authority of India (AAI), Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL), Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL), Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (HIAL) and Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL).

# Jet fuel prices cut, LPG hiked



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jet fuel, or ATF, price was on Tuesday reduced by 6.3 per cent to its lowest level this year, while the rate of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants was hiked by Rs 48.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends. Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price was cut by Rs 5,883 per kilolitre, or 6.29 per cent, to Rs 87,597.22 per kl in the national capital, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

This is the lowest price of jet fuel this year. The price reduction, the second in a month, will help ease the burden of airlines for whom fuel makes up for almost 40 per cent of the operating cost. Prices were on September 1 cut by Rs 4,495.5 per kl, or 4.58 per cent. The ATF rate in Mumbai was reduced to Rs 81,866.13 per kl on Tuesday from Rs 87,432.78 previously. Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes. Alongside, oil firms increased the price of commercial LPG

# Reliance Infra approves US \$ 350 million fundraise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Board of Directors of Reliance Infrastructure Limited (Reliance Infrastructure) on Tuesday approved raising of funds upto US\$ 350 million (INR 2,930 cr) to VFSI Holdings Pte. Limited, an affiliate of Värde Investment Partners, LP, a leading global alternative investment firm. The FCCBs will be unsecured and will have ultra-low cost coupon of 5% p.a. with a long maturity of 10 years. The FCCBs will be convertible into Equity Shares at INR 330 per share. The Board of Directors also approved an Employees Stock Option Scheme (ESOS) for all employees of the Company and its subsidiaries. ESOS provides for grant of upto 2,60,00,000 fully paid-up equity shares of INR 10 each, representing approximately 5% of the Company's fully diluted capital.

## INBRIEF

### PARAMJEET SINGH GETS WARM FAREWELL

PATIALA: Er Paramjeet Singh, Director Generation, Punjab State Power Corporation Limited was given farewell on his retirement on Monday.



### MOU BETWEEN CCRH AND SRMIST



Central Council for Research in Homeopathy has officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST). The partnership aims to enhance collaborative research efforts by leveraging the advanced infrastructure of SRMIST.

### 5000 LIGHTS TO BE INSTALLED IN NARELA

NARELA: On Sunday a ceremony was held in the Comfort Zone to commemorate the birth anniversary of martyr Bhagat Singh. The event's organizer Dheeran Maan shared that hundreds of tractors and vehicles formed a rally.



### GNDU 'B' ZONE ZONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL CONCLUDED



AMRITSAR: Zonal Youth Festival of Zone 'B' of the Guru Nanak Dev University was concluded in Dasmesh Auditorium of the University.

### REC SIGNS MOU WITH GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN

NEW DELHI: REC Limited has signed MoU with Govt of Rajasthan, Department of Finance during the Rising Rajasthan Investors meet today. As per MoU, REC will provide Rs. 50,000 Crore annually to finance projects for a period of six years.



# MANE LEADS AIR RIFLE DOMINANCE WITH DOUBLE GOLD

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
It was double delight for Parth Rakesh Mane as he was crowned junior world champion in 10m air rifle and also claimed a team gold to lead India's impressive performance at the ongoing ISSF Junior World Championship in Lima, Peru. In a thrilling 24-shot final, the 16-year-old Mane overcame a field oozing class with consummate ease, shooting 250.7 to edge out reigning junior Asian champion Huang Liwanlin of China by 0.7 points. Braden Peiser of the USA took the bronze medal. Paris Olympic silver medallist Victor Lindgren of Sweden was fourth while reigning double junior world champion Romain Aufrere was sixth. Parth's own compatriots, the in-form Ajay Malik and the seasoned-at-15 Abhinav Shaw finished fifth and seventh

respectively. Ajay went down in shoot-off to Lindgren to finish with 186.7 while Abhinav bowed out in seventh with 144.2. Mane also won the men's team event alongside Ajay Malik and Abhinav Shaw. India's third gold of the day came when Gautami Bhanot, Sambhavi Kshirsagar and Anoushka Thakur also picked up the junior women's 10m air rifle team title. Earlier in the 62-strong qualification round, Malik secured second place with a score of 628.8, followed by Mane in fourth with 627.7, and Shaw in sixth with 627.0 after 60 shots. Their combined total of 1883.5 easily surpassed teams from the USA (1877.6) and Germany (1873.9) to win the team gold. Two other Indians in the fray Umamahesh Maddineni (625.5) and Talwar Singh (625.2) finished 13th and 14th respectively.

## INDIA SURGES AT LIMA JUNIOR WORLDS



Three Indians also made the junior women's air rifle final but missed out on individual medals. Gautami Bhanot finished second in the 90-strong qualification field with a score of 634.7 as China's Wang Zifei topped with a junior world record score of 635.7. Shambhavi Kshirsagar finished fourth (632.6) and Ojasvi Thakur (631.4) qualified in fifth place. Anoushka Thakur was 17th with 627.5, while Saumya Khedkar was 20th with 627.4. Gautami then finished fourth in the final, going down to the bronze-winning US athlete by 0.2 after the 20th shot. She finished with a score of 209.3. Shambhavi (188.4) was fifth and Ojasvi (146.1) bowed out in seventh place. Gautami and Shambhavi, however, combined effectively with Anoushka Thakur to clinch the team competition, bossing USA with a junior world team record score of 1894.8. Norway was third. Indians also competed in the junior men's and women's skeet competition at the shotgun ranges but couldn't reach the finals. Gurfateh Singh Sandhu finished 29th with a score of 112 in qualification, while Bhavtegh Singh Gill shot the same score in the junior men's skeet to finish 31st on countback. Harmehar Singh Lally was 44th with 107. In junior women's skeet, Mansi Raghuvanshi was the best placed Indian in shotgun. Her score of 109 giving her 8th place as she missed out on qualification by a point. Mufaddal Dessawala and Shivani Raikwar shot scores of 98 each to finish in 30th and 31st positions respectively. With five gold medals till date, India continues to lead the overall medal tally at the championship.



## Ronaldo scores winner for Al-Nassr in AFC Champions League Elite

**AP ■ RIYADH**  
Cristiano Ronaldo scored the winning goal as Al-Nassr of Saudi Arabia defeated Al-Rayyan of Qatar 2-1 in the AFC Champions League Elite group stage on Monday. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner missed Al-Nassr's opening 1-1 draw against Al-Shorta of Iraq two weeks ago because of a viral infection. On Monday, he had a goal ruled out for offside, but his shot into the top corner with 14 minutes remaining in Riyadh proved to be decisive. Former Liverpool forward Sadio Mane headed home for Al-Nassr just before the break and the points seemed secure when Ronaldo added a second. Al-Rayyan came back in the game three minutes from the end when Roger Guedes scored from close range. Al-Nassr, seeking a first Asian

title, hung on, however. Riyad Mahrez scored his first goal of the season as Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia won at Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates 2-0 for a second straight win. The Algerian attacker, who joined the Jeddah club from Manchester City in 2023, had been struggling for fitness. Mahrez opened the scoring after just three minutes. He ran on to a long pass from defender Roger Ibanez and shot home from inside the area. He returned the favor seven minutes before the break as his corner was headed home powerfully by Ibanez. Elsewhere, Al-Sadd of Qatar defeated Esteghlal of Iran 2-0, whose Tehran rival Persepolis drew with Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan 1-1. The 24 teams are divided into two groups of 12 - one based in the west and one in the east - with the top eight from each progressing to the round of 16.

## HI announces 40 probables for national camp to prepare for home series against Germany

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Hockey India on Tuesday announced a 40-member core probable squad for the senior men's national coaching camp in Bengaluru to prepare for the upcoming two-match home series against world champions Germany. The team for the two matches against Germany to be played at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium here on October 23 and 24 will be selected from the camp. The camp will run from October 1 to 19. The team heads into this camp following their recent successes that include a second consecutive bronze medal at the Paris Olympics and a successful title defence at the Asian Champions Trophy in China. The focus will be on honing



skills of the players and strategies during matches, a Hockey India release said. India captain Harmanpreet Singh said the camp will help in ensuring that the team is well-prepared and in peak condition before facing Germany. "Playing against the world champions is a tremendous opportunity for us to showcase our abilities, and having an exciting mix of players in this camp will allow us to improve our strategies and build the cohesion needed," he said. "Each player in this core group brings unique strengths and varying levels of experience and we'll be focusing on how to harness these individual talents and help us grow as players. "Our objective is to create an environment where everyone pushes each other and by the end of this camp, we want to be an even stronger and better coordinated team."

- Goalkeepers:** 1. Krishan Bahadur Pathak; 2. Pawan; 3. Suraj Karkera; 4. Mohith
- Defenders:** 1. Jarmanpreet Singh; 2. Amit Rohidas; 3. Harmanpreet Singh; 4. Sumit; 5. Sanjay; 6. Jugraj Singh; 7. Amandeep Lakra; 8. Nilam Sanjeev Xess; 9. Varun Kumar; 10. Yashdeep Siwach; 11. Dipsan Tirkey; 12. Mandeep Mor
- Midfielders:** 1. Rajkumar Pal; 2. Shamsheer Singh; 3. Manpreet Singh; 4. Hardik Singh; 5. Vivek Sagar Prasad; 6. Nilakanta Sharma; 7. Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh; 8. Mohammed Raheel Mauseen; 9. Vishnukant Singh; 10. Rajinder Singh; 11. Poovanna CB
- Forwards:** 1. Abhishek; 2. Sukhjeet Singh; 3. Lalit Kumar Upadhyay; 4. Mandeep Singh; 5. Gurjant Singh; 6. Angad Bir Singh; 7. Aditya Lalage; 8. Bobby Singh Dhami; 9. Sudeep Chirmako; 10. S. Karthi; 11. Maninder Singh; 12. Shilanand Lakra; 13. Dilpreet Singh.

## Mumbai City FC hope happy homecoming against high-flying Bengaluru FC

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**  
Mumbai City FC would look to notch their first win of the Indian Super League (ISL) this season and move up the points table when they face high-flying Bengaluru FC in a clash between two heavyweights here on Wednesday. Bengaluru have made a commanding start, winning all their three outings so far to sit atop the points table, while Mumbai are surprisingly placed at 11th after two away matches, with just one point. Mumbai have found the back of the net in their previous eight matches at home and are looking to equal their longest such ISL run, having done so in nine meetings between October 2022 and February 2023. Interestingly, they have also won their previous three matches versus Bengaluru. Bengaluru have scored one-third of their goals in the competition this year within the opening 15 minutes, the highest such rate for any team so far. Mumbai City head coach Petr Kratky said his team needs to avoid conceding goals from set-pieces. "We need to get better in the area where it's hurting us. And, we have to stop it as soon as possible because, in two games, we conceded five goals and four goals from set-pieces, which is unacceptable for me," he said.



"We have to keep working and keep going. We need to analyse and identify what's (going) wrong and have to find why. The 'why' is very important. "If we know why we're conceding, why we're losing, or why we're not getting the points, then we can figure out what to fix. So, this is our and my first goal." On the other hand, BFC head coach Gerard Zaragoza expressed his happiness at the impressive start but admitted that they cannot afford to slow down yet. "Let me enjoy. Three games, three wins, and we are happy. But it's too early," he noted. "Mumbai City FC will be there, and Odisha FC will be there. We are going to Mumbai, and it will be difficult there." The two sides have faced each other on 16 occasions in the tournament, with Mumbai winning on eight instances, as against seven victories for Bengaluru. One match ended in a draw. Meanwhile, Bengaluru FC legend and former India captain Sunil Chhetri has netted nine times versus Mumbai City in the competition. He will be aiming to become the first Indian to score on 10 occasions against a single opponent in the ISL.



## Pegula out of China Open after a 4th round loss to Badosa

**AP ■ BEIJING**  
Paula Badosa reeled off 11 of the last 12 games in a 6-4, 6-0 victory over US Open finalist Jessica Pegula at the China Open on Tuesday to reach her eighth career quarter-final at a WTA 1000-level event. From 3-1 down in the opening set, former No. 2-ranked Badosa dominated in her first-ever win over third-ranked Pegula. "She's one of the players I never want to face -- she's very solid, hits very flat, changes very well direction," said Badosa, who was 0-3 previously against Pegula. "I prepared myself for a battle, but I think today everything worked pretty well. "Every point was very important for me, especially against Jessica, because she can come back at any moment." Badosa next faces 35-year-old Chinese player Zhang Shuai, who continued her resurgence with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Magdalena Frech of Poland. Zhang entered the China Open on a 24-match losing streak and ranked No. 595, but she's yet to drop a set in four

matches this week. That includes eliminating US Open semi-finalist Emma Navarro in straight sets for her first win over a Top 10 player in two years. Zhang is now in her first women's tour quarter-final since Tokyo in 2022, and her first at a WTA 1000 tournament since Cincinnati in the same year. Later Tuesday, No. 14-ranked Anna Kalinskaya was scheduled to meet Yulia Starodubtseva of Ukraine, before the marquee women's match of the day between four-time major winner Naomi Osaka and sixth-ranked Coco Gauff. It will be the first meeting between the two Grand Slam champions in over two years, with the head-to-head series tied at 2-2. On the men's side, Carlos Alcaraz was playing fifth-ranked Daniil Medvedev in the first semi-final, with the Spaniard holding a 5-2 advantage in their head-to-head history. Defending champion and top-ranked Janner Sinner was set to face No.

# Women's soccer on a high as new Asian Champions League launches

**AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR**  
Women's soccer is on a high in Asia after some World Cup performances that captivated nations, raising expectations for the new AFC Champions League. North Korea's win over Japan in the women's Under-20 World Cup last month has the women's game back in focus across the continent. Australia's run to the semi-finals at the Women's World Cup it co-hosted last year with New Zealand drew record crowds and attention to the talent in the region. Now, the continental club championship has been revamped and the group stage of the Women's Asian Champions League launches this week with the Urawa Red Diamond Ladies flying the flag for Japan. The Reds defeated South

Korea's Incheon Red Angels in the final of the Women's Club Championship in May, a pilot tournament for the AFC's Women's Champions League, and would like nothing more than to repeat that success. "To have two Asian nations in the (under-20) World Cup final is good for Asia and good for us, too, as we have rivals to compete with," Urawa coach Naoki Kusunose said. "We are grateful for this new challenge in club soccer - and we want to move on to the next step and win the Women's AFC Champions League." The 12-team tournament, including four teams that advanced through a preliminary stage, is divided into three groups of four. Urawa kicks off against India's Odisha on Thursday and will go on to face Ho Chi Minh City and Taiwanese team Taichung Blue Whale.



The Group C games will take place in Vietnam as each group is played in a single venue over nine days, with the top two advancing to the quarter-finals next March along with the two best third-placed teams. The semi-finals and final will be held in May of 2025. Australia's Melbourne City is in Group B and kicks off

against Iran's Bam Khatoon in Thailand. Melbourne City who will also face Kaya-Iloilo of the Philippines and Thailand's College of Asian Scholars. "For women's football in general in Asia, it's a great opportunity," Melbourne City coach Michael Matricciani said. "To be in the inaugural campaign, it's an honor for us representing Australia, and also an opportunity for silverware and to test ourselves against the best in Asia." Incheon Red Angels are in Group A along with Sabah of Malaysia, China's Wuhan Jiangda and Abu Dhabi Country Club from the United Arab Emirates. The Asian Football Confederation has confirmed that the champion will receive at least USD 1.3 million in prize money. "We are confident that the

competition will empower women in Asian football, contributing to gender equality and breaking down societal barriers, to make a positive impact on the growth of the women's game," AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa said in a statement. With varying degrees of professionalism in the women's game across the continent, going deep into the tournament can make a difference financially. There are concerns, however, that the new tournament does not reflect the reality of women's soccer in Asia. FIFPro Asia/Oceania, part of a worldwide organization representing 65,000 soccer players, compiled a report on the tournament in August based on 88 players who participated in the pilot Women's Club Championship.

It found that just 62% of players in the tournament identified as professional, less than half earned more than USD 10,000 from soccer per season and a quarter reported that the sport was not their primary income. FIFPro wants more co-operation between the AFC and other stakeholders. "Whilst the potential of the women's game in Asia is immense, we must ensure it is developed in a way that is responsive to the lived realities illustrated in this report," said Kathryn Gill, a FIFPro board member and former Australia international. "This can only occur through establishing a genuine partnership between the AFC, leagues, clubs and players, and not through unilaterally overlayering regulations that are fit for men's competitions onto female competitions.

