



the pioneer

Established 1865

RAIPUR, THURSDAY OCTOBER 31, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

www.dailypioneer.com

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI | LUCKNOW | BHOPAL | BHUBANESWAR | RANCHI | RAIPUR | CHANDIGARH | DEHRADUN | HYDERABAD | VIJAYWADA

INSIDE

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Disengagement complete at LAC

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

Troop disengagement process at two friction points in Depsang Valley and Demchok at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh is complete. Patrolling by India and China will commence soon as agreed upon between the two countries. The two sides will exchange sweets on Thursday on the occasion of Diwali. Giving this information here on Wednesday, sources said the local commanders of the level of Brigadier from both the sides will continue their talks. The two officials will decide on patrolling modalities in the two areas, they said. India on October 21 announced that the two countries have reached an agreement on patrolling. Sources said that verification post-disengagement is in progress and patrolling modalities are to be decided



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

between ground commanders. On October 25, sources here said the disengagement process was likely to get completed by October 28-29. The agreement framework was signed first at the diplomatic level and then military-level talks took place, they had said, adding the nitty-gritty of the agreement was worked on during the Corps Commander-level talks which was signed last week. Adhering to agreements between the two sides, Indian troops then began to pull back equipment to rear locations in these areas. The process follows the agreement firmed up between the two countries on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a major breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

Ties between the two Asian countries had nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. Sources earlier said the areas and patrolling status were expected to be moved back to pre-April 2020 level. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on October 21 had said in New Delhi the agreement was finalised following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020. On October 23, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping endorsed the agreement on patrolling and disengagement along the LAC in eastern Ladakh during their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan in Russia.

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Delhi's 'Anywhere Registration Policy' will end touts' careers!

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has approved a policy titled 'Anywhere Registration Policy', with this the sale and purchase of properties in the National Capital can be registered at any sub-registrar's office. The move will help the thousands who have to visit Sub-Registrar Offices, at different locations, and is also aimed at curbing corruption and harassment. Under the policy, buyers can now take an online appointment at any of the 22 Sub-Registrar Offices, across the National Capital for their property registration. They do not have to physically visit any sub registrar office to register the sale/purchase deed of their properties. The policy will save people from long queues for property registration, thus promoting transparency to help curb corruption. Traditionally, to buy or sell property in Delhi, people need to visit a designated Sub-Registrar Office. Whether it's a property transaction or registering the property through other means, one has to go to the Sub-Registrar Office. However, this process often led to challenges, including long waiting lines and delays in booking appointments at certain offices, while others remained underutilised. All Sub-Registrars in Delhi will now function as joint sub-registrars and their jurisdiction will cover the entirety of Delhi. The new registration software, National Generic Document Registration System, now allows people to upload the necessary documents required for the registration of sale deeds, power of attorney and wills from the comfort of their homes, make payment and take appointments at the sub-registrar office to complete the remaining formalities. "So, anyone residing in Delhi can make an online appointment for property registration at any of the 22



Sub-Registrar Offices in Delhi," said a sub registrar official. According to an estimate, nearly 2,000 documents of 28 different categories are registered at 22 Sub-Registrar offices on a given working day. Some offices get 50 applications and there are a few which receive up to 150 documents in a day. In 2022, 1.25 lakh documents were registered at the offices of the sub registrar. While Janakpuri, Kashmere Gate, Model Town and Pitampura are among the most-crowded offices, Sarojini Nagar, Preet Vihar and Defence Colony witness the least number of applicants. The Delhi government recently appointed joint sub-registrars at six of its most crowded offices to ease the rush. Explaining this, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi said that the 'Anywhere Registration' policy is being introduced to resolve these problems. "Under this policy, anyone seeking property registration can go to any sub-registrar office in Delhi. Residents will no longer be limited to just one designated office for property registration," Atishi added. The government has received a number of complaints and suggestions to improve the functioning of the sub registrar office which is one of the major departments to contribute to the state's financial health.

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Why did Punjab cops give 'studio' to Lawrence?

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH

In a scathing remark, the Punjab and Haryana High Court said that police officers in Punjab provided a studio-like facility to gangster Lawrence Bishnoi to facilitate his interview with a news channel. A Bench of Justices Anupinder Singh Grewal and Lapita Banerji made the remark while hearing a suo motu matter related to inmates' use of mobile phones within jail premises. The High Court ordered further probe, rejecting the report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) and directed the Director General of Police (DGP) to file an affidavit in this regard. "The police officers allowed the criminal to use electronic devices and provided a studio like facility to conduct the interview which tends to glorify crime with the potential to facilitate other crimes including extortion by the criminal and his associates. Involvement of the police officers may suggest receipt of illegal gratification from the criminal or his associates and constitute offences under Prevention of Corruption Act. Therefore, the case requires further investigation," the Court said in an order dated October 28. The Bench made the remarks while questioning the SIT's decision to file a cancellation report in a case related to the interview given by Bishnoi.

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Rash and drunk drivers may lose their licences soon

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to tackle problems regarding road safety and discourage habitual offenders, the Delhi Traffic Police has written to the Secretary of the Delhi Transport Department to cancel the driving licences of owners of vehicles, which have had three violations relating to dangerous driving and drink and driving or more than five relating to normal challans. This comes in the light of a recently released Delhi road crash report of 2023, which revealed that a pedestrian or



a motorist travelling on the roads of the National Capital are among the most prone to road fatalities as data reveals

that they constitute 43 and 38 per cent of such casualties respectively. "In 2023, 622 pedestrians died in 618 fatal crashes caused by all types of vehicles as compared to 629 pedestrian deaths in 2022. The maximum pedestrian casualties were caused due to car, jeep and taxis which have increased to 76 this year compared to 69 in 2022," the report read. It also revealed that two-wheeler riders have emerged as second most fatal crash-prone victims. "The above figure shows 538 fatal crashes of two-wheelers in 2023 as compared to 539 in

2022. These two-wheelers were the worst hit by Heavy Vehicles (HTVs) (89) followed by Car/Jeep/Taxis (66) in 2023," it stated. According to the report, prepared by the traffic police and released by Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora, the number of deaths in road crashes has however decreased from 1,264 in 2022 to 1257 in 2023 despite the increase in the number of vehicle registrations. Moreover, the number of drivers booked under traffic violation has increased from 4,38,052 in 2022 to 6,39,097 in the Year 2023.

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LIGHTS, PEACE PROSPERITY



A view of the Saryu river on Deepawali eve

PTI

SIT to probe tusker deaths

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ UMARIA (MADHYA PRADESH)

Three more elephants have died in the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Madhya Pradesh's Umaria district, taking the toll to seven, while the condition of three other tuskers was serious, a forest official said on Wednesday. The condition of three other pachyderms, he informed. The Forest Minister Ramniwas Rawat has ordered a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the death of the tuskers and asked officials to ensure strict action against culprits. According to BTR's deputy director Prakash Kumar Verma, prime facie, the elephants seemed to have died after consuming Kodo millet, but the exact cause



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

will be known after the autopsy. Four wild elephants were found dead in the BTR on Tuesday while four others, part of the same herd of 13 tuskers, were found ill during routine patrolling, officials earlier said. Verma on Wednesday said so far seven elephants have died. They were part of the herd of 13 pachyderms, he informed. The condition of three other jumbos was serious and they were being treated, while the BTR teams were monitoring the movement of remaining elephants that were part of the herd, he said.

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Bomb Threat Assessment Committee set up

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the multiple hoax bomb threat messages to airlines, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, along with security agencies, has come up with new protocols and guidelines to evaluate bomb threats on Indian airlines, especially those emerging via pseudonymous social media accounts. The guidelines are structured to more effectively distinguish between credible threats and hoaxes. As per the new protocols, the Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC) will establish the identity of the person or organisation making the threat, check their credentials to see if they belong to a terrorist or proscribed outfit, and ascertain the motive and specific socio-economic and political situation within the country or around the globe that could be linked to the threat.

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When brake lights lit up peak traffic chaos

Serpentine snarls were witnessed across the National Capital on Diwali eve

BY SAUMYA SHUKLA

The festival of lights is here, and for thousands of commuters it also means the brake lights of the scores of vehicles in front of them. It was difficult to enumerate the number and location of these serpentine traffic snarls that were witnessed across the National Capital on the eve of Diwali. The roads were jammed, the pavements had been taken over as shops set up display counters outside, and inside buyers stood six rows deep waiting for their turns. Many others made a beeline for malls, to grab just the perfect gifts to make the festival of lights a memorable affair for their loved ones, creating significant delays and inconvenience to commuters. Even as traffic police made arrangements to minimise inconvenience to commuters, social media was rife with tales of commuting woes. Videos on social media showed long lines of vehicles stuck in traffic in Laxmi Nagar, Chirag Dilli, Kashmiri Gate, Kamla Nagar, Lajpat Nagar, Sarojini Market, Karol Bagh, Sarai Kale Khan and several other parts of Delhi.

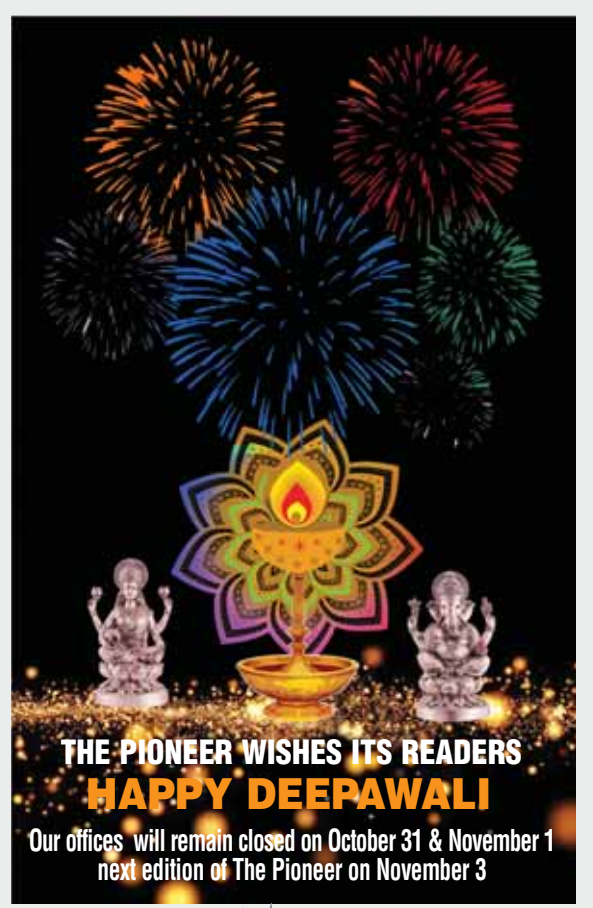


Expressing frustration over the significant jams against the Delhi Traffic Police, a commuter said, "Please deploy your teams on the roads. There is not a single traffic police available on roads in Delhi despite heavy festive rush. From Sheikh Sarai flyover to Moolchand flyover, traffic is choked." Another commuter travelling around the Laxmi Nagar area said, "Delhi is experiencing

significant traffic congestion due to the festive season, causing delays for commuters. A big reason has also been the mismanagement of traffic despite authorities knowing well in advance that such a situation will arise." The other massive congestion reported at Dhaura Kuan, Khajuri Khas, Model Town, Sadar Bazar, Rohtak Road, Kishan Ganj,

Chandni Chowk, Connaught Place, Mangolpuri, Rajouri Garden and Najafgarh. "Nangloi-Najafgarh road is seeing very heavy traffic and no traffic police are available here. I am stuck for the last hour. Should we enjoy Diwali by sitting in our cars?" Commuters took to X saying the traffic was heavy at several places including Badarpur flyover, CV Raman Marg, Punjabi Bagh,

Mehrauli Badarpur Road, Taimur Nagar-Maharani Bagh Road, Ashram and Yamuna Vihar. This situation remains despite the Delhi Police saying that they have made elaborate arrangements for smooth flow of traffic. A senior traffic police officer said they have intensified checking on the road. "We have deployed personnel on bikes to check the encroachment on busy roads which could lead to traffic congestion in the area. People who are coming to the markets are also informed that they should park their vehicles at designated places," it said. "The personnel have loud speakers on their bikes to make the flow of traffic smooth. Non-destined vehicles are not being allowed to enter the national capital. Continuous anti-encroachment drives are also being carried out in the crowded places," the officer said. In view of the festive season, the Delhi Metro also stated that it will introduce additional 60 trips on Tuesday and Wednesday in a bid to enhance commuter convenience and ease congestion. There are around 4,000 daily Metro trips.



THE PIONEER WISHES ITS READERS HAPPY DEEPAWALI
Our offices will remain closed on October 31 & November 1 next edition of The Pioneer on November 3



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Traffic mayhem

On the eve of Diwali, Delhiites found themselves stranded for hours as traffic jams clogged major roads

Diwali is the biggest festival in Delhi. It is awaited eagerly by one and all. While the festivities galore it is also during this time, the Delhiites suffer the most; high pollution levels and traffic jams dampen the festive spirit. On the eve of Diwali, thousands of commuters in Delhi found themselves trapped in an unending traffic nightmare. With the festive season in full swing, the city's roads, particularly around popular market areas, became scenes of frustration as vehicles moved at a snail's pace, leaving commuters stranded for hours. Despite pre-announced traffic measures by Delhi Police, congestion overwhelmed key roads, with frustrated citizens questioning the effectiveness of traffic management efforts. Heavy traffic jams were reported across several areas, including the DND flyway, Ashram Marg, and Sarai Kale Khan, stretching into congested points such as Karol Bagh, Taimur Nagar-Maharani Bagh Road, Punjabi Bagh, and Badarpur Mehrauli Road. As the festive rush built up on



Dhanteras, shoppers headed to market areas in droves. Many took to social media to share images and videos of the gridlocked streets, sparking discussions about the city's recurring traffic woes. In a bid to curb the chaos, Delhi Police had announced intensified road checks, anti-encroachment drives and measures aimed at keeping traffic flowing smoothly. Additionally, non-essential vehicles were restricted from entering the capital, and shoppers were instructed to park only in designated areas. Despite these efforts, the measures seemed insufficient against the overwhelming crowd of festival shoppers. Sarojini Nagar, Sadar Bazar, and Khan

Market saw an enormous influx, leaving shop owners struggling to manage both security and traffic. In some areas, the traffic snarls dampened the Diwali spirit. Ironically, the unexpected security measures, intended to reduce congestion, left sections of the market unusually empty on Dhanteras. As commuters endured bumper-to-bumper delays, voices of discontent grew louder and many people vent their spleen on social media. With Diwali celebrations continuing, these issues are likely to persist. Despite attempts to bolster security and traffic regulation, the administration's efforts seem to have fallen way short, leaving commuters to bear the brunt of another chaotic festive season on Delhi's streets. The traffic jams reflect poorly on the administrations capability to handle it. No denying that more cars are on the roads and given the limited capacity of roads, traffic jams cannot be completely eliminated. But having said that it is also true that the preparedness to deal with such a scenario were inadequate. At places there was no traffic police personnel to control the traffic and many signal lights reportedly did not work. We actively campaigned to bring this issue to the attention of relevant departments through a series of reports well in advance, right before the festive season began. Yet, as always, complacency prevailed.

PICTALK



Artists dance on the Rampath ahead of Deepotsav celebrations, in Ayodhya

'Trophyisation' of weapon platforms

In the propaganda war, the symbolic power of "trophy" weapons extends far beyond the battlefield, reshaping the narratives of geopolitical rivalries



BHOPINDER SINGH

If Ukrainians made a public spectacle of captured Russian weaponry, the Russians did likewise in flaunting captured Western military hardware, from the American M1 Abrams tank, German Leopard tank or the British Husky tactical support vehicle etc., in a public park. The symbolism supports the Russian narrative that the 'West/NATO is attacking Russia, and yet the Russians are triumphing. However, the ground truth is more complex as the Russians had invaded Ukraine and the war status is a stalemate at best, as the envisaged '10-day operation' has gone on for over a year and a half. Such displays are common across militaries, and they understandably do not sit well with the other side.

Now, the Chinese have got riled over similar symbolism as the US Navy plans to exhibit a warplane, albeit of its own, that harks back to the 2001 Hainan Island incident that involved a midair collision of a Signal Intelligence aircraft i.e., EP-3E Aries II of the UN Navy, and a Chinese Air Force F-8 fighter plane. Flying over the tense and disputed South China Seas, the US plane had taken off from its Kadena Air Base in Japan and was intercepted by two F-8 fighters midway between the Hainan Islands and Paracel Islands. Whilst making aggressive passes, one of the Chinese fighter planes collided with the American plane and the Chinese fighter plane broke. The Chinese fighter pilot's body was never recovered. The damaged American plane along with its 24 crew members made an emergency landing at China's Hainan Airbase without authorization and its crew were detained. There was a counterclaim by the Chinese that the American plane had deliberately hit the Chinese fighter plane, but it was never substantiated, even though the Chinese had the data from the flight recorders of both planes. 10 days of hectic diplomatic parleys ensued with each side blaming the other for provocation and unreasonable conduct.



China insisted on the illegality of the American plane's presence claiming the region to be part of its exclusive economic zone as per the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS)—whereas the Americans claimed patrolling rights under its right of Freedom of Navigation. But embarrassing delays in securing the release of American crew were publicly distracting from the more pressing foreign policy issue of launching the 'War on Terror' for the then US President, George Bush, in Afghanistan, following 9/11. A due 'letter of the two sorries' (for the death of the Chinese fighter pilot and unauthorized landing) from the American side led the same to be conveniently interpreted as a 'letter of apology' by the Chinese media, and the same led to the release of American crew and the return of the disassembled aircraft. 23 years later, the Americans are bringing back the same plane i.e., EP-3E Aries II, at its Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona, for public display. The 'trophyisation' will be accompanied by a backstory explaining its significance in a historic incident that was fraught with risks of further escalation, for public consumption. The Chinese fear an American



THERE WAS A COUNTERCLAIM BY THE CHINESE THAT THE AMERICAN PLANE HAD DELIBERATELY HIT THE CHINESE FIGHTER PLANE, BUT IT WAS NEVER SUBSTANTIATED, EVEN THOUGH THE CHINESE HAD THE DATA FROM THE FLIGHT RECORDERS OF BOTH PLANES

narrative of 'capitulation' that paints the Chinese reaction in a dim light, even though it had the American plane and its 24 crew members, on its soil. As a riled Chinese social media commentator reacted, "It is not 2001. Wake up! It's 2024" — as if to suggest that the Chinese PLA was no minnow any longer, and it would give a befitting reply. The unofficial mouthpiece of the Chinese regime i.e., Global Times, captured the reactionary mood in China, "Chinese people saw the incident as a painful memory for the nation and the reported plan to display the US warplane at a sensitive moment when China-US relations are delicate and face uncertainties, is like 'rubbing salt into the wound' and reflects an unfriendly stance by the US toward China". However, the situation in the choppy South China Seas has not changed much with the Chinese belligerence continuing and growing by the day, and with the Americans still conducting reconnaissance air sorties and naval exercises to counter the same. Countries like Taiwan, Japan and most recently Philippines, are in the direct line of competing territorial claims, against China. Symbolism with the conceptualisation of con-

cepts like QUAD (Quadrilateral of Sino-wary, Japan, US, Australia and India) or Naval Exercises are part of vital international optics and narrative building. In a dictatorial country like China where propaganda has been elevated to a fine art, Beijing understands the power of public perception, hence its discomfort with the re-positing of the Hainan incident, entailing the return of EP-3E Aries II in public imagination. The Chinese pipedream would like the new US exhibit to include, "calls from China and other countries worldwide to end US reconnaissance operations near their borders", but as the most encroaching, expansionist, and coercive neighbour — it would know better than to expect the American exhibit to be kind towards China's propaganda position. With many famous defections of fighter pilots towards 'enemy' countries (especially from China to Taiwan), the 'trophyisation' of weapon platforms is an old hat, and in that context, the thin-skinned and hyper-reaction by the Chinese recently is churlish. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POPULATION CENSUS 2025

Madam—Regarding 'Population Census Takes Off in 2025' (Oct 29), the census is far more than a political activity; it's a strategic framework for development as India progresses toward becoming a superpower. The proposed 31 questions for the census should encompass aspects such as the agricultural workforce, tribal and coastal populations, elderly and infirm populations, women's education and economic standing, the skilled youth workforce, informal sector engagement, child mortality rates, school and college enrollment, residents abroad, border-area inhabitants, those who have traveled or hold properties abroad, and OCI and NRI populations in India. The upcoming election delimitation should ensure fair population representation per constituency for MPs and MLAs. Although caste census isn't constitutionally mandated, it is often used as a political tool that risks dividing society along caste lines. The lack of exact figures on castes among Hindus and Muslims and the absence of official caste records make the legitimacy of caste data contentious, often resulting in disputes and litigation. Furthermore, with the prevalence of inter-caste marriages, the caste census appears increasingly outdated.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

DIGITAL FRAUD

Madam—When a Prime Minister warns citizens about digital fraud, it underscores the gravity of this issue and its deep infiltration at the grassroots level. According to available data, Indian citizens lost around ₹120 crores to digital fraud in the first quarter of 2024 alone—a conservative estimate, as many cases go unreported due to fear of police harassment or lack of awareness. The methods used by fraudsters vary widely and evolve constantly. A common tactic involves scammers posing as relatives to extract bank details, often from numbers originating abroad. This is particularly prevalent in Punjab, where many have relatives overseas, making

Revisit West Asia policy



The editorial on the looming war clouds in West Asia (Oct 28) should resonate more deeply with India than with other nations, given India's critical stakes in the region. For decades, attacks and counterattacks in West Asia have been common, but the current wave of violent escalations and genocides on both sides has far-reaching implications globally. India, in par-

ticular, faces a dilemma. The current administration leans ideologically toward supporting Israel, despite India's historical support for the Palestinian cause. Additionally, India benefits from affordable crude oil sourced from Russia, although these savings are primarily enjoyed by select private players in the oil sector rather than reaching the public. However, as tensions intensify, potentially drawing in the US and Russia, nations worldwide may find themselves compelled to align with one side. This situation could pressure the government to prioritize ideological support for Israel or risk trade disruptions that could affect India's economic stability—already challenged by an unfavorable trade balance. India, surrounded by a region of strained relations, cannot afford isolation in such turbulent times. It is essential for prudence to prevail.

AG Rajmohan | Anantpur

them easy targets.

These foreign-based numbers make tracing the criminals more challenging. While the Digital India initiative launched in 2015 has successfully propelled the nation toward digital empowerment, it has also exposed more citizens to cybercrime. This calls for increased caution, particularly among the elderly and those less familiar with digital technology. Only by staying vigilant can we protect ourselves from these evolving digital threats.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

RISING CASES OF STROKES AMONG YOUNG

Madam—Countries worldwide are making significant investments to position themselves at the forefront of the semiconductor industry, with India setting aside \$11 billion and considering an additional \$5-10 billion. These are sizable figures, particularly when compared to the relatively lower investment in labor-intensive industries like leather and handicrafts. But what is the government's ultimate goal with such a massive investment? Is it to establish a base

for a larger electronics sector, or to support the expanding automobile supply chain? Unfortunately, the government's response has been unclear and less than satisfactory, with an emphasis on promoting "aatmanirbharta" or self-reliance. However, self-reliance may not be entirely practical given the complex nature of global supply chains. Reducing dependence on allied nations like South Korea and Taiwan may not be necessary; rather, the focus could be on lessening reliance on China. A key challenge for the government in implementing this plan will be securing a skilled workforce. A more strategic approach would be to target specific, scalable segments of the supply chain, such as fabrication, design, assembly, and packaging. Instead of focusing solely on self-reliance, India should aim to establish itself as a key player in the global semiconductor supply chain, maximizing the impact of this significant investment.

Pratyush Tiwari | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The benefits and reality of organic food choices

From freshly harvested crops to packaged foods, the organic label now commands a premium price; is it for real or just a sales gimmick

In recent years, a remarkable trend has emerged, with organic products now prominently displayed on supermarket shelves and featured on packaging across the board. It encompasses everything from freshly harvested crops to essential packaged goods. And, given that the organic brand will cost significantly more, people are questioning if it is worth it. Organic foods offer health, aetiology, and environmental benefits. This type of food is promoted as a more wholesome and righteous option. The concept is straightforward: reduce pesticide use, eliminate synthetic fertilisers, and avoid genetically modified organisms. For numerous individuals, opting for cleaner and more organically cultivated produce justifies the expense. And yet, aren't we, in our way, being chipped away at our true worth as customers?



Years ago, before the rise of industrial farming, vegetables like ladyfingers (okra) were a lot less predictable. We often found worms inside, an unpleasant but natural reminder of the environment in which they grew. These "flaws" assured us that the produce was authentic, untouched by synthetic chemicals. Fast forward to today, and the produce is picture-perfect, but the trade-off has been significant. Our vegetables, once vibrant and full of flavour, are now coated in pesticides that strip them of their natural essence. We've all noticed it: the tomatoes don't taste like they used to, and a bell pepper is just... bland. With the essence of fresh vegetables fading from our experience, many sought refuge in the convenience of pre-packaged meals.

The appeal and taste of fast food or packaged snacks overshadow the presence of vegetables offered alongside them. It's hardly unexpected that many individuals find themselves torn between the less appealing, time-consuming superfoods and the quicker, more delicious meal alternatives. Yet, what is the price to pay? Here's the point: it's not about flavour or ease—it's about well-being. Even minimal exposure to pesticides has been linked to a variety of health issues, including hormone disruption and neurological complications. As time passes, these substances may build up within the human body, and despite increasingly stringent regulations, the long-term consequences remain largely unclear. This justifies the higher price tag, reinforcing the value of organic foods. Is "organic" always synonymous with better quality? Not exactly. Organic does not guarantee perfection. Certification processes have gaps, meaning that pesticide-free does not necessarily

equate to "organic." It promises a reduction in synthetic chemicals and the adoption of more sustainable farming practices. Additionally, organic farming enhances biodiversity and soil health—both essential for the future of our planet. Is this a worthwhile investment? It hinges on what you value most. Choosing organic is a positive move towards minimising chemical exposure and fostering sustainable practices. However, to truly enhance the flavour of your meals, seeking out local farmers and fresh produce that hasn't undergone excessive processing or long-distance transport could be a more effective solution to that issue. Embracing organic choices transcends mere financial considerations; it represents a commitment to your well-being, an enhancement of your culinary experience, and a forward-thinking approach to the future of our food systems. (The writer is a motivator and a freelance journalist; views expressed are personal)



RACHNA LAKHPATRI



FIRST COLUMN

WHERE DO WE GO WRONG?

It is essential to recognise the diverse spiritual paths that humanity traverses



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

I am referring to our relationship with God. To understand this properly, clarity must be there about different classes of men. There are two main ones. The first one is of majority. In this, there are five types. Many do not know God, those who are living in the wilderness, and do have not much connection with civilization. The next are those, who are aware but have no opinion about God. They take a neutral stance in this matter. They are called agnostics. The next level is of those, who are aware of God, but are too lazy to have anything to do with Him, i.e., they don't do any spiritual practices to develop a link with God. The fourth category is of those, who are envious of God. Why is God superior to us, why should we take His shelter, why does He control everything, etc.? And the last category is atheists, who forcefully deny God's existence. Now I come to those, who have faith in God and His instructions, but are of different levels. The first level is of those who do some spiritual practices as rituals. For example, someone has a murti of Lord Krishna in his home, which he has placed on a shelf. He lights an 'agarbatti' every morning after bath and places it near the murti. Someone else may be chanting Gayatri Mantra three times a day. Or someone maybe worshipping Suryadeva every morning with water. These are very nice activities and bring benefits, which are limited in extent. The worshiper has certain material desires, which he is keen on. He is superior to an ordinary man carrying out his material activities in pur-



suit of material goals like wealth, power, fame, etc. The next level is those who do some rituals and also have some faith in the Lord's instructions, as given in bonafide spiritual texts like the Bhagavad-Geeta. But they restrict themselves for two reasons what they can get from God. They don't do more to please God and become deserving, but displease God by their lusty, greedy, angry, hateful, etc. activities. Is this intelligent?

They end up gaining some material benefits for the spiritual acts done, and also punishments for bad acts done. They don't cancel out, i.e., both come to fruition. The next level of faith is better. They do rituals and try to gain purity in action through their minds, senses, and words. This helps them enhance their mode of goodness. They reap many benefits as a consequence. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 14.6) Then, comes the next level, who can be called devotees. They desire to please God in addition to their senses, minds and bodies. They have faith in God's instructions, i.e., try to act accordingly. But they also don't go far enough. This happens due to many reasons like fault in nature (svabhava) and not great 'sanskars' (cultural training).

They only come to a stage described by Lord Krishna. (6.41) Now we come to the highest level of devotees; he is helplessly attracted towards God due to practice done in the previous life. He transcends the ritualistic part of the Vedas. (6.44) Let us, therefore, not go wrong. We should stop ourselves from denying the existence of God staying neutral or being feeble about connecting with God. We have so much to gain even if we are not thinking of gaining liberation. God has so much to offer like opulence of all six kinds including success.

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

India's shift toward competency-based hiring



DINESH SOOD

The focus on competency over credentials promises not only to improve employability but also to foster a more inclusive workforce



India is moving towards skills-based hiring over degrees, marking a significant shift in the job market. Companies increasingly adopt competency-based hiring practices, focusing on practical skills and inclusivity rather than traditional degrees. This change is influenced by the growing importance of industry-relevant competencies in today's digitised business landscape. IBM India is a notable example of this trend, as it has implemented a 'skills-first' policy, where a college degree is no longer a prerequisite for recruitment. Similarly, companies like TCS, Infosys, and Wipro are also shifting towards skills-based hiring, investing heavily in training programs in the digital economy.

This shift has broad implications for India's education sector, prompting universities and educational institutions to incorporate more industry-relevant training and competency-based curricula. Many Indian universities are partnering with businesses to offer specialized training in artificial intelligence, data analytics, cyber security, and beauty and wellness.

Recently, Medhavi University collaborated with Orane International, a pioneer global institute in beauty-wellness. Such collaborations aim to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements, ensuring graduates are job-ready from day one. Reports have shown that such partnerships have significantly increased employability in specialized fields, highlighting the importance of aligning education with industry needs. Competency-based hiring is revolutionising university education and professional development in India. In today's technology-driven economy, continuous learning and upskilling are crucial for career advancement. Companies like IBM, TCS, and Infosys



THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THAT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IS CRITICAL TO NATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. AS REFLECTED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION BUDGET, SIGNIFICANT FUNDING HAS BEEN DIRECTED TOWARDS DIGITAL PROJECTS TO PREPARE YOUNG INDIANS FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE

heavily invest in training programs on the digital economy. These programs often include online courses, certifications, and micro-credentials, enabling employees to acquire new skills efficiently.

The Indian government recognizes that skills development is critical to national performance and economic growth. As reflected in the 2024 education budget, significant funding has been directed towards digital projects to prepare young Indians for a digital future.

Over the next five years, approximately 2 million young people will receive skills training. Additionally, 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) will be modernized, with updated course content tailored to industry needs.

This government support is crucial for India's ambition to remain a talent hub. India stands at a critical juncture in its economic journey, with immense potential for growth but facing a significant challenge in bridging the unemployment-employability gap. As the world's fifth-largest economy, India's vision for "Viksit Bharat" by 2047 hinges on effectively skilling its youth to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving job market.

The Union Budget 2024-25 has highlighted this priority, allocating substantial funds for education, employment, and skilling initiatives. However, the task ahead is daunting, with nearly 73% of workers aged 15-59 years lacking formal or informal vocational training. A multi-pronged

approach is essential to harnessing India's demographic dividend and fueling economic growth. This includes bolstering institutional support, strengthening industry-academia connections, and leveraging innovative financing solutions like impact bonds. As India navigates this crucial phase, the success of its skill development efforts will play a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future and realizing its economic potential. Competency-based hiring transforms the job market and creates opportunities for diverse groups often excluded.

In India, many individuals seeking to re-enter the workforce—often in remote or part-time roles—benefit from this approach. During the pandemic, many women took online courses in digital marketing, content creation, and I.T. services while balancing home responsibilities. This shift towards skills-based hiring opens doors for a more inclusive and diverse workforce and paints an optimistic picture of the future of employment in India, full of opportunities and potential for growth.

India's thriving start-up culture is a testament to the adaptability and practical experience valued in skills-based hiring. Startups, often operating with limited resources, place less emphasis on educational background and more on the skills and potential of their employees.

As a result, startups are setting the pace in adopting skills-based hiring practices, inspiring more giant corporations to follow suit

and revolutionise the job market. Their innovative approach to hiring is not only inspiring but also a sign of the changing times in the Indian job market. Transitioning to skills-based hiring comes with challenges, including the need for accurate and unbiased skills assessments.

Traditional hiring, reliant on academic qualifications, is relatively straightforward. In contrast, evaluating practical skills requires sophisticated testing and assessment techniques. Additionally, companies must train their H.R. teams to recognize and nurture talent based on skills rather than credentials.

Acknowledging these challenges is the first step towards overcoming them, and it prepares us for the future of hiring. By acknowledging these challenges, we can better prepare for the future of hiring and ensure a more effective and inclusive job market.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of competency-based hiring are evident. Companies can access a broader and more diverse talent pool by focusing on skills, including individuals overlooked by traditional hiring processes. This approach helps fill critical skills gaps and fosters a more inclusive and innovative workforce.

(The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation and a network Member of India International Skills Centres, an initiative of GoI. The views expressed are personal)

Reviving Bihar's libraries: Bridging the gap between tradition and technology

A well-conceived hybrid model could revitalise Bihar's libraries, providing a space where traditional and digital learning coexist

In today's era of rapid digital transformation, libraries in Bihar and across India are facing a critical challenge: how to remain relevant in a world increasingly dominated by digital content and online resources. Historically, libraries have been pillars of knowledge and learning, preserving history, culture, science, and philosophy for generations. However, with the rise of the internet, mobile technology, and social media, the traditional role of libraries is being questioned, especially in rural areas and smaller towns. The digital revolution has reshaped the way people, especially the youth, consume information. Where libraries were once the sole custodians of knowledge, the



RINKU KUMARI

Internet now offers instant access to vast amounts of data. E-books, online courses, and educational videos are available at the click of a button, challenging the need for physical spaces to access information. While this shift has opened new avenues for learning, it has also contributed to the neglect and decline of public libraries, particularly in states like Bihar. Bihar's once-thriving

library culture has dramatically deteriorated. Where there were once 540 public libraries in the state during the 1950s, only 51 remain today, according to a 2022 report from the Bihar Library Committee.

Entire districts, including Arwal, Kaimur, Banka, Sheohar, Kishanganj, and Sheikhpura, now have no public libraries at all—neither in rural areas nor in urban centres. The closure of these institutions reflects a deeper cultural shift, where reading and communal learning spaces are no longer central to the lives of many. Muzaffarpur, highlights the concerning reality of the fading library tradition. Its few remaining libraries, such as

the Gandhi Smriti Library and Nav Yuvak Samiti Trust Library, are either poorly resourced or neglected. In a city of this size, there isn't a single well-functioning library that caters to literature lovers or cultural enthusiasts, leaving little hope for their counterparts in rural areas. Yet, as the world embraces digital transformation, the role of libraries must evolve rather than disappear. The challenge lies not in replacing libraries but in reimagining them as hybrid spaces—integrating digital resources with the physical charm and purpose of traditional libraries. Libraries, with their rich legacy of providing knowledge, can be transformed into community hubs that offer more than just



books. They can become centres for digital literacy, e-learning, and skill development, especially in areas where access to the internet and technology is still a challenge. In this context, Vinay, a social worker from Muzaffarpur, suggests a forward-thinking solution: modernizing libraries to meet the needs of the current generation. Libraries should be equipped with computers, internet access, and resources

for career counselling and education. "We need to reconnect young people, who are lost in the virtual world, with the world of books," he explains. Libraries can offer both—the serenity and richness of traditional books and the practicality and excitement of digital resources. This transformation would not only make libraries more accessible but also relevant to today's youth, who are accustomed to

consuming knowledge digitally.

The success of such an initiative would depend on concerted efforts by local leaders, communities, and governments. For instance, establishing a digital library in every Panchayat would bridge the urban-rural divide, bringing digital literacy to the forefront while preserving the cultural and intellectual heritage libraries represent. Panchayat representatives and village intellectuals can play a critical role in promoting the use of these modernized libraries, ensuring that the younger generation has access to both digital and physical forms of knowledge. The ongoing digital revolution has created an urgent need to rethink the purpose and structure of

libraries. The Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna, one of the few libraries still thriving in Bihar, is a testament to the potential of such institutions. However, unless libraries across the state are modernized to embrace digital tools and resources, their future seems uncertain.

The decline of libraries in Bihar isn't just about the closure of physical spaces—it reflects the broader societal changes driven by technology. But rather than view this as the end of the library's role, it should be seen as an opportunity to redefine its importance in a digital-first world. (The writer is an educator in Muzaffarpur Bihar; views are personal. Charkha Features)

South Korea's military says the North appears poised to conduct nuclear, ICBM tests

South Korea's military intelligence agency told lawmakers Wednesday that North Korea has likely completed preparations for its seventh nuclear test and appears to be preparing to test a long-range missile capable of reaching the United States...

North Korea's top diplomat in Moscow for talks on troop deployment

North Korea's top diplomat is set to hold talks in Moscow on Wednesday following reports that Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops to Russia to support its action in Ukraine...

UK budget proposes US\$ 50b in tax hikes

British Treasury chief Rachel Reeves told lawmakers Wednesday that taxes will rise by 40 billion pounds (USD 52 billion) in order to plug a hole in the public finances and investment projects to boost growth...

return to the austerity that marked the early years of the previous Conservative government after it was first elected in 2010. Reeves argued that higher taxes and limited public spending increases are needed to "fix the foundations" of an economy...

New sanctions target Myanmar's military suppliers

Opponents of Myanmar's military government on Wednesday welcomed the latest sanctions imposed by the European Union, the UK and Canada on individuals and entities supplying aviation fuel and equipment to the army...

Iran lifts its ban on imports of new iPhone

Iranians will soon be able to get their hands on iPhones 14, 15 and 16 after authorities lifted a ban on new smartphone models by the US tech giant Apple...

Iran lifts its ban on imports of new iPhone

Iranians will soon be able to get their hands on iPhones 14, 15 and 16 after authorities lifted a ban on new smartphone models by the US tech giant Apple, according to an announcement...

I've heard about half a billion dollars were spent to import one type of American luxury cellphone. However, other foreign smartphone brands such as Motorola, Samsung, Nokia, Xiaomi and Huawei remain widely available in Iran.

PROVISION OF LIFTS AT ABSS STATIONS Tender Notice No.: APEL/20/24-25. Dated: 28-10-2024. E-tender is invited by the undersigned for the following work...

PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform to the General Public at large that my clients (1) Sh. Vikas Vishwakarma S/O Sh. Sudeshan Vishwakarma and (2) Smt. Kamla Devi W/o Sh. Vikas Vishwakarma both R/o H.No. 70, Gali No.25, A-Block, Daxx Garden, Bopara, Nagalgadh, Delhi-110043, have severed all their relations socially, financially in all respects with their son Sh. Sandeep Vishwakarma because he is not obedient to my clients and misbehaved with me... For NEXGEN Financial Solutions Sd/- Sanjeev Gupta Partner Dated : 01.10.2024

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME I, Pankaj Kumar, S/O. Sunil Kumar, House Number - B-2/541 J.J.Colony, Raghuhir Nagar Tagore Garden Delhi - 110027. I, have changed my name from Pankaj Kumar Gihara to Pankaj Kumar all purposes. PD(889)C

PUBLIC NOTICE Reg: Residential Plot No. 34, land area measuring 60 sq. yds. (Sixty sq. yds.) out of total area measuring 260 sq.yds. "said portion", part of Plot No. 34, measuring 260 sq. yds., out of Kharsa No. 85, Situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Nawada, Colony known as Vign Garden Extra., Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059; (Hereinafter referred to as the "Said Property")

PUBLIC NOTICE Reg: Second Floor and Third Floor with roof rights referred to as "said floor" of Property bearing Municipal No. A-62, measuring 208.33 sq. yds., Block-A, Situated in the layout plan of Gujranwala Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., situated at Village Raj Pur Malikpur (Sithauri), now Known as Gujranwala Town, Part 1, Delhi-110009; (Hereinafter referred to as "said property")

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the general public including Banks, Financial Institutions, etc. that, as informed by our client, Mrs. Kamud Khanna, she is the sole and absolute owner of the said floor. In this connection, she has informed that the said property was owned by Mr.Dev Raj Khanna, Dharam Pal Khanna, and Mr. Sham Sunder Khanna vide conveyance Deed executed by POI thru DD in their favour and the said deed is registered as Document No. 7906 on 03.10.1994. Later on, a Partition Deed was executed amongst them and the said Partition Deed is registered as Document No. 221 Book No. 1 Vol No. 07, page No. 14-130 on 25.03.1998 (SRO Delhi). According to the said partition deed, the said floor (alongwith 1/3rd undivided share of the said property) fell to the share of Mr. Dharam Pal Khanna who has since died and Mr. Dharam Pal Khanna expired leaving behind his following legal heirs viz., Mrs. Kamud Khanna and Mr. Ashish Khanna. However, in terms of the Will registered as Doc. No. 386 Book No. III, Vol No. 432, pages 111-115 on 01/02/2016 (SRO-VIA) executed by Mr. Dharam Pal Khanna, the said floor was inherited by Mrs. Kamud Khanna. Thus, she is the sole and absolute owner of the said floor. Now, our client intends to mortgage the said floor with IDFC FIRST Bank Limited for availing loan facility.

SHIVKANT ARORA, ADVOCATE FOR MS INTELLECTIVE LAW OFFICES, A-74, LGF, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the general public that Mr. Aseem Takyar S/o Late Sh Ram Chandar Takyar & Mrs Renu Takyar W/o Mr Aseem Takyar both R/O House No. 4061 Sector 23 A Gurugram, Haryana 122017 had purchased a residential House No. A-554 C size measuring 173 Sqyds. Situated at Ansals Palam vihar Gurugram Haryana 122017. That Mrs Renu Takyar unfortunately had expired on 31/07/2024 at Gurgaon & left her son Mr. Arman Takyar as her only legal heir alongwith her husband Mr. Arman Takyar in the firm, Mr. Aseem Takyar had approached to M/s Ansal properties and Infrastructure Limited for addition of his son named Mr Arman Takyar as a co-owner for House No. A- 554 C at Palam Vihar Gurugram Haryana.

JASCH INDUSTRIES LIMITED. Regd. Off. : 502, NDM-II, NSP, Pitampura, Delhi - 110034. Website : www.jaschindustries.com. Extract of Reviewed Ind AS Financial Results for the Quarter & Half Year Ended on 30th September 2024 (Standalone Financial Results under Regulation 47(1)(B) of Listing Regulations)

JASCH GAUGING TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED. Regd. Office : 502, NDM-II, NSP, Pitampura, Delhi - 110034. CIN: L33111DL2021PLC831513. Extract of unadvised standalone Ind AS financial results for the quarter & half year ended on 30th September 2024 (under Regulation 47 (1)(B) of SEBI Listing Regulations)

JASCH GAUGING TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED. Regd. Office : 502, NDM-II, NSP, Pitampura, Delhi - 110034. CIN: L33111DL2021PLC831513. Extract of unadvised standalone Ind AS financial results for the quarter & half year ended on 30th September 2024 (under Regulation 47 (1)(B) of SEBI Listing Regulations)

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Petrol, diesel commission hiked; no change in prices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commission paid to petrol pump dealers on sale of petrol and diesel has been hiked without change in retail price but rates will go down in several places in states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Himachal Pradesh on account of intrastate freight rationalisation.



Commission on sale of petrol has been hiked by 65 paise a litre and that on diesel by 44 paise per litre. Alongside, the state-owned firms also rationalised intrastate tariffs which could lead to a reduction in rates of up to Rs 4.5 a litre in some parts. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) -- the state-owned market leader -- on October 29 wrote to dealers informing of an increase in dealer margin for all categories.

of customers who visit our Retail Outlets on a daily basis. The revision, it said, also aims at delivering happiness to all the committed staff employed at retail outlets and their families. Dealers commission was last revised on October 5, 2016 when it was raised to Rs 1,868.14 per kilolitre, plus 0.875 per cent of produce billable price on petrol and Rs 1,389.35 per kl plus 0.28 per cent of product billable price on diesel. This has now gone up to Rs 0.65 per litre on petrol and Rs 0.44 a litre on diesel. The three firms also rationalised intra-state freight that will result in a cut in petrol and diesel prices in several places in states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and

Himachal Pradesh.

"Further, demonstrating the core value of Nation First, our endeavour to provide affordable petrol and diesel across the length and breadth of the country on a sustained basis has come to fruition. IndianOil has undertaken intrastate rationalisation of freight which will reduce variation of retail selling price of product across various markets within a state, except in geographies where Model Code of Conduct is in place," IOC said. BPCL said intra-state freight rationalisation will reduce price disparities in petrol/diesel, benefiting consumers, especially in remote areas. "Simultaneously, we have also undertaken intrastate rationalisation of freight thus benefiting customers at remote places, far from our supply locations, except in areas under model code of conduct," HPCL said. Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri welcomed the intra-state freight rationalisation which he said will "benefit consumers located at remote locations (far from petrol and diesel depots of oil marketing companies) which will result in a decrease in petrol and diesel prices in several parts of the country. (Decision in poll-bound states and constituencies will be implemented later)". In a post on X, he cited the example of Kuanpally and Kalimela in Odisha's Malkangiri where petrol price will reduce by Rs 4.69 and Rs 4.55, respectively; and diesel

rates will be cut Rs 4.45 and Rs 4.32, respectively. Similarly, prices will reduce by Rs 2.09 in petrol price and Rs 2.02 in diesel price in Chhattisgarh's Sukma. Rates will also be cut in Bijapur, Bailadila, Kateykalyan, Bachel, and Dantewada of the state. Similarly, prices will also be cut in several places in Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Mizoram. "The dealer commission increase will provide better services to approximately 7 crore citizens who visit our fuel retail outlets in the country everyday, without increasing fuel prices," he said. "The fulfilment of this demand pending for the last 7 years will bring joy and happiness in the lives of petrol pump dealers and nearly 10 lakh staff working at more than 83,000 petrol pumps across the country." Ajay Bansal, President of All India Petroleum Dealers' Association, welcomed the decision saying it will help meet a part of the increase in cost of running petrol pumps over the past eight years. "This revision comes after seven years and eight months. We welcome it," he said, adding that the dealers have withdrawn a legal case they had filed against the oil companies over oil companies enforcing marketing discipline guidelines. The dealer commission revision has happened following the withdrawal of the court cases.

BRICS+ group's share in global goods exports can overtake G7 by 2026

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The share of BRICS+ grouping in global merchandise exports can overtake the G7 bloc by 2026, EY India said on Wednesday. The October edition of EY Economy Watch reveals a significant shift in global trade dynamics, with the BRICS+ group rapidly increasing its share in merchandise exports and imports. From 2000 to 2023, the BRICS+ group's share of global merchandise exports has risen from 10.7 per cent to 23.3 per cent, marking an impressive increase of 12.6 percentage points. In contrast, the G7's share has seen a notable decline, dropping from 45.1 per cent to 28.9 per cent. Meanwhile, the rest of the world has maintained a relatively stable share, increasing slightly from 44.2 per cent to 47.9 per cent. G7 is a grouping of advanced economies -- the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. This trend highlights the growing prominence of the BRICS+ group in the global trade arena, suggesting a potential shift towards a multipolar global economic landscape, EY India said. "Given the present trends and the likelihood of several new members joining the BRICS+ group being strong, the share of BRICS+ in global merchandise exports can overtake that of the G7 group by 2026," EY India Chief Policy Advisor DK Srivastava said.



BRICS, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has now expanded with five additional members - Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Central to this transformation are India and China, two key members of the BRICS+ alliance. In 2023, they ranked third and first, respectively, globally in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), both countries are projected to retain these positions by 2030. China's contribution to BRICS+ exports has surged dramatically, increasing from 36.1 per cent in 2000 to 62.5 per cent in 2023. India has also made significant strides, contributing 7.9 per cent to BRICS+ exports in 2023. EY's analysis further underscores the increasing importance of high-tech exports from BRICS+ countries. The group's share of global high-tech exports has risen significantly, from just 5 per cent in 2000 to 32.8 per cent in 2022. This shift reflects a strategic move toward technology-intensive products, positioning BRICS+ nations as vital players in the global

high-tech market, it added. In addition to trade dynamics, the currencies of BRICS+ nations are gaining traction in the global economy. The Yuan has remained stable, with slight appreciation, while the Indian rupee has faced depreciation, particularly since 2018. Notably, the share of the US dollar as a global reserve currency has declined from 71.5 per cent in 2000 to 58.2 per cent in 2024, signalling a potential shift toward a more multipolar currency framework. "As geopolitical tensions continue, the coordinated policies among BRICS+ members may challenge the established dominance of the G7 and the US dollar, paving the way for a new multipolar global economic landscape," Srivastava said. The BRICS+ group is establishing a platform for conducting international trade and investment transactions, which could become a low-cost alternative to the existing SWIFT platform. The group is also developing a trade and reserve currency, backed by gold and other select commodities, Srivastava added.

Businesses expect resounding sales this Diwali

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The roads are jammed and shops chock-a-block as people make beelines for malls and markets to grab just the perfect gift to make the festival of lights a memorable affair for their loved ones. Dinner sets, beauty hampers, gourmet food baskets, electronic gadgets, and the ever reliable chocolates and mithai, the options are endless for the fervent Diwali shoppers but the task is to balance budgets with big expectations. Khanna, a homemaker in her 30s, knows it too well as she treads the fine line between temptation and staying within budget. "The temptation to give innovative and expensive gifts to your near and dear ones is always there but one can't go out of budget too. The key is in finding the right balance," Khanna told PTI. On her shopping list is an eclectic mix of home decor for friends, smartwatch for her husband, board games for children and home appliances

for house helps. "Gifting during the Diwali festival comes with a huge responsibility. I guess zeroing in on budget and what to give to whom is never easy, and I doubt if anyone has mastered it," she added. The festive season has always been the favourite time of the year for businesses and this year is no different as leading players in the online and offline retail sector are expecting "resounding sales". While Bikano, a leading name in the traditional snack market, has set a mammoth "Rs 300 crores plus" year-end target in the festive season, Surya Roshni, a lighting and consumer durable company, explained how a large proportion of their sales, accounting to about "30 per cent", happens during this period. "When it comes to the festivities, most people tend to spend more than usual, which is somewhat of a distinct period when the purchasing tendencies flout all the rules," Jitendra Agrawal, ceo of Surya Roshni,



said. He added that it's not just the urban centres but the semi-urban centres have also seen "recording steady growth" in the festive period. Chirag Gupta, founder and ceo of premium snacking company 4700BC, is upbeat about this year's demand, witnessing a "20-25 per cent" increase for its festive gourmet hampers. The festive season has set the cash registers ringing for brands selling their wares online. And like previous years, the online sector continues to garner strong demand. For instance, online marketplace Snapdeal

witnessed a "1.8X growth" in order volumes during the festive sale. "Women's fashion (2.5 X growth), children's fashion (2X growth) and home decor (1.6X increase) are among the categories that saw significant increase compared to the previous year," a Snapdeal spokesperson said. In addition to buying physical gifts, shoppers have come to rely on digital gift cards that offer minimum inconvenience and enticing discounts. Gift cards are not just hassle free for the ones gifting but also allow the recipients the freedom of choice. Tata Neu's gift card

marketplace, which offers a diverse range of gifting options from high-value electronics to everyday essentials like food and travel, said the category has become very popular on their platform with "over 50 per cent" of existing customers returning frequently to make purchases. Revelling in the festive spirit are also the alcohol brands, with many ditching conventional gift choices such as bed linen or crockery sets for spirits. Major players in the breweries and distilleries industry, such as DeVANS Modern Breweries Ltd and Radico Khaitan, are witnessing growing demand and bumper sales. They have launched new variants and festive packs for their premium products. Mocktail brand Swizzle has also recorded a noticeable uptick of 25 per cent in the sales last month. Last year, according to figures by the excise department, 64 lakh liquor bottles worth about Rs 121 crore were bought by people in Delhi in

just three days running up to Diwali. "One of the reasons liquor has emerged as a preferred gifting choice during festivals is its strong association with celebration and social gatherings. "This year, we hope for this trend to continue and will show sustained growth in alcohol sales, fuelled by an expanding customer base and a heightened interest in distinctive beverage experiences," said Amar Sinha, Chief Operating Officer at Radico Khaitan Limited. Gifting an "experience" in Diwali also has its own loyal takers. Instead of delivering a package to the loved ones, many are opting to give them a break from the daily hustle by booking an exclusive staycation at five-star hotels and resorts. The Claridges, for instance, has an array of staycation offers at its picturesque Uttarakhnd, with packages starting at Rs 20,000 inclusive of breakfast.

3F Oil Palm inks pact with Karnataka Government to empower farmers

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The 3F Oil Palm on Wednesday said it has signed a pact with the Karnataka government to advance sustainable agriculture in rural communities. This partnership will provide farmers access to advanced agricultural technologies, training programmes and essential resources to enhance productivity and support Karnataka's growing horticultural sector, according to a statement. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the Department of Horticulture of Karnataka with an aim to increase palm



oil productivity, create economic growth and empower farmers with sustainable knowledge, offering a model for long-term agricultural success for oil palm cultivators in Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Sedam taluk of Gulbarga district, the company said in a statement. The company plans to introduce cultivation practices, focusing on sustainable growth and community empowerment.

INBRIEF

VIT AP UNIVERSITY HONOURED WITH BHARAT BLOCKCHAIN AWARD

AMARAVATI: VIT AP University is proud to announce that it has been awarded with Bharat Blockchain Academic Excellence Award 2024, representing the state of Andhra Pradesh.



PRACTICAL EXAMINATION FROM NOVEMBER 04

AMRITSAR: The practical examination for all subjects of Guru Nanak Dev University affiliated colleges for BA/BSc Semester - First, Third and Fifth classes under Guru Nanak Dev University are commencing from November 04, 2024.

GNDU EXTENDS LAST DATE FOR ODL AND ONLINE COURSES

AMRITSAR: Guru Nanak Dev University has extended the last date for admission to courses offered under Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Online mode until 15th November 2024 as per the guidelines issued by the University Grants Commission- Distance Education Bureau (UGC-DEB) Notification.

BLOOD DONATION CAMP AT GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY



AMRITSAR: Guru Nanak Dev University has extended the last date for admission to courses offered under Open and Distance Learning and Online mode until 15th November 2024 as per the guidelines issued by the University Grants Commission- Distance Education Bureau Notification.

GNDU CELEBRATED THE "DIWALI FESTIVAL - GREEN GLOW FEST"

AMRITSAR: The Department of Education of Guru Nanak Dev University celebrated the "DIWALI FESTIVAL" under the title "GREEN GLOW FEST" with great enthusiasm under the guidance of, Head, Department of Education.



Piyush Goyal meets Schneider Electric CEO; discusses investment plans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday held a meeting with Peter Herweck, CEO of energy management and automation major Schneider Electric, in Riyadh and discussed the company's investment plans for India. The minister is in Saudi Arabia to discuss ways to further deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries and explore new avenues of trade, investment and economic cooperation. "Held a meeting with Mr Peter Herweck, CEO of @SchneiderElec, a global company specialising in energy management and digital automation with a strong presence in our country. Discussed the company's investment plans for India and how it can leverage the nation's talent pool and government support to provide high-tech, sustainable, and energy-



efficient solutions to the world," Goyal said in a post on social media platform X. In March this year, Schneider Electric said that it will invest Rs 3,200 crore by 2026 to make India its manufacturing hub for domestic sales as well as exports. As part of this, the company will set up manufacturing facilities for its various products and solutions across India. Presently, the company has 30 factories across India. The minister also held a

bilateral meeting with William E Ford, Chairman and CEO of the global growth investment firm, General Atlantic. "Discussed the company's potential to collaborate with India's healthcare sector, especially in consumer-focused health enterprises. Additionally, explored potential for expansion of their investment in Global Capability Centres (GCCs), as well as various other sectors, in the country," Goyal said in another post.

Suzuki to supply electric SUV to Toyota as collaboration expands

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Suzuki Motor Corporation will supply the all-new battery electric vehicle SUV model to Toyota Motor Corporation as the companies further expand their collaboration.



The new model is scheduled to be manufactured at Suzuki Motor Gujarat from the early months of 2025, Suzuki Motor Corporation said in a statement. Maruti Suzuki India plans to launch the same model next year. Suzuki has around 58 per cent stake in Maruti Suzuki. "Suzuki will supply our first BEV (Battery Electric Vehicle) to Toyota globally. I am grateful that the collaboration between the two companies has further deepened in this way," Suzuki President Toshihiro Suzuki said. While continuing to be competitors, the companies will deepen collaborations toward solving social issues, including the realisation of a

carbon-neutral society through a multi-pathway approach, he added. Toyota President Koji Sato said by leveraging the BEV unit and platform that the companies have jointly developed, they will take a new step in the collaboration in the field of electrified vehicles. "This will allow us to deliver various choices that contribute to a carbon-neutral society to customers worldwide. We would like to learn from each other's strengths, compete, and further joint efforts based on a multi-pathway approach," he added. The BEV unit and platform

adopted for this model were jointly developed by Suzuki, Toyota, and Daihatsu Motor Corporation, utilising each company's strength. Both Suzuki and Toyota's businesses have their roots in Enshu - the western part of Shizuoka Prefecture - and both companies took on the challenge of switching their businesses from looms to the automobiles industry, the statement said. Suzuki and Toyota started exploring business partnerships in 2016. The fields of collaboration are diverse and include production and mutual supply of vehicles, and the spread of electrified vehicles. As a result, the market launch of collaboration vehicles has expanded to Japan, India, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The new development marks the first BEV in the OEM relationship between the two companies. It will be launched worldwide, providing a BEV choice even in the SUV market, which is showing remarkable growth.



Ronaldo misses late penalty as Al-Nassr eliminated from Saudi cup

AP ■ RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Cristiano Ronaldo missed a stoppage-time penalty and Al-Nassr was eliminated from the King's Cup in a 1-0 loss to Al-Taawoun. The five-time Ballon D'Or winner has yet to win a major trophy since signing for the club almost two years ago.



Playing at the round-of-16 stage of Saudi Arabia's premier knockout competition, Al-Taawoun took the lead on Waleed Al-Ahmad's header with 20 minutes remaining.



Bopanna-Ebden advance to quarterfinals of Paris masters

PTI ■ PARIS

Veteran Indian tennis player Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden advanced to the quarterfinals of the men's doubles event of the Paris Masters here.

Brazil's Atletico Mineiro draws at Argentina's River Plate and reaches Copa Libertadores final



AP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Brazil's Atletico Mineiro drew 0-0 at Argentina's River Plate and reached the final of the Copa Libertadores for the second time.

winning the first leg 5-0. Brazilian teams have won the tournament for the past five years.

India to play international FIFA friendly against Malaysia on Nov 18 in Hyderabad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Winless in three matches after chief coach Manolo Marquez took charge as head coach, the Indian men's football team will play Malaysia in an international friendly in Hyderabad on November 18, national federation (AIFF) said on Wednesday.

match will be played on November 19 but did specify the venue. On Wednesday, it advanced the match by a day and also announced the venue.

scheduled during a FIFA window, clubs are mandated to release players for national duty. The November 18 match will be Marquez's fourth match in charge of the national team and he would be looking for a win against a lower-ranked team, though it will not be an easy one.

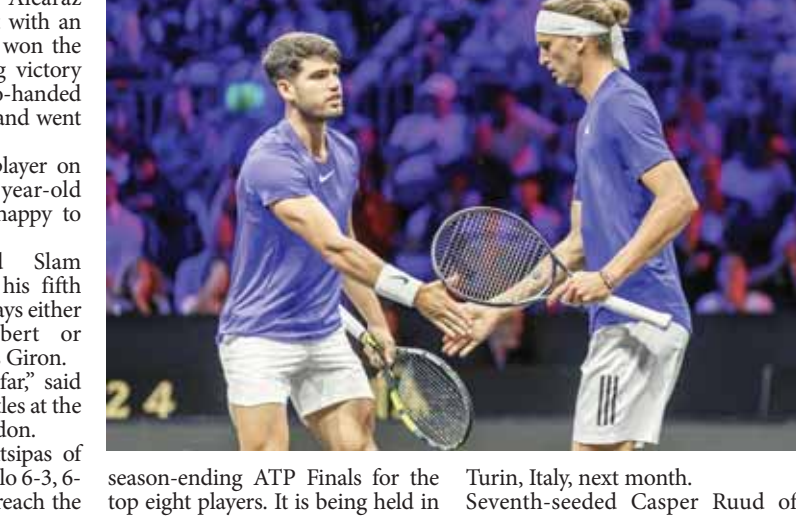
international friendly against the hosts on October 12. The match ended 1-1. The November 18 match will be Marquez's fourth match in charge of the national team and he would be looking for a win against a lower-ranked team, though it will not be an easy one.

Alcaraz and Tsitsipas reach 3rd round at Paris Masters but Rublev loses temper and match

AP ■ PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz overcame some crusty moments on his serve to beat Nicolas Jarry 7-5, 6-1 and reach the third round of the Paris Masters.

Serving for the match, Alcaraz saved another break point with an ace to make it deuce and won the next two points, clinching victory when the erratic Jarry's two-handed backhand clipped the net and went out.



Norway, a three-time Grand Slam runner-up, started well before losing 7-6 (3), 3-6, 6-4 to unseeded Australian Jordan Thompson. In an earlier second-round match, sixth-seeded Andrey Rublev lost two tiebreakers and his temper as his hopes of qualifying for the Finals took a hit.

for the Finals. The big-serving American reached the season-ending tournament for the second time in three years.

outside contention for Turin, while No. 12 Hubert Hurkacz lost 6-1, 6-3 to Alex Michelsen.

Punjab FC, Chennaiyin FC clash following a string of good run

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In-form sides Punjab FC and Chennaiyin FC will square off in the Indian Super League here on Thursday as the battle for playoffs spots heats up.



against the Hyderabad FC attackers by winning 2-0. Never before in the ISL have Punjab FC managed to keep successive clean sheets at home though.

matches without finding the back of the net in the competition, which was a sequence of two clashes in December last year.

to achieve positive outcomes. For instance, they have won seven points from losing situations this season - the joint-most with Kerala Blasters FC.

expressed confidence by saying that he wants his team to take the lead in setting the tempo of the game regardless of the ideas and plans that Chennaiyin FC come up with.

FIFA announces first Club World Cup sponsor with Chinese electronics firm branding VAR checks

AP ■ SHANGHAI

FIFA finally announced a first sponsor for its revamped Club World Cup on Wednesday in a deal that will brand video review checks at the tournament in the United States next year.

tournament has had a sponsor for video reviews since the technology was approved before the men's 2018 World Cup in Russia.

months ago and U.S. Sponsors have been more focused on deals for the men's 2026 World Cup that will be co-hosted with Canada and Mexico.

deal sealed with Infantino at a signing ceremony in Shanghai. Reviews of referee decisions in key incidents - for goals, penalty awards and red cards - can extend to at least two minutes, despite FIFA's aim during trials in 2016 of completing checks in about 10 seconds.



Jürgen Klopp defends his decision to join Red Bull after fan backlash

AP ■ BERLIN

Jürgen Klopp has defended his decision to head up Red Bull's group of soccer clubs, saying he "didn't want to step on anybody's toes" after his decision prompted a backlash from fans of his former teams in Germany.

some fans. "I really don't know what exactly I could have done for everyone to be happy," he said.

suggested it played an important role in bringing high-level club soccer back to the former East Germany with the Leipzig project.

EASWARAN, NITISH REDDY, PRASIDH TO BE UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY

PTI ■ MACKAY (AUSTRALIA)
The outings of Abhimanyu Easwaran, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Prasidh Krishna will be the primary focal points of India A's four-day match against their Australian counterparts, starting here on Thursday. Easwaran, Nitish and Prasidh have been included in India's squad for the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, beginning on November 22, and the thinktank will be eager to know how they fare in Australian conditions. Easwaran's performance will, however, have far more significance as the 29-year-old opener could potentially replace Rohit Sharma's replacement if the captain skips a match or two against Australia for personal reasons. Easwaran, who is also the vice-captain of India A here, is a vastly experienced campaigner having played 99 First-Class matches to score 7638 runs with 27 hundreds and 29 fifties. He has also been part of the India squad in the past but what inspires confidence is his

recent form in First-Class matches. The right-hander struck 157 and 116 for India B in the Duleep Trophy before making a 191 against Mumbai for Rest of India in the Irani Trophy and made another hundred in his final red-ball game before flying out to Australia - an unbeaten 127 against Uttar Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy. So, he has the body of work to feel in fine fettle ahead of the match against Australia A, though the conditions here will be vastly different from what he has experienced so far this season in India. On the other hand, Nitish does not boast of such impressive First-Class numbers, as he has been drafted into squad for his perceived ability as a pace-bowling all-rounder and, even in that, batting is his stronger suit. In the Duleep Trophy earlier this year, Nitish made two ducks with a highest of 40 in five matches while grabbing just two wickets. But the selectors have backed him ahead of senior names such as Shardul Thakur, who has resumed playing domestic



INDIA A vs AUSTRALIA A

matches after recovering from an injury. So, this will be a good opportunity for the selectors to check how the Andhra man measures up to a very capable Australia A side that includes

the likes of Camrean Bancroft, Marcus Harris, Michael Neser, Cooper Connolly and Scott Boland. Prasidh is a late addition to the India A squad in place of initially picked up Yash Dayal,

and the Karnataka pacer needs to find some rhythm here. Since his return from injury, Prasidh has picked up just seven wickets in as many innings across Duleep Trophy, Irani Cup and Ranji Trophy.

But the selectors seemed to have been influenced by the theoretical advantage his height brings in on the Australian decks. Prasidh can use this opportunity to keep himself ready if he gets a call-up to the first eleven as the third seamer behind Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj or if the management wants to rest one of the frontline pacers as part of workload management during the tour. Other than this aforementioned trio, the likes of skipper Rituraj Gaikwad, top-order batter B Sai Sudharsan, pacers Yash Dayal and Navdeep Saini and middle-order batter Devdutt Padikkal can look forward to churn out some good efforts to keep themselves on the periphery of selection in case of an eventuality in the senior side. Ishan Kishan, the wicketkeeper batter, too will

be eager to make the most of this chance after a finding his favour back with the powers that be.

TEAMS (FROM):
India A: Rituraj Gaikwad (capt), Abhimanyu Easwaran (vice-capt), Devdutt Padikkal, Sai Sudharsan, B Indrajith, Abishek Porel (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Mukesh Kumar, Ricky Bhui, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Manav Suthar, Navdeep Saini, Khaleel Ahmed, Tanush Kotian, Prasidh Krishna.
Australia A: Nathan McSweeney (c), Cameron Bancroft, Scott Boland, Jordan Buckingham, Cooper Connolly, Ollie Davies, Brendan Doggett, Marcus Harris, Sam Konstas, Nathan McAndrew, Michael Neser, Todd Murphy, Fergus O'Neill, Jimmy Peirson, Josh Philippe, Corey Rochiccioli, Beau Webster.

Retirement thought hit me after we lost to India in T20 WC: Matthew Wade

PTI ■ MELBOURNE
Former Australia wicketkeeper-batter Matthew Wade has revealed that his team's defeat to India in the T20 World Cup earlier this year was probably the moment that ended his career as it was the first time that the thought of retirement crossed his mind. India, led by skipper Rohit Sharma's superb 41-ball 92, defeated the Aussies by 24 runs in a crucial Group 1 Super Eight match at St

Lucia to book a semifinal berth and eventually went on to bag the title. "It (the thought about retirement) probably hit home after we lost against India. That was when I really sat down and reflected that that was probably the end of my career. That was an emotional moment," Wade, who announced his retirement from international cricket on Tuesday, told cricket.Com.Au Wade, who generally batted



down the order in T20 Internationals, said the arrival of Josh Inglis as a wicketkeeper who could bat top of the order too influenced his decision. "The time was right for 'Ingo' (Josh Inglis) to come

in. You can see what he's done in the last (few months that) he's been in the team as the No.1 'keeper. He was certainly ready to come in and take that role. "They're looking for maybe someone who can bat more top to middle order now as well and that suits him really well." The Tasmanian also said he is unlikely to participate in the upcoming IPL mega auction as it will be tough to make himself available for the entire duration of the event.

Wade has been a part of Gujarat Titans over the last two seasons. "I'm doing the ILT20 which will be straight after the BBL. I'm doing the (Abu Dhabi) T10, which leads straight into BBL. "So, I'm going over to Dubai at the end of this month. I've got some Tassie (Tasmania) one-dayers that I've been playing as well. I won't be in the IPL," said Wade, who will be Australia's wicket-keeping and fielding coach during the white ball series against Pakistan.

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the Authorized Officer of Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited (acting in capacity as Trustee for the below mentioned Trusts) (hereinafter referred to as "ARCIL") is incorporated under the companies Act, 1956 and registered as an Asset Reconstruction Company with the Reserve Bank of India of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as "the SARFAESI Act") and whereas the Borrower / Co-Borrowers as mentioned in Column No. 2 of the below mentioned chart obtained loan from MUTHOOT HOUSING FINANCE COMPANY LTD, the Original Lenders and whereas ARCIL has acquired the financial assets relating to the loan accounts mentioned herein below and whereas ARCIL being the secured creditor under the SARFAESI Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers as mentioned herein below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons.

LANo. / Name of Original Lender / Demand Notice Date / Name of the Trust	Borrower / Co-Borrower Name	Total Outstanding in INR as per Demand Notice Date
LAN: 18600080075 & 18600081181 Original Lender : MUTHOOT HOUSING FINANCE COMPANY LTD Date of Demand Notice : 23-10-2024 Name of the Trust : Arcil-Retail Loan Portfolio-086-A-TRUST ("Arcil")	TANESH RUP RAM DEVANGAN ALIAS THANES KUMAR ALIAS TANESH DEVANGAN, KUNTEE TANESH KUMAR DEVANGAN ALIAS KUNTEE DEVANGAN	Rs. 17,04,450.56/- (Rupees Seventeen Lakhs Four Thousand Four Hundred Fifty and Paise Fifty Six Only) As on 23-10-2024

Description of Property - ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY PART OF KHASRA NO.15, AREA 1050 SQ. FEET. SITUATED AT VILLAGE BHOTHALI, P.H.N NO-34 R.N.M, TEHSIL KHURD, DISTRICT DHAMTARI, CHATTISGARH. BOUNDED BY : NORTH : HOUSE OF SHANTRUGHAN MOHAN SOUTH : HOUSE OF ROOPRAM, EAST - HOUSE OF RAMESH, WEST : LANDS OF TEK RAM

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers, as mentioned herein above, calling upon them to make payment of the total outstanding amount as shown herein above, against the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice. Failure to make payment of the total outstanding amount together with further interest by the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, ARCIL shall be constrained to take u/s 13(4) for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described above. Steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder. You are put to notice that the said mortgage can be redeemed upon payment of the entire amount due together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by Arcil at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or private treaty for transfer by way of sale, as detailed in Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act. Take note that in terms of S- 13 (13) of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby restrained from transferring and/or dealing with the Secured Properties in any manner by way of sale, lease or in any other manner.

Date - 30-10-2024, Place - Raipur Sd/-, Authorized officer, Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited

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