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# भटकों मत हेमंत, मुद्दों पर अटकों!

## 2019 के चुनाव से पहले किए गए 300+ वादों से भागो मत हेमंत, जिम्मेदारी निभाओ!

### सरकार बनी, तो तीन और उपराजधानियां बनायेंगे: हेमंत सोरेन



झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा (झामुमो) की बदलाव मकसद वाली नवनीतियों को राजधानी के हर पक्ष में बनें, भारी चाँद के बाद भी नई संख्या में कार्यकर्ता जुटे थे, देश में पार्टी के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष हेमंत सोरेन ने घोषणा की है कि राज्य में झामुमो की सरकार 2019 बनी तो एक राजधानी के साथ-साथ चार उपराजधानियां भी बनेंगी, दुपका पहले से ही है, इसके अलावा चाँदबासा, पलामू और हजारीबाग की भी उपराजधानी बनाया जाएगा, हेमंत सोरेन ने और भी कई वादों के बारे में कहा कि खुबर सरकार में किसान आत्महत्या कर रहे हैं, मंत्री हो वा अधिकारी सब चोटाले में लगे हुए हैं, झामुमो की घोषणाएं

### व्यवस्थापक सचिव अधिकार

निश्चय पत्र

- पलामू चाँदबासा एवं हजारीबाग को उप राजधानी
- नौकरियों में स्थानीय लोगों को 75% का आरक्षण
- किसानों को कर्ज माफ़ी, बेरोजगार युवकों को भत्ता
- खेतों पर मजदूरी को स्वरोजगार के लिए 15 हजार का अनुदान
- महिलाओं को सरकारी नौकरी में 50% आरक्षण
- दो साल के अंदर पांच लाख युवाओं को नौकरी
- पांच वर्षों तक उपवास में नती लाये गये अधिवासित भूमि रखती को वापस करेंगे
- अनमानवादी सैनिक, सशस्त्र एवं पाग शिक्षकों के लिए सेवा जारी एवं वेतनमान का निर्धारण
- पौधे तब तक लड़कियों को मुफ्त शिक्षा
- पिछड़े वर्ग को नौकरियों में 27% आरक्षण
- गरीब सवारी छात्रों को मुफ्त शिक्षा व छात्रवृत्ति
- सभी शौदी के जन्म स्थान को पर्यटन स्थल के रूप में विकसित

### कांग्रेस का वादा, परिवार में एक सदस्य को नौकरी

झारखंड विधानसभा चुनाव के लिए कांग्रेस ने रविवार को घोषणा पत्र जारी किया। इसमें परिवार के एक सदस्य को नौकरी देने का वादा किया। कांग्रेस ने अपने घोषणा पत्र में कहा है कि राज्य में अगर गठबंधन की सरकार बनी तो 6 माह के अंदर विश्व पट्टी सरकारी नौकरियों को भरा जाएगा। कांग्रेस ने घोषणा पत्र में यह भी वादा किया कि जब तक नौकरी नहीं मिलती है तब तक परिवार के एक सदस्य को बेरोजगारी भत्ता दिया जाएगा। बताते चलें कि कांग्रेस, झामुमो और राजद के साथ गठबंधन के साथ झारखंड विधानसभा का चुनाव लड़ रही है। इसमें झामुमो की 43, कांग्रेस की 31 और राजद की 2 सीटें मिलनी हैं।

### हेमंत सोरेन का दावा: खत्म करेंगे नक्सलवाद

पूर्व सीएम हेमंत सोरेन ने कहा कि मुझे ये नक्सलवाद को खत्म करने का एकमात्र उपाय सभी को रोजगार मुहैया कराना है। नक्सली घटनाओं पर खैरेगी के अग्रणी पर उन्होंने कहा कि खैरेगी को लोकतंत्र का सम्मन नहीं है, इसी कारण वह पेशे छोड़ करती है। उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार बनी, तो खैरेगी को लोकतंत्र का सम्मन नहीं है, इसी कारण वह पेशे छोड़ करती है। उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार बनी, तो खैरेगी को लोकतंत्र का सम्मन नहीं है, इसी कारण वह पेशे छोड़ करती है। उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार बनी, तो खैरेगी को लोकतंत्र का सम्मन नहीं है, इसी कारण वह पेशे छोड़ करती है।

# सरकार बनी तो एक साल में 5 लाख नौकरी



झामुमो की सरकार बनी, तो एक साल में पांच लाख नौकरी देने और नती दे पाने पर राजनीति से संन्यास ले लेंगे, यह घोषणा विश्व झामुमो के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री हेमंत सोरेन ने बुधवार को कदमा उलियायन स्थित शाहीद निर्मल महतो के 32वां शताब्दि दिवस पर

आयोजित सभा को संबोधित करते हुए की, उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार बनी, तो 25 करोड़ रुपये तक लोगों को नौकरी देनी और नती दे पाने पर राजनीति से संन्यास ले लेंगे, यह घोषणा विश्व झामुमो के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री हेमंत सोरेन ने बुधवार को कदमा उलियायन स्थित शाहीद निर्मल महतो के 32वां शताब्दि दिवस पर

किसानों को तीन हजार व केंद्र सरकार से बैंक खाते में मिलने वाली राशि को खैरेगी कर दिया, का झारखंडी लोगों का जल, जंगल जमीन है, वे खैरेगी के मोहताज नहीं हैं, इस दिन के लिए सिद्धी-कानून से लेकर हजारों लोगों ने कुर्बानी नहीं दी,

## भूमि अधिकार कानून बना कर हर भूमिहीन को भूखंड

आगामी विधानसभा चुनाव के लेकर झामुमो की ओर से मंगलवार को 20 पन्नों का निश्चय पत्र जारी किया गया। झामुमो के केंद्रीय अध्यक्ष शिवू सोरेन से अनुमति लेकर पार्टी की ओर से निश्चय पत्र जारी किया गया, कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष सह नेता प्रतिपक्ष हेमंत सोरेन ने कहा कि झामुमो का निश्चय पत्र आनेवाले समय में राज्य को नती दिशा देगा, उन्होंने कहा कि भूमि अधिकार कानून बना कर सभी स्थानीय भूमिहीनों को भूखंड उपलब्ध कराया जाएगा, 25 करोड़ रुपये तक के सरकारी कर्जों की निवृत्ति सिर्फ स्थानीय लोगों को दी जाएगी, स्थानीय रोजगार अधिकार कानून बना कर राज्य के निजी क्षेत्रों में 75 प्रतिशत नौकरियों स्थानीय लोगों के लिए आरक्षित की जाएगी, स्थानीय व नियोजन नीति को बदल कर झारखंडियों के हितों के अनुरूप बनायी जाएगी, यह पूछे जाने पर क्या स्थानीय नीति का आधार 1932 का खालियान होगा? श्री सोरेन ने कहा कि यहाँ के लोगों की जनभावना के अनुरूप स्थानीय

### झामुमो के निश्चय पत्र की महत्वपूर्ण घोषणाएं

नीति बनायी जाएगी, आगे हेमंत सोरेन ने कहा कि झामुमो सरकार बनने पर राज्य के सभी किसानों को सिंचाई के लिए मुफ्त बिजली दी जाएगी और उनके कर्ज माफ़ किये जाएंगे। स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में सुधार लाते हुए, हर पंचायत में एक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र स्थापित किया जाएगा। राज्य में शिक्षा को बढ़ावा देने के लिए, आदिवासी और पिछड़े क्षेत्रों में नये विद्यालय और तकनीकी संस्थान खोले जाएंगे। इसके साथ ही, झारखंड की सांस्कृतिक धरोहर को संरक्षित करने के लिए विशेष योजनाएं लागू की जाएंगी, ताकि झारखंडी अस्मिता और संस्कृति को सशक्त किया जा सके। राज्य की मौजूदा स्थानीय नीति झारखंडी विरोधी है, यह पूछे जाने पर कि भाजपा के लोग

कह रहे हैं कि सरकार भाजपा की हो बनेगी, चाहे झामुमो का क्यों नहीं साथ लेना पड़े, श्री सोरेन ने कहा कि भाजपा के लोग यह भी कह रहे हैं कि हम हारे या जीते सरकार हम ही बनायेंगे, भाजपा देश में नती नये राजनीतिक इतिहास रच रही है, इसे ध्वजे के रूप में देखा व बाद किया जाएगा, महाराष्ट्र में सरकार बनाने को लेकर लोकतंत्र की हत्या की गयी, उन्होंने कहा कि किसी भी राज्य को राजधानी आइना होती है, आज रांची को कोई ऐसा दिन गुजर रहा है कि जब लूट, हत्या, दुर्घटना का डेढ़खानी की घटनाएं घट रही हैं, एक सवाल के जवाब में श्री सोरेन ने कहा कि निश्चय पत्र के माध्यम से पार्टी ने अपनी सोच जाहिर की है, यह गठबंधन का निश्चय पत्र नहीं है, इसके लिए अलग से न्यूनतम साक्ष्य कार्यक्रम तय किये जाएंगे, भौक पर पार्टी के केंद्रीय उपाध्यक्ष हारी हर्षन अंसरी, पूर्व विधायक योगेंद्र महतो, केंद्रीय महासचिव किनो पंडित, मुख्यमंत्री भद्राचार्य, अशोक मंडल समेत कई लोग मौजूद थे,

## राजद ने घोषणा पत्र में महिलाओं को 50 फीसदी आरक्षण देने का किया वादा

राजद ने अपने घोषणा पत्र में गरीबी मिटाने, बेरोजगारी खत्म करने और पिछड़ों को आरक्षण देने को प्राथमिकता दी है। राजद के प्रदेश अध्यक्ष अमर कुमार सिंह ने रविवार को घोषणापत्र जारी कर कहा कि अगर गठबंधन की सरकार आती है तो महिलाओं को हर स्तर पर 50 प्रतिशत आरक्षण दिया जाएगा। बालूघाटी की नीलामी का अधिकार पंचायत को दिया जाएगा। पुराने पेंशन योजना दोबारा शुरू की जाएगी। जेपीएससी और अन्य प्रतियोगी परीक्षा निर्धारित कराया जाएगा। राजद ने अपने घोषणापत्र में मेधावी छात्रों को निःशुल्क उच्च शिक्षा का वादा किया है। कॉलेज छात्रों को लैपटॉप और टैब दिया जाएगा। राज्य में बंद पड़े स्कूलों को खोला जाएगा। साथ ही पारा शिक्षकों, अनमानवादी सैनिकों और सहायिका को स्थायी किया जाएगा। सभी जिलों में नारी उद्योग केंद्र और वृद्धाश्रम की भी व्यवस्था

होगी। अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति, पिछड़ा वर्ग और अल्पसंख्यक समुदाय के सामाजिक-आर्थिक स्तर को बढ़ाया जाएगा।

### किसानों के लिए

घोषणापत्र में बंजर भूमि को कृषि योग्य बनाकर भूमिहीनों को देने का वादा किया गया है। कृषि आधारित उद्योग को बढ़ावा देने, ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी का क्रियान्वयन करने, काम के बदले अन्याय योजना लागू करने और 10 हजार रुपए तक के कृषि ऋण को माफ़ करने का वादा है।

## कांग्रेस ने किया कर्जमाफी का एलान

झारखंड विधानसभा चुनाव के लिए कांग्रेस ने घोषणापत्र जारी किया, «घोषणापत्र में पार्टी ने खैरेगी के लिए पा 2 लाख रुपये तक के लोगों को माफ़ करने का वादा किया है। खैरेगी का नती है कि इसमें पंचायतों में शामिल लोगों पर लगे मुकदमे हटाने की बात कही गई है, CMA, SPA एक समेत स्कूलों की खरना जाल पर जोर देते हुए शिक्षा को लेकर बेतरास सुनिश्चाने के वादा किए गए हैं, पार्टी ने झारखंड की सभी जिलों में बंद 6 भागों से सला कट रहे (अधिकतम 7 वर्ष तक की) क्रेडिटों को तुरंत बमागत पर रिहा करने का वादा भी किया है, यह भी वादा किया गया है कि झारखंड सरकार को तरफ से पिछले कुछ वर्षों में जिन कर्जों का (अधिकतम) किया गया है और जिसपर अभी तक कोई काम शुरू नहीं हुआ है उसे फिर से उनके मालिकों को वापस कर दी जाएगी, पार्टी ने कहा है कि छात्रों को छात्रवृत्ति सम्बंधित सभी बकाया राशि को तत्काल नती दी जाएगी, रांची, जमशेदपुर और धनबाद में मैट्रो लाइफ़ लोकल बनाना जाएगा,

## झामुमो की सरकार बनी तो नियोजन नीति सुधारेंगे: हेमंत

झामुमो के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष हेमंत सोरेन ने कहा है कि इस बार राज्य में युपीए गठबंधन की सरकार बनेगी, भाजपा की स्थिति दयनीय है, भाजपा गुजरान, महाराष्ट्र व अन्य पड़ोसी राज्यों से लोगों को बुला कर प्रचार करा रही है, इससे मदवा समेत अन्य जिलों के बेरोजगार युवक युवातियों को नौकरी से खिंच कर दिया गया है। इससे युवाओं में काफी अशंका है। वर्तमान सरकार आम लोगों के हित में नहीं बल्कि अपने हित में काम कर रही है।

मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि वर्तमान सरकार हर मोर्चे पर फेल है तथा सिर्फ़ बैनर पोस्टर से अपना चेहरा चमकाने में लगी है। उन्होंने कहा कि एक ओर जहाँ पीएम मंडल डैम का शिलान्यास कर रहे हैं दूसरी ओर सांसद शाहीद नीलांबर पीतांबर की प्रतिमा का अनावरण कर रहे हैं। अगर इन्हीं सह पता नहीं कि शाहीदों के गांव के लोग मंडल डैम के कारण विस्थापित हो जाएंगे। झारखंड के लोगों को दुख देकर वर्तमान सरकार विहार को पानी देने के लिए लासलायित है। यह होने नहीं दिया जाएगा इस अवसर पर केंद्रीय महासचिव मिथिलेश कुमार ठाकुर ने कहा कि स्थानीय नीति के नाम पर राज्य को दो हिस्से में बांट दिया गया है। इससे मदवा समेत अन्य जिलों के बेरोजगार युवक युवातियों को नौकरी से खिंच कर दिया गया है। इससे युवाओं में काफी अशंका है। वर्तमान सरकार आम लोगों के हित में नहीं बल्कि अपने हित में काम कर रही है।

## गरीब परिवार को सालाना 72 हजार रुपये



झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा (झामुमो) ने मंगलवार को जारी अपने निश्चय पत्र (घोषणा पत्र) में स्थानीय नीति बदलने की बात कही है, राज्य की नौकरियों में स्थानीय लोगों को 75 फीसदी आरक्षण और महिलाओं को 50 फीसदी आरक्षण देने का वादा किया गया है, निश्चय पत्र में समाज के हर वर्ग के लिए पार्टी ने घोषणा की है, इसमें किसानों की कर्ज माफ़ी से लेकर लड़कियों व गरीब सवारी छात्रों को मुफ्त शिक्षा देने की बात कही गयी है, झामुमो ने हर गरीब परिवार को 72 हजार रुपये सालाना देने का वादा किया है,

## शाहीद निर्मल महतो शहादत दिवस पर बोले हेमंत सोरेन

### झामुमो के 'निश्चय पत्र' में हर वर्ग के लिए सुनहरे वादे

- सरकार बनते ही पाँच लाख सरकारी नौकरियों की व्यवस्था।
- सरकारी नौकरी न मिलने पर स्नातक को 5,000 रुपये तथा स्नातकोत्तर को 7,000 रुपये प्रति माह भत्ता।
- निर्धन परिवार की नवविवाहिताओं को सोने का सिक्का उपहारस्वरूप।
- महिलाओं को आधार कार्ड पर बिना गारंटी 50,000 रुपये का ऋण।
- गरीब महिलाओं को 2000 रुपये प्रतिमाह चूल्हा खर्च।
- धान का खरीद मूल्य 2300 से 2700 रुपए प्रति क्विंटल।
- सभी गरीब परिवार को 72 हजार रुपए हर साल सुनिश्चित राशि।
- वृद्धापेंशन 2500 रुपए प्रति माह, 10 रुपए में धोती, साड़ी, लुंगी।
- जन वितरण दुकानों से गरीबों को चायपत्ती, सरसो तेल, साबुन, सब्जियाँ एवं दल।
- गरीब परिवारों को तीन कमरों के सुविधायुक्त आवास निर्माण के लिए तीन लाख रुपए।

## झामुमो का चुनावी वादा - 75% नौकरियां झारखंडियों के लिए



झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा ने विधानसभा चुनाव में वोटों को लुप्ताने के लिए लुप्ताने वादे किए हैं। मोर्चा के घोषणापत्र को निश्चय पत्र का नाम दिया गया है। झामुमो के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष हेमंत सोरेन ने मंगलवार को इसे जारी करते हुए अपनी प्राथमिकताएं दिखाई दस मीक पर झामुमो प्रमुख शिवू सोरेन भी मौजूद थे। झामुमो ने गरीबों को सालाना 72 हजार रुपये देने का वादा किया है। झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा ने स्थानीय लोगों के अधिकार पर ज्यादा फोकस किया है। इसके अलावा महिलाओं के अधिकार, युवाओं के अधिकार, जल, जंगल, जमीन, आदिवासी दलित कल्याण एवं बस संरक्षण आदि भी घोषणा पत्र के एजेन्डे में शामिल हैं। रांची प्रेस क्लब में पत्रकारों से मुखातिब हेमंत सोरेन ने कहा कि अगर उनकी सरकार बनी तो बेरोजगार अधिकार कानून बनाएँ और राज्य के निजी क्षेत्रों में 75 प्रतिशत नौकरियों स्थानीय लोगों के लिए आरक्षित करेंगे। इसके अलावा सरकारी टेंडर में 25 करोड़ तक के काम सिर्फ़ स्थानीय लोगों को दिए जाएंगे। भूमि अधिकार कानून बनकर सभी स्थानीय भूमिहीनों को जमीन उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी। इसी प्रकार सरकारी नौकरी में आरक्षण का प्रतिशत बढ़ाने का वादा भी झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा ने किया है। निश्चय पत्र के मुताबिक सरकारी नौकरी में झारखंड के पिछड़े समुदाय को 27 प्रतिशत, आदिवासियों को 28 प्रतिशत और दलितों को 12 प्रतिशत आरक्षण दिया जाएगा। इसके अलावा झारखंड के स्थानीय संवर्ग वर्ग के गरीब छात्रों

को निशुल्क शिक्षा और छात्रवृत्ति देने का वादा किया गया है।

### झारखंड आंदोलन के शाहीदों के परिवारों को नौकरी

झामुमो के घोषणापत्र में झारखंड आंदोलन के दौरान शहीद हुए परिवार के एक सदस्य को सरकारी नौकरी देने व प्रतियोगी परीक्षा के चयन उन्हें नौकरी देने के लिए कानून बनाने की बात कही गई है। लोहार, लोहार, बरहड़िक नैसी जातियां जो जुटि बस जाति विशेष की सुविधाओं से खिंच रहे हैं उन्हें अवश्यकर संशोधन कर लाभ दिलाया जाएगा।

### युवाओं के लिए कई घोषणाएं

झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा ने युवाओं के बड़े बोट बैंक को देखते हुए यह घोषणा की है कि सरकार गठन के दो साल के अंदर विपिन खाली पटी पर सरकारी पदों पर झारखंडी युवकों और युवातियों को निशुल्क की जाएगी। नौकरी नहीं मिलने तक सभी बेरोजगार स्नातकों 5000 तथा स्नातकोत्तर को 7000 रुपये बेरोजगारी भत्ता दिया जाएगा। इसके अलावा हर पंचायत में झारखंड युवक-युवातियों को पंचायती राज योजना के निर्माण और कार्यक्रम से जुड़ते हुए निश्चित आय के साथ रोजगार उपलब्ध कराया जाएगा।

झारखंड लोक सेवा आयोग, कार्यकारी चयन आयोग एवं अन्य प्रतियोगी परीक्षा में सिर्फ 100 रुपये का परीक्षा शुल्क देय होगा। सभी जातियों के गरीब छात्रों को निशुल्क हेतु होने वाली प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं के लिए कोई शुल्क नहीं देना होगा। हर प्रखंड में नता सुविध केंद्र की स्थापना की जाएगी। इसके अलावा खाली पड़े पदों को भरा जाएगा।

# Assembly Polls: Meeting focuses on infrastructure, voter awareness, and law and order

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

A review meeting was held today under the chairmanship of District Election Officer Ananya Mittal at the Collectorate Auditorium in Jamshedpur. The meeting included senior and in-charge officers of all election-related cells to assess preparations for the upcoming 2024 Assembly Elections. The primary focus was on ensuring mutual coordination and strict adherence to the guidelines set by the Election Commission to guarantee fair, transparent, independent, and fear-free elections.

Mittal reviewed the progress of key cells responsible for the election process, including the Personnel Cell, Material Cell, EVM Cell,

Vehicle Cell, Law and Order Cell, Expenditure Account Cell, Training Cell, and Media Cell, among others. Each cell provided updates on their action plans, and special attention was given to the polling booths' infrastructure. The District Election Officer emphasized ensuring the availability of ramps, electricity, drinking water, toilets, wheelchairs, and proper access roads to facilitate voters, especially Persons with Disabilities (PWD).

The Vehicle Cell was instructed to finalize the assessment and acquisition of vehicles for election use, with clear instructions that all vehicles required for election duties will be managed by the Vehicle Cell. Mittal also mentioned that the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)



would come into effect once the Election Commission announces the election dates, and the MCC cell was tasked with ensuring its

strict compliance. The District Election Officer also highlighted the need for voter awareness through the Systematic

## Banks to report transactions over ₹10 Lakh

Banks to report transactions over ₹10 Lakh

Jamshedpur: In a move to enhance transparency and ensure strict monitoring of election expenditure, District Election Officer Ananya Mittal and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kishore Kaushal held a crucial meeting with enforcement agencies at the Collectorate auditorium today. The focus of the meeting was the effective use of the Election Seizure Management System (ESMS)

app, recently launched by the Election Commission, to track and report election-related seizures.

The ESMS app is designed to provide real-time data on the seizure of cash, liquor, weapons, drugs, and other illegal items during the election period. Officers were directed to ensure all such activities, particularly those conducted by the Flying Squad Teams (FST) and Static Surveillance Teams (SST), are promptly recorded online through the app and

portal.

SSP Kaushal underscored the need for heightened security once the MCC comes into effect. He announced that check posts and CCTV cameras will be installed at inter-district and inter-state borders, while FST and SST teams will be activated. Additionally, banks will be required to report any transactions or withdrawals exceeding ₹10 lakh to the enforcement agencies and the Election Expenditure Monitoring Team.

voters was to be widely publicized.

Mittal urged all senior officers to hold regular meetings, ensure proper coordination, and complete their election-related duties within the stipulated time frame to ensure smooth election conduct. He reiterated that the top priority of the district administration is to conduct fair and transparent elections without fear or external influence.

Key officials present at the meeting included Project Director ITDA Deepak Chaudhary, ADM Law and Order Aniket Sachan, SDM Dhalbhum Shatabdi Majumdar, Director NEP, District Planning Officer, District Supply Officer, and other senior officers from the Municipal Corporation and various departments.

# Jharkhand students should strive for fully funded Ph D programmes in US: Dr Pawan Kumar

PNS : RANCHI

In US, UK and Germany, all the Ph D programmes in public universities are fully funded by the respective institutes and carry lucrative stipends also therefore students of Jharkhand should strive for selection and enrolment there. Out of every 100 overseas applicants hardly 5-6 get selected based on their CV, earlier research work and justification of why he/she wants to pursue research in that particular laboratory or university.

Dr Pawan Kumar, Associate Professor, Stony Brook University, New York,



USA outlined these points while delivering an awareness lecture at College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry of BAU on Tuesday. Drafting of CV and application is very important and students

should master that skill. They should have adequate knowledge of the lab or institute where they want to pursue PG programmes and this knowledge can be acquired through the webpage of the institute and other online

content. In appointments against scientific positions in the US, more weightage is given on research papers, aptitude and dedication towards work than that of disciplines of degrees. "That is why I was appointed in the department of microbiology despite having Master's in Veterinary Physiology and Ph D in Pharmacology", he added. He also replied to the queries of students regarding Master's, Ph D and Post Doc programmes in the US and assured his all kind guidance and support in that process.

Dr Pawan, an alumnus of BAU veterinary faculty has two postdocs from Blood Centre of Wisconsin and

University of Pittsburgh, US and has contributed a lot in animal immunity. He also delivered a technical lecture on 'Immune and epithelial cell interaction at the intestinal mucosa' for the students and teachers of the college.

Dean of the Veterinary Faculty Dr Sushil Prasad welcomed the speaker while coordinator of the event Dr Nandani Kumari proposed a vote of thanks. Students Prasenjit and Amisha anchored the programme. Dean PG Dr MK Gupta and Associate Dean of Dairy Technology College Dr AK Pandey also spoke on the occasion.

# Assembly polls: 9182 personnel to be deployed across six constituencies

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In preparation for the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024, a total of 9182 personnel will be deployed across six constituencies -

Baharagora, Ghatshila, Potka, Jugsalai, Jamshedpur East, and Jamshedpur West - to ensure smooth polling operations and strict adherence to the Model Code of Conduct. This announcement was made during a press conference held by District Election Officer Ananya Mittal and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kishore Kaushal, who outlined the election schedule and security measures for the region.

The deployment of personnel will play a critical role in ensuring the election process is conducted fairly, independently, and without fear. Mittal stressed the importance of effective coordination between various enforcement agencies to maintain law and order and prevent any violations during the election.

Mittal also introduced the Election Seizure Management System (ESMS) app, which has been launched by the Election Commission to ensure real-time tracking of election expenditures. The app will be used to report the seizure of cash, liquor, weapons, and other contraband by the Flying Squad Teams (FST) and Static Surveillance Teams (SST). This move is aimed at increasing transparency and ensuring that all election-related activities



adhere to strict monitoring protocols.

Expenditure Monitoring: Banks are required to report any cash transactions or withdrawals exceeding ₹10 lakh to the Election Expenditure Monitoring Team and the enforcement agencies to detect any irregularities.

Enhanced Security: Checkpoints and CCTV cameras will be installed at inter-district and inter-state borders. FST and SST teams will be activated to monitor the movement of illicit materials such as cash, narcotics, and other valuable items during the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) period.

Personnel Deployment: A comprehensive deployment plan, covering polling stations in both urban and rural areas, has been established to ensure smooth operations across the six constituencies.

During the press conference, Mittal instructed all enforcement agencies to work in close coordination to ensure a fear-free voting environment. Regular updates and reports regarding the seizure of materials

and any election-related incidents will be shared with the Election Office daily through the ESMS portal.

The press conference was attended by senior officials including ADM Law and Order, Aniket Sachan, and representatives from various departments such as Income Tax, Excise, Railways, and the Postal Department. Together, they discussed the strategic plans to ensure that the Assembly Elections 2024 are conducted smoothly and without disruption.

Key Election Dates Announced:

Gazette Notification Issue: October 18, 2024 (Friday)  
Last Date for Nominations: October 25, 2024 (Friday)

Scrutiny of Nominations: October 28, 2024 (Monday)  
Last Date for Withdrawal of Candidature: October 30, 2024 (Wednesday)

Polling Date: November 13, 2024 (Wednesday)

Counting of Votes: November 23, 2024 (Saturday)

Completion of Election Process: November 25, 2024 (Monday)

# Dr. Ajoy Kumar confident of INDIA alliance forming government in Jharkhand

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Senior Congress leader and former MP Dr. Ajoy Kumar expressed confidence that the INDIA alliance will secure a majority and form the next government in Jharkhand. In a press statement issued on Tuesday, Dr. Kumar welcomed the Election Commission's announcement of the Jharkhand Assembly election dates and emphasized that the

party is fully prepared for the polls.

Dr. Kumar highlighted the achievements of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, stating that the people of Jharkhand have already made up their minds to re-elect the government led by the INDIA alliance. "Hemant Soren has delivered excellent governance, and the public is ready to bring back the alliance to power," he said. He pointed out key initiatives

like the Maiba Samman Yojana, where the monthly financial assistance for women has been increased to ₹2500, which he believes will benefit the alliance in the elections. Further, Dr. Kumar noted the government's efforts in improving education, healthcare, and introducing inclusive welfare schemes. He praised the Sarvajan Pension Scheme, which provides pension benefits to all communi-

ties, and lauded the Hemant Soren-led government for focusing on the welfare of lawyers in the state. As Jamshedpur goes to the polls in the first phase, Dr. Kumar affirmed that their preparations are complete and that they are receiving significant support from the people. He expressed confidence in gaining the backing and cooperation of the voters in the upcoming elections.



## Nibav launches Advanced Series 4 Home Lifts in Jamshedpur

Nibav Lifts, India's largest home elevator brand, has recently launched Nibav Series 4 Home Lifts at the brand's flagship Jamshedpur Experience Centre. This new launch seamlessly integrates advanced technology with exceptional design, offering homeowners an elevated experience of luxury and convenience. The lifts are equipped with features such as an AI-enabled cabin display, intuitive LOP display, and LIDAR 2.0 technology for precise navigation and gentle landings. The unveiling ceremony was led by Shri Shailendra Singh, Renowned Businessman in Hotel & transportation Industry, Shri Bhagwan Singh, Prominent Businessman specializing in real estate trading and the senior management from Nibav Home Lifts. Talking about the new launch, Mr. Vimal Babu, CEO & Founder of Nibav Lifts, said that, with Nibav Series 4 we have set new standards and offer unparalleled quality. We are confident that homeowners will certainly benefit from our Series 4 lifts.

## Indian Navy signs MoU with Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance

RANCHI : The Indian Navy, on 08 October 2024, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with one of India's leading private life insurers to provide life insurance solutions to the civilian personnel of the Indian Navy. As part of this collaboration, Bajaj Allianz Life will offer a variety of life insurance products, ensuring comprehensive coverage at affordable rates.

# Bokaro DC takes charge of poll preparations

PNS : BOKARO

As the Election Commission announced the schedule for Jharkhand Assembly elections, Bokaro's Deputy Commissioner (DC) Vijaya Jadhav has stepped into the spotlight, overseeing the district's preparation for the upcoming polls. With voting set to occur on November 13 and 20, and counting scheduled for November 23, DC Jadhav is responsible for ensuring that the election process in Bokaro's four constituencies - Bokaro, Chas, Bermo, and Gomia - runs smoothly.

In a press conference, DC Jadhav confirmed the timeline for the election in Bokaro, emphasizing that around 1.5 million voters will have the opportunity to participate on November 20. With the Model Code of Conduct now in effect, she assured that all necessary steps are being taken to uphold fair and transparent elections across the district.

DC Jadhav provided a detailed overview of key dates, announcing that the official election notification will be released on October

22. The deadline for filing nominations is set for October 29, with the final date for withdrawal being November 1. Speaking on behalf of the administration, she reiterated that every measure is being put in place to ensure seamless voting and counting.

To streamline the process, DC Jadhav has appointed a team of officers to oversee each constituency. Chas SDO Pranjal Dhanda will manage Bokaro, while Prabhash Dutta, has been assigned to Chandanakiyari. Additional Collector Md. Mumtaz Ansari will handle Gomia, and SDO Bermo Mukesh is in charge of Bermo.

The DC also confirmed that the nomination sites for the constituencies have been arranged, with candidates for Gomia and Bermo filing at the Sub-Divisional Office in Bermo, and those for Bokaro and Chandanakiyari filing at the Chas SDO office.

With a strong and experienced team in place, DC Vijaya Jadhav is confident that Bokaro will witness a fair and efficient election process with maximum voter participations.

# Poll schedules no surprise in Palamu

PNS : DALTONGANJ

The ECI's holding press conference today in regard to the poll schedules for the assembly elections in the states Jharkhand and Maharashtra didn't come as any surprise.

People had expected it most on Monday. The BJP knew when it was to come.

Hours before the ECI's press conference this correspondent was told by a senior BJP leader about ECI's declaration of poll schedules today early this morning itself.

This correspondent met a cross section of people to know their first reactions. Some were indifferent. They declined to speak. Some said it's time to teach a lesson to the MLAs. They have done nothing. They had made huge promises.

Political analysts believe Palamu may see an extreme type of polarisation of votes.

In the lok sabha elections there were elements in the society who had dubbed some booths as Burqa booths for the simple reason of Burqa wearing voters had cast their votes.

Palamu administration had conducted the lok sabha election in all fairness and transparency. There was not even a whimper of complaint from any side.

Again the team that had conducted the lok sabha election here is unchanged. DC Shashi Ranjan and SP Reeshma Ramesan will be playing front foot for the assembly election again as what they had worked for the lok sabha election here in Palamu.

Assembly election is much different from the lok sabha election. In the assembly election faces of the contestants, their skin colours, whether they wear a beard or topi or whether their foreheads have a paste of sandal wood etc are checked.

Brawl at the polling stations is feared most in assembly elections. There are numerous instances of resistance at the polling stations here in the assembly election in Palamu.

# BSL Vigilance Dept holds Capacity Building Training for frontline officers

PNS : BOKARO

Bokaro Steel Limited's (BSL) Vigilance department, as part of its three-month Vigilance Awareness Campaign 2024, conducted a capacity-building training program for its frontline officers on October 15. The event was held at the Gyanarjan & Vikas Department and saw the participation of 31 executive



officers from various departments.

The program's chief guests were Gyanesh Jha, Chief General Manager (Vigilance) & ACVO, and Manish Jalota, Chief General Manager (Gyanarjan & Vikas), along with Santosh Kumar Gupta, Assistant General Manager (Vigilance).

The primary objective of the program was to raise awareness among BSL offi-

cers regarding the organization's systems and procedures, ethics and policies, governance, conduct rules, cyber security, procurement, and other critical areas. In this interactive session, faculty members shared knowledge and insights on these topics with the participants. The event was coordinated by Rajesh Kumar, Deputy General Manager (Gyanarjan & Vikas).



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ALEX FERGUSON  
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CLUB AMBASSADOR  
11 SPORTS

## November's poll results will decide politicians festive mood

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the Election Commission's announcement of another round of Assembly elections in the crucial states of Maharashtra and Jharkhand, and bypolls to several Assemblies and Lok Sabha seats across the States, the decks are now cleared for Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi to plunge into active politics by contesting from Wayanad in Kerala on November 13. The election in Wayanad has been necessitated after Congress Member of Parliament Rahul Gandhi vacated the seat for Rae Bareilly, the other seat he had won during the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year. With Priyanka's potential entry into active politics, the Congress' first family will be looking to solidify its influence in the Parliament. Additionally, with Priyanka's presence in Wayanad, the party hopes to send a strategic message to the public, signalling the Congress's presence in both northern and southern regions. Election Commission (EC) announced single phase Assembly polls in Maharashtra for on November 20, while Jharkhand to vote in two phases on November 13 and 20. The votes for both the polling states and bypolls will be counted on November 23. Keeping in view of the several upcoming festivals, including Diwali from October 29 to November 1, Chhath and Dev Deepawali on November 15,

### Priyanka Gandhi will make LS debut from Wayanad



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar with Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

### CEC punctures Exit Poll balloon

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday said a huge distortion was created due to exit polls, and called for introspection by pollsters. The EC also questioned the practice of showing winning/losing trends five to ten minutes after the official beginning of counting at 8 am on election result days. "Showing winning/losing trends at 8.05 am or 8.10am, which is just five or ten minutes after the start of counting at 8 am is nonsense. Political parties felt there was a huge distortion due to exit polls. Need self-introspection by pollsters," Chief Election

Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Kumar also said exit polls create a huge distraction by raising expectations and it was a matter for self-introspection for the media, particularly electronic media. "We do not govern exit polls, but there is a need for self-introspection. What was the sample size, where was the survey done, how did the result come and what is my responsibility if I did not match to that result, are there disclosures - all of these need to be seen," Kumar said, flanked by two Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and SS Sandhu.

the dates were decided and this will allow voters, particularly those temporarily migrating for the festivals, ample time to return to their registered voting locations. The term of Maharashtra Assembly will end on November 26, while the term of Jharkhand Assembly will end on January 5, 2025. Maharashtra has 288 seats while Jharkhand has 81 seats. Bye-elections to 47 Assembly seats and the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat will be held on November 1. Announcing the schedules Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the date of issue of Gazette notification for the Maharashtra Assembly election is October 22, last date of filing nominations is October 29, the date for scrutiny of nominations will be October 30 and the last date for withdrawal of candidatures is

November 4. "There are 9.63 crore eligible voters in Maharashtra while the number of eligible voters in Jharkhand is 2.6 crore," Kumar said. Expressing concern over urban apathy affecting voter turnout, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday said that polling days in Maharashtra and Jharkhand have been kept mid-week so that more people vote. The EC has been flagging the issue of low polling in urban centres including those like Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, and has been taking a number of steps to increase voter awareness. In Maharashtra, turnouts in 62 of 64 urban Assembly constituencies were less than the state average in 2019, as was the case in Lok Sabha elections, he said, adding "We will have a special drive for urban areas". He said in the recent Haryana election, there were booths in the "poshest" areas where voting was less than 20 per cent. After the Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir polls, the BJP hopes to make a return to power in Maharashtra, where it has an alliance with Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena. The Maharashtra election is expected to witness a two-way fight between the ruling Mahayuti Alliance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena-Eknath Shinde and NCP-Ajit Pawar and Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, of the Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP-Sharad Pawar and the Congress.



## Omar to be CM today... Nayab's turn tomorrow

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

Fifty four-year-old Omar Abdullah is all set to take oath as the first chief minister of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday. His party, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference recorded a historic victory winning 42 Assembly seats in the maiden assembly elections held after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A in 2019. This will be Omar Abdullah's second term in office. However, this time, he will be governing a Union Territory without the special status that Jammu and Kashmir once held. He remained Chief Minister from January 2009 till October 2014. The oath-taking ceremony will take place at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) on the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar, where elaborate security and other arrangements have been made. The swearing-in ceremony is expected to witness several prominent leaders from the INDIA bloc, a coalition of opposition parties, in attendance. Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav and Supriya Sule from the NCP have already reached Srinagar to attend the swearing-in ceremony. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi are also expected to attend the oath ceremony. The National Conference has also extended invitations to the top brass of the DMK, Shiromani Akali Dal, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, MK Stalin, Uddhav Thackeray, Sharad Pawar, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Arvind Kejriwal, and D Raja. Meanwhile, speculations were rife about the list of probable members of the Council of Ministers. The NC is expected to induct a congress nominee in the council along with Independent legislators from the Jammu region to balance the regional aspirations.

The meeting of the Haryana Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs to elect the State legislature party leader of the State will be held on Wednesday. Nayab Singh Saini, who replaced Manohar Lal Khattar as the Chief Minister of Haryana in March is likely to be the CM choice. He was the BJP's chief ministerial face in the state Assembly polls, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav are the central observers for the election of the state legislature party leader in Haryana. It is learnt that Shah and Yadav were named central observers after reports of rebellion by Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh and nine of his Ahirwal loyalist MLAs. The minister, however, clarified that he was "solidly" behind the BJP. BJP experimented by naming one of the senior-most party members Union Minister Rajnath Singh to iron out the heavy factional differences in Rajasthan after the Assembly elections. The meeting, which will be held in Panchkula, will elect the state legislature party leader, Haryana BJP president Mohan Lal Badoli said. The state legislature party leader will be the next chief minister. On Tuesday, Saini held meetings with senior officers making preparations for the BJP's big event. Hectic lobbying for ministerial berths have been doing the rounds and names of probable shares shall be shared to shared party high command on Wednesday. The oath-taking ceremony of the new Haryana Cabinet will take place at Panchkula's Parade Ground in Sector 5 on Thursday and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to attend. The BJP secured a third term in the Assembly polls in Haryana, results of which were declared on October 8. It won 48 seats against the Congress' 37 in the 90-member Assembly in the state.

### Delhi AQI dips to 'severe' category

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The Air Quality Index (AQI) in certain parts of Delhi dipped to severe, a day after GRAP-1 rules kicked in with the national Capital's AQI falling under 'poor' category on Monday. The Anand Vihar pollution control monitoring centre recorded an AQI of 461 at 12:30 pm on Tuesday, data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) showed. Amid the air becoming increasingly hazardous, Chief Minister Atishi announced that 99 teams will inspect private and government construction sites in Delhi to ensure compliance with dust mitigation measures. The average AQI for Delhi stands at 198 in the 'moderate' category at 4 pm, according to the CPCB. With GRAP Stage 1 implemented along with other related measures in the national Capital, the Delhi government convened a high-level meeting to review the implementation of the first stage of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). The meeting was chaired by Atishi and included representatives from various departments such as the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPPC), Public Works Department (PWD), Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and the revenue department among others.

### National Capital Region's second airport almost ready for operations



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region's second airport, Noida International Airport has successfully completed the calibration of the instrument landing system and precision approach path indicator to assess navigation systems. The calibration, carried out by Airports Authority of India (AAI) with support from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), represents a crucial milestone in the airport's journey towards operational readiness. The airport plans to apply for an aerodrome licence in December, this year. The airport is strategically

located at about 72 km from Indira Gandhi International Airport, about 52 kilometres from Noida, about 130 kilometres from Agra and about 90 kilometres from Multi-Modal Logistics Hub at Dadri. The Instrument Landing System (ILS) is a radio navigation system that provides precise guidance to pilots during approach and landing, particularly in low visibility conditions. The Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) is a system of lights positioned beside the runway to provide visual indication to pilots regarding their correct descent angle during the final approach.

"A Beech King Air 360ER from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) began the calibration process on Thursday, 10th October, with the process concluding on 14th October 2024," a media release stated on Tuesday. Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd (YIAPL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG, is developing the airport. The foundation stone for the project was laid in November 2021. The concession period for Noida International Airport commenced on October 1 2021 and will run for 40 years. The airport, which aims to start commercial operations in April 2025, is expected to submit the application for aerodrome licence in December after completing the validation flights. In the first phase, the airport will have one terminal, one runway, 10 aerobridges and 25 parking stands. Once all four development phases are completed, the airport will have a capacity to handle 70 million passengers per year.

### 26 arrested, Bagraich tense, but under control

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant development, Uttar Pradesh police have arrested 26 individuals in connection with the recent violence in Bagraich. The arrests were made earlier today, and the accused were sent to jail following medical examinations, according to SP's Public Relations Officer (PRO) Shivesh Shukla. To prevent the spread of misinformation, internet services in the district have been suspended until October 16. Normalcy is returning in the area as shops in the affected area opened on Tuesday afternoon. "The situation in Bagraich remains tense but under control", District Magistrate Monika Rani said.

### More bomb hoaxes keep airports on edge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Airport staffers and security agencies on Tuesday went into a tizzy to undertake specific counter-terrorist drills at various airports after five planes, including one bound for the United States, received bomb-threat messages through a social media handle on Tuesday. The threats via microblogging platform X came a day after five hoax bomb threat messages to three international flights, a mail train and a university on Monday, caused trouble to hundreds of passengers and airline crew. According to sources, an X handle issued threats on Tuesday to five flights, an Air India Express flight from Jaipur to Bengaluru via Ayodhya (IX765), a SpiceJet flight from Darbhanga to Mumbai (SG116), an Akasa Air flight from Bagdogra to Bengaluru (QP 1373), an Air India flight from Delhi to Chicago (AI 127) and an Indigo flight from Dammam (Saudi Arabia) to Lucknow (6E 98). The Air India Express aircraft underwent a security check at the Ayodhya airport. The SpiceJet and Akasa Air planes have landed, according to flight-tracking websites. An Air India flight from Delhi to Chicago was diverted to Iqaluit Airport in Canada following a bomb



threat. "Flight AI127 operating from Delhi to Chicago on October 15, 2024, was the subject of a security threat posted online and, as a precautionary measure, has landed at Iqaluit Airport in Canada," the airline said. It further said, "Air India notes that it, and other local airlines, have been subject to a number of threats in recent days. Though all have subsequently been found to be hoaxes, as a responsible airline operator all threats are taken seriously." An Ayodhya-bound Air India Express flight also received a bomb threat, which was sent via phone call for the IX 765 flight that flew from Jaipur at 12.25 pm. The Boeing 737 Max8 aircraft with call sign AXB765 landed at Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya airport by 1.59 pm. The aircraft is currently parked in an isolated bay area of Ayodhya airport, while passengers have been alighted from the aircraft.



## Weekly markets offer bargains, and traffic jams as a bonus!

### Large carts piled with clothes, fruits, vegetables, household items, take up roadscape

BY ABHI SINGHAL

Festive season in Delhi is also shopping and gifting season, this inturn is a major factor that contributes to the severe traffic jams that are taking a toll on daily commuters. The glittering lights of the bustling streets bring little cheer to the stagnant long lines of traffic that make navigating the city a daunting experience, especially in the North-West areas, during evening hours. The traffic congestion in the North West Delhi starts intensifying at Britannia Chowk, a crucial crossroad connecting Punjabi Bagh, Netaji Subhash Palace and Rani Bagh. Commuters heading towards Rani Bagh from the crossroad, face long red lights due to excessive rush.

When travelling to the Shakurpur Basti Railway Station one will find sweet shops and small roadside markets in between. The condition becomes disastrous every Wednesday due to the 'Buddh Bazaar' (the ubiquitous Wednesday market) choking the two way road. Large heavy carts piled high with clothes, fruits, vegetables, household items, toys and more for sale take up roadscape. This leads to bumper-to-bumper traffic, exacerbated by many traffic signals on the road. The traffic situation is further complicated on Mahatma Gandhi Road, as major thoroughfares of car modification shops and fruit vendors occupy the sidewalks, leaving little space for vehicles to manoeuvre. The stretch from Shri Ram Mandir crossroads to Mahindra Park Red Light is a notorious bottleneck. The narrow



road bends towards Madhuban Chowk, creating a choke point that disrupts traffic flow for buses and other vehicles. Punjabi Zaika, a restaurant on the Mahindra Park crossroad seems to have earmarked its own parking in the service lane and the road itself. The main road is more difficult to travel on, due to the movement of DTC buses and crowded bus stands. The buses line up one behind the other, and this affects the complete stretch. Illegal parking along these routes adds to the chaos, affecting connectivity to Chandra Shekhar Azad Marg and M2K Rohini. Delhi's traffic woes are not new, the traffic but the festive season has made matters worse. "As soon as I leave home, I'm stuck in a jam. The whole of Delhi is gridlocked," Varun Singh, who was on his way to meet friends, said. Another

commuter, Sanyam, lamented, "What used to be a 10-minute ride now takes at least 30 minutes." Meanwhile Traffic volunteers, and police do what they can to manage the situation. "We took illegally parked vehicles and try to keep things moving, but during the festive season, it's nearly impossible to control," a traffic volunteer stationed at Ashok Vihar Circle, said. Another volunteer explained the challenge of this job, "khade hona asaan nhi hai, aur logo ko samjhana mushkil hai" (It is not easy to stand for so long and make people understand the traffic rules and curate the traffic.) As the peak office hours wear on, the congestion extends to other areas, with heavy traffic beginning at the Punjabi Bagh flyover, leaving Delhiites hoping for a smoother ride amidst the festivities.

Photo: Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

# Polling in Jharkhand scheduled on Nov 13, 20; results on Nov 23

State has 2.6 crore registered voters, including 1.31 crore men and 1.29 crore women

ROSHAN KUMAR : RANCHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday announced the schedule for the 2024 Jharkhand Legislative Assembly elections. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar revealed that voting for the 81 assembly seats will take place in two phases—on November 13 and November 20. The counting of votes will be done on November 23.

Jharkhand has 24 districts, with 44 general seats out of a total of 81 assembly constituencies. Chief Election Commissioner Rajeev Kumar shared that the state has 2.6 crore registered voters, including 1.31 crore men and 1.29 crore women. Among the voters, 11.84 lakh are first-time voters aged 18-19, and there are 66.84 lakh young voters aged 20-29. Additionally, there are 3.67 lakh Persons with Disabilities (PwD) voters and 1.706 voters over the age of 100. The state will have 29,562 polling stations, with 5,042 located in urban areas and 24,520 in rural regions.

Out of the 81 seats in the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly, a party or coalition needs to win at least 41 seats to secure a majority.

The Jharkhand State Assembly's term will end on January 5, 2025, with elections set for 81 constituencies, including 44 General, 9 SC, and 28 ST seats. In the first phase seats where polls will be held on November 13 are Koderma, Barkatha, Barhi, Barkagaon, Hazaribagh, Simaria, Chatra, Baharagora, Ghatshila, Potka, Jugsalai, Jamshepur East, Jamshepur West, Ichagarh, Saraikela, Chaibasa, Majhgaon, Jagannathpur, Manoharpur, Chakradharpur, Kharsawan, Tamar, Torpa, Khunti, Ranchi, Hatia, Kanke, Mandar, Sisai, Gumla, Vishnupur, Simdega, Kolebira, Lohardaga, Manika, Latehar, Panki, Daltonganj, Vishrampur, Chhatrapur, Hussainabad, Garhwa, Bhawanathpur.

Seats where polls will be held on November 20

Seats - Rajmahal, Borio, Barhet, Litipara, Pakur, Maheshpur, Shikaripara,



CEO, Jharkhand, K Ravi Kumar alongwith Additional Chief Electoral Officer Dr. Neha Arora and Sandeep Singh during a press conference at his office in Ranchi on Tuesday. Pix by Ratan Lal

Nala, Jamtara, Dumka, Jama, Jarmundi, Madhupur, Sarath, Deoghar, Poraiyaha, Godda, Mahagama, Ramgarh, Mandu, Dhanwar, Bagodar, Jamua, Gandey, Giridih, Dumri, Gomia, Bermo, Bokaro, Chandankhari, Sindri, Nirsra, Dhanbad, Jharria, Tundi, Bagmara, Silli and Khijri.

In the last assembly elections in 2019, voting took place in five phases from November 30 to December 20, with the results declared on December 21. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) secured 30 seats, the Congress 16, and the BJP won 25. The AJSU Party gained two seats, while Babulal Marandi's

JVM(P) won three. Two months after the election, in February 2020, Marandi merged his JVM party with the BJP.

With the announcement of poll dates the Model Code of Conduct has come into effect in Jharkhand from 3.30 pm on October 15, 2024. Chief Electoral Officer, Jharkhand,

K. Ravi Kumar has informed that the elections will be held in two phases on November 13 and 20. Counting of votes will be done on November 23. The notification for the first phase of elections will be issued on October 18 and for the second phase on October 22.

He said that the Election Commission will ensure compliance with the Model Code of Conduct. Free, fair and peaceful elections will be our priority. Increasing the voting percentage in urban areas is also on our priority list. He was addressing the media at Nirvachan Sadan, Dhurva on Tuesday. The Chief Electoral Officer said that voting will be held in 43 assembly constituencies in the first phase and in 38 assembly constituencies in the second phase. Nominations for the first phase will be till October 25 and the last date for nomination for the second phase will be October 29. Scrutiny of nominations for the first phase will be on October 28 and scrutiny of the second phase will be on October 30. He said that the last date for withdrawal of

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Date of issue of gazette notification - October 18 (Phase 1) and October 22 (Phase 2)  
Last date of nominations - October 25 (Phase 1) and October 29 (Phase 2)  
Scrutiny of nominations - October 28 (Phase 1) and October 30 (Phase 2)  
Last date of withdrawal of candidature - October 30 (Phase 1) and November 1 (Phase 2)  
Phase 1 poll date - November 13  
Phase 2 poll date - November 20  
Date of counting of votes - November 23

nomination for the first phase of elections is 30 October and the last date for withdrawal of nomination for the second phase is 01 November. The entire election process will end on 25 November.

Responding to questions from journalists, he said that extensive preparations have been made to ensure that voters do not face any inconvenience regarding voting. Election personnel have also been trained for this. Arrangements are also being made to reduce the wait of voters at polling stations. He said that the Election Commission will also release an app, through

which voters will be able to get information about the status of polling stations, such as how many people are in queue for voting at the polling station, from home.

He said that this app will be very beneficial for elderly voters. At the same time, voters above 85 years of age will also have the facility to vote from home. For this, they will have to fill Form 12 D. He said that candidates can spend up to Rs 40 lakh in election campaign. Additional Chief Electoral Officer Dr. Neha Arora and Sandeep Singh were also present along with the Chief Electoral Officer in the press conference.

## BJP welcomes poll dates announcement



PNS : RANCHI

BJP State President and former Chief Minister Babulal Marandi and Leader of Opposition Amar Kumar Bauri have welcomed the announcement of election dates for Jharkhand by the Election Commission. Marandi said that the people of Jharkhand, who have been troubled by unemployment, infiltration, crime, corruption, bad governance, appeasement, oppression of Dalit-tribal-backward society and the jungle raj of JMM-Congress RJD in the last 5 years, now want change.

This election is to save the identity of the bread, daughter and soil of Jharkhand. This election is to save the

## JMM nervous with poll dates : Shahdeo

BJP's state spokesperson Pratul Shahdeo welcomed the Election Commission's announcement of holding elections in two phases and said that Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is objecting to it without any reason. Pratul said that it is clearly mentioned in the constitution that the Election Commission is capable of holding elections in the states where elections are to be held 6 months in advance. This government has ruled Jharkhand with loot and corruption for 59 months. Then why is it so restless for one month? Pratul said that many times even Chief Minister Hemant Soren has said that we are ready for elections at any time. Then why this restlessness after the announcement of elections? Pratul said that they actually know that every section of society in Jharkhand which they have cheated, is ready to hurt this government through votes.

existence of the tribal society from intruders. This election is to provide jobs, employment and justice to young friends. This election is to provide the poor, farmers, women of Jharkhand their rights. This election is to save Jharkhand!

"I have full faith that in this assembly election, the voters of Jharkhand will form a public welfare government by giving a massive majority to the Bharatiya Janata Party and NDA alliance under the leadership of respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi," said Marandi.

Leader of Opposition Amar Kumar Bauri said that the final countdown for the departure of the tyrannical and highly corrupt JMM-Congress-RJD government of Jharkhand has begun. This decision of holding elections in two phases is welcome. The Election

Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday announced the schedule for the 2024 Jharkhand Legislative Assembly elections. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar revealed that voting for the 81 assembly seats will take place in two phases—on November 13 and November 20. The counting of votes will be done on November 23.

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## Varun Ranjan becomes new Ranchi DC



Outgoing Ranchi Deputy Commissioner Manjunath Bhajantri welcomes new Ranchi DC Varun Ranjan in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

PNS : RANCHI

Following the Election Commission of India directive Ranchi DC Manju Nath Bhajantri has been removed from the post. Varun Ranjan has been made the new DC of Ranchi. A few days ago, Manjunath Bhajantri was made the Ranchi DC after removing Rahul Sinha. But on Tuesday he too was removed and Varun Ranjan was made the Ranchi DC.

The new DC of Ranchi, Varun Ranjan, assumed charge on Tuesday. He took over from the outgoing Deputy Commissioner Manjunath Bhajantri. Varun Ranjan is a 2014 batch IAS officer. Let us tell you here that Varun Ranjan was earlier the DC of Dhanbad, but he was removed for being negligent in his duty during the PM's program. A few days after being appointed to the post of Ranchi DC, the Election Commission had raised objections to Manjunath Bhajantri being

made the DC. According to the order issued by the Personnel, Manjunath Bhajantri has now been given the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of JSLPS.

Mrityunjay Kumar Barnwal, posted as the Chief Executive Officer of JSLPS, has been appointed as the MGNREGA Commissioner.

The Jharkhand Government transferred six IAS officers on September 30. In which the DCs of four districts were also changed. Manjunath Bhajantri was given the command of Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi district. Shashi Prakash Singh was given the responsibility of Deputy Commissioner of Jamtara, Utkarsh Gupta of Latehar and Manish Kumar of Pakur. Pawan Kumar was made the Divisional Commissioner of North Chotanagpur Division. Ranjit Kumar Lal was given the responsibility of MD of Energy Production Corporation. After which the Ranchi DC has been changed again today.



Former Deputy Mayor and Congress leader Ajay Nath Sahdeo holds a dialogue with youth in Hatia Assembly Constituency in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

## Union Minister flags off new Ranchi-Gorakhpur train

PNS : RANCHI

Union Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth inaugurated the "Ranchi - Gorakhpur Express Train" by flagging off through video conferencing on Tuesday.

In the ceremony organized at Ranchi Railway Station of the division, Ranchi - Gorakhpur Express Train departed in the presence of special guest MP (Rajya Sabha) Mahua Maji, MLA Ranchi Chandreshwar Prasad Singh and Divisional Railway Manager Jasmeet Singh Bindra.

On this occasion, ADRM Hemraj Meena, Sr DOM Shreya Singh, Sr DS and TE Neeraj Panchal, Sr DPO Raja, other officers of the division and a large number of public representatives, representatives of Railway Consumer Advisory Committee, media representatives, railway



employees, passengers and others were present at Ranchi Railway Station.

Information about the regular operation of train number 18629/18630 Ranchi - Gorakhpur - Ranchi Express will be given soon. Train number 18629 Ranchi - Gorakhpur Express will depart from Ranchi every Friday at 17.10 hrs and this train will arrive in Gorakhpur the next day at 11.30 hrs.

Train number 18630 Gorakhpur - Ranchi Express

will depart from Gorakhpur every Saturday at 15.30 hrs and this train will arrive in Ranchi the next day at 09.25 hrs. This train will have 01 AC First Class, 02 AC 2-Tier, 07 AC 3-Tier, 06 Second Class Sleeper, 01 Generator Car, 01 SLRD and 02 General Class coaches and the train will stop at Muri, Bokaro Steel City, Chandrapura, Dhanbad, Chittaranjan, Jamtara, Madhupur, Jasidih, Jhajha, Kiul, Mokama, Patna Sahib, Patna, Patliputra, Dighwara,

## Rains expected in South-Central Jharkhand till Oct 18

PNS : RANCHI

A low pressure system is forming in the Bay of Bengal, the effect of which will be seen in Jharkhand as well in the coming days. Light to moderate showers are being predicted in the southern and central parts of the State till October 18.

On October 16, parts of Jamshepur, Chaibasa, Simdega and Saraikela are likely to witness rain while the State capital and its adjoining areas, districts of Bokaro, Khunti, Gumla, Hazaribagh and Ramgarh may receive rainfall on October 17 and 18. "The rainfall being predicted is due to the incoming easterly component in south and central Jharkhand-the incoming winds from Bay of Bengal are carrying moisture. This is because the low pressure area over central part Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a depression and move west-northwards towards north Tamil Nadu," said Director MET Centre, Ranchi Abhishek Anand.



## PVUNL celebrates its 10th Raising Day

PNS : RANCHI

PVUNL celebrates its 10th Raising Day with great enthusiasm and pride. The event commenced with an inspiring speech by PVUNL CEO RK Singh, setting the tone for the festivities.

Singh's address was followed by ceremonial cake cutting to celebrate another successful year for the company. In his address, the CEO expressed his gratitude to all employees for their relentless hard work and commitment to the organization's growth and success.

Furthermore, the occasion was made even more special with the distribution of bicycles to specially-abled persons and tree plantation. A symbolic gesture of celebration was marked by the release of balloons into the sky by Shri RK Singh CEO PVUNL, all Heads of Departments, Swarnarekha Mahila Samiti, employee's representatives.

This act signified the soaring aspirations and bright future of PVUNL. RK Singh addressed the gathering while sharing the importance highlights of the plant and encouraging the employees to for the future to achieve more goals.

The event was attended by GMs the heads of various departments, NEAP representatives, employees, contract labours and other staff

## Dr Bharti Kashyap honoured by Women Ophthalmologists Society

Recognition for work as a social catalyst in Jharkhand against blindness and cervical cancer

PNS : RANCHI

Renowned ophthalmologist of Eastern India, Dr. Bharti Kashyap, was honoured with the Social Change Award by the Women Ophthalmologists Society in New Delhi on 7 October 2024. She has been given this award for her social contribution. It was given by Supreme Court advocate and former national spokesperson of BJP, Nupur Sharma, in a grand ceremony in New Delhi.

After completing her medical studies in the year 1991, Dr Kashyap got involved in awareness and social service in the field of ophthalmology. In this episode in 1995, she organized a huge eye screening camp for 10 thousand school children. Gradually this campaign spread throughout the state. The result was that children who had dropped out of school due to eye problems were able to return to school and normal people could get back to their



Supreme Court advocate and former national spokesperson on BJP Nupur Sharma felicitates Dr Bharti Kashyap in a WOS programme in New Delhi. PNS

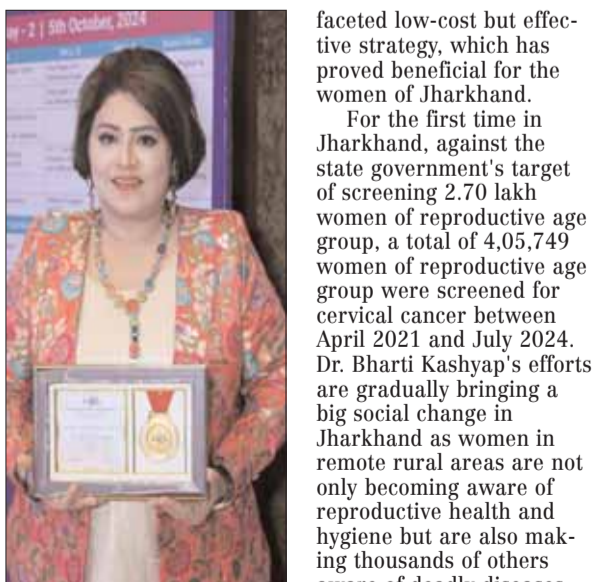
daily work. So far, more than two million school students have benefited from this in Jharkhand.

Dr Kashyap has treated thousands of people in her eye camps, including people from primitive tribal groups, victims of human trafficking, newspaper vendors, diabetics, people living in old age homes, people living in slums, spastic children, sports persons and even truck drivers.

This was a time when there was no awareness among people about eye donation. Understanding

this social need, Dr Bharti Kashyap worked to motivate people and spread awareness about eye donation after death. This brought attention to it in the society. Due to the efforts of Dr Kashyap, Jharkhand (then unified Bihar) saw its first posthumous eye donation in 1996. And since then, hundreds of eye donations have taken place in the state due to her efforts.

In the year 2014, Dr. Bharti Kashyap took a big step towards the reproductive health of women by



starting a campaign against the global killer disease - cervical cancer in Jharkhand. She prepared an effective low-cost Jharkhand model. Modifying the third part of the World Health Organization guidelines, she conceptualized the Jharkhand model, a multi-

faceted low-cost but effective strategy, which has proved beneficial for the women of Jharkhand.

For the first time in Jharkhand, against the state government's target of screening 2.70 lakh women of reproductive age group, a total of 4,05,749 women of reproductive age group were screened for cervical cancer between April 2021 and July 2024. Dr. Bharti Kashyap's efforts are gradually bringing a big social change in Jharkhand as women in remote rural areas are not only becoming aware of reproductive health and hygiene but are also making thousands of others aware of deadly diseases like cervical cancer.

During the WOS programme Dr Kashyap also received the best proverb demonstration award in the Ophthalmic Premium League as she best demonstrated the proverb 'Better Safe than Sorry' through her surgical video in the programme.

# Punjab gram panchayat elections: Polling concludes amid tight security arrangements

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH**

Polling to elect gram panchayat members concluded amid tight security arrangements in Punjab on Tuesday, officials said. Two incidents of firing were reported, they added. Voting for the posts of "sarpanch" and "panch" through ballots started at 8 am and concluded at 4 pm, the officials said, adding that a voter turnout of more than 45 per cent was recorded. The polling percentage is likely to go up once the data is compiled, they said. After the polling, the votes will be counted at the polling stations, the officials said. A firing incident was reported outside a polling booth in Sohan Sain Bhagat village in Tarn Taran district, leaving a

man injured. Mandeep Singh was rushed to a hospital where his condition was stated to be out of danger. A police official said a scuffle took place between two groups, adding that the matter is being investigated. Another firing incident was reported from Khudda village in Patiala district, leaving one person injured. A police official said 20-25 unidentified people arrived at a polling booth, allegedly manhandled the polling staff and took away a ballot box. Subsequently, they left the ballot box behind in a nearby field, the official said. Congress MP Dharamvira Gandhi, who visited the spot, demanded strict action in the matter. In Ballagan village in Amritsar, two groups clashed and pelted stones at each



other at a polling booth. At a polling booth in Lohke Khurd village in Ferozepur's Zira, an unidentified person tried to throw ink on a ballot box. An official said the incident has been brought to the notice of senior officials for further action. Sub-Inspector Lakha Singh (53), who was posted on election duty at Dhilwan village in Barnala district, passed away, a police official said. After he felt uneasy, he was taken to a

hospital where he died, the official added. Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian, along with his son, cast his vote in Khudian village in Muktsar district while Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains exercised his franchise in Gambhirpur village in Anandpur Sahib. Talking to reporters, Bains appealed to people to turn their votes in large numbers to cast their votes in order to elect those who would work for the development of the villages. The State Election Commission cancelled the polling in Dalla and Pona villages in Ludhiana's Jagraon subdivision due to certain technical reasons. The next date of polling in these villages would be announced later, the officials said. A total of 19,110 polling booths, including 1,187 marked as hyper-sensitive, were set up for the election. The state has 13,225 gram panchayats. Polling for the posts of "sarpanch" was held in 9,398 gram panchayats. A total of 3,798 candidates were already elected unopposed for the posts of "sarpanch". Elderly people, women and youngsters were seen standing in queues outside several polling booths in the morning. The polls were held without the symbols of political parties as a consequence of the Punjab Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2024 passed by the Assembly last month. A total of 1.33 crore people were eligible to vote. There were 25,588 candidates in the fray for the posts of "sarpanch" and 80,598 nominees contested the polls for the posts of "panch", the officials said. Around 96,000 personnel were deputed on election duty. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann appealed to people on Monday to exercise their franchise. The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Monday dismissed a bunch of petitions filed against the panchayat polls. The pleas were filed on several grounds, including challenging the ward demarcation, delimitation, regarding grievances about poll symbols, extension of time for nominations and rejection of nomination papers. The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stay the panchayat polls on grounds of alleged irregularities in the nomination process, saying there will be "chaos" if courts start staying elections on polling day.

## It is election fever in Kerala as EC announces by-poll schedule

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

Stage is set in Kerala for a S-battle royale between the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF as two assembly constituencies and the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency go to the by-elections on November 13. The assembly constituencies of Chelakkara and Palakkad fell vacant following the election of K Radhakrishnan (CPI-M) and Shaffi Parambil to Lok Sabha in the general election held in 2024 May. Both were members of the Kerala Legislature Assembly. Radhakrishnan was elected from Alathur Lok Sabha constituency defeating the sitting member Remya Haridas of the Indian National Congress by a margin of 20,111 votes. Shafi Parambil of the INC was elected to Lok Sabha from Vatakara Lok Sabha constituency trouncing K K Shailaja (CPI-M) by a huge margin of 1,14, 506 votes.



Rahul Gandhi was elected with a mammoth majority of more than 3.64 lakh votes (59.69 per cent) from Wayanad in the May 2024 Lok Sabha election. But he chose to retain the Rae Bareilly seat and resigned from Wayanad making the road clear for sister Priyanka Gandhi to contest the seat. Though the INC is yet to make any formal announce-

ment regarding the party candidate to be fielded from Wayanad, it is almost certain that Priyanka Gandhi would launch her electoral battle from the district atop the Western Ghats in Kerala. While the CPI-M is confident of retaining the Chelakkara assembly seat thanks to the good work done by Radhakrishnan, the Congress has boosted the morale of the Congress cadre as well as that of its allies. The LDF may have to find out a new candidate this time as Annie Raja of the CPI who challenged Rahul Gandhi last time ended up as an also ran forfeiting her security deposit. Though K Surendran, the BJP's state president, claimed immediately after the dates of the by-poll was announced, that the NDA would win both the assembly constituencies, party insiders tell that even the former knows it well that the Hindutva brigade would make no change in the electoral scenes in Kerala. "At the best, the party may be able to finish third in the race," said a senior BJP leader. The suicide of Naveen Babu on Monday night, allegedly following public humiliation meted out to him by the District Panchayat President P P Divya of the CPI(M) is likely to derail the party's dreams of winning from Chelakkara,

## Will contest Jharkhand Assembly polls in alliance with JMM: Congress

**PNS ■ RANCHI**

Congress on Tuesday said it will contest the Jharkhand assembly elections in alliance with the JMM, with a final decision on seat sharing expected soon. "We will contest elections with our alliance partners in the state. A final decision on the seat sharing will be done soon. We are confident of winning elections on the back of development works done by us," Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee president Keshav Mahto said. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) also expressed confidence that its alliance would be voted back to power. However, it raised concerns on how Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma knew that the election dates would be announced on Tuesday. "We are ready to contest elec-



tions, though the announcement was made a bit early. However, we would like to know how Sarma was aware that elections would be announced on Tuesday. This is a grave threat to democracy," JMM spokesperson Manoj Pandey said. Sarma, who is BJP's co-in-charge of assembly elections in Jharkhand, had said on Monday that the election dates would be announced on Tuesday. Reacting to the

## By-polls in Uttar Pradesh: Political test for BJP amid internal discord

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW**

The upcoming by-elections in Uttar Pradesh have garnered significant attention, especially considering the BJP's underwhelming performance in the recent general elections. Adding to the political intrigue are reports of internal discord within the state BJP unit, further intensifying the stakes of these by-polls. The by-polls will be held on nine seats against the vacant 10 seats as the election in the Milkipur assembly constituency in Ayodhya has been deferred due to impending court case. The by-elections will take place in Karhal, Katehari, Kundarki, Ghaziabad, Khair, Meerapur, Phulpur, Majhawan, and Sisamau. Of these ten seats, four are currently held by the Samajwadi Party (SP), while the RLD and Nishad Party each hold one seat, and the BJP controls the remaining three.

Polling in all these constituencies will be held on November 13 and results would be declared on November 23. In a bid to ensure a strong showing, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has deployed 16 senior ministers from his government to oversee the BJP's campaign efforts in these constituencies. "For the BJP, these by-elections present a crucial opportunity to consolidate its position in Uttar Pradesh, but they also pose challenges in maintaining smooth relations within the alliance, particularly with the Nishad Party. Negotiations over seat-sharing remain a point of contention, adding further pressure on the ruling coalition," political analyst Manoj Bhadra said. **Opposition strategy:** The Samajwadi Party, led by Akhilesh Yadav, has teamed up with the Congress for the by-elections. The SP has so far announced candidates in five constituencies, with specula-

tion suggesting that it may allocate two seats to Congress as part of their alliance. The Congress had asked for 5 seats. Despite discord over seat sharing the partnership between SP=Congress is seen as a strategic counterbalance to the BJP-led coalition. According to the SP's candidate list, Tej Pratap Yadav will contest from Karhal, a seat vacated by SP President Akhilesh Yadav after his Lok Sabha election victory from Kannauj. Naseem Solanki, wife of jailed SP leader Irfan Solanki, will contest from Sisamau in Kanpur. Other candidates include Mustafa Siddiqui from Phulpur (Prayagraj), Shobhavati Verma from Katehari, and Jyoti Bind from Majhwan. Shobhavati Verma, wife of SP MP Lalji Verma, was previously SP's MLA from Katehari. Ajit Prasad, the son of Faizabad (Ayodhya) MP Awadhesh Prasad, will contest from Milkipur. Jyoti Bind is the daughter of SP leader Ramesh Bind, who ran in the



2024 Lok Sabha elections from Mirzapur. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has also announced its candidates for most of the constituencies, adding another dimension to the contest. With multiple parties vying for influence over key regions, the by-elections are emerging as a critical test of the evolving political dynamics in Uttar Pradesh. **Key Constituencies in Focus Karhal (Mainpuri):** The Karhal seat, situated in Mainpuri district, became

vacant after Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav resigned following his victory in the Lok Sabha elections from Kannauj. Historically, this constituency is considered a stronghold of the SP. Tej Pratap Singh Yadav, a member of the influential Yadav family, is will contest on SP's ticket. **Katehari (Ambedkar Nagar)** The Katehari seat was vacated by Lalji Verma after his victory in the Ambedkar Nagar Lok Sabha elections. The BJP faces a tough chal-

lenge here as the NDA needs to strengthen its standing with Nishad voters. Swatantra Deo Singh, Daya Shankar Mishra, and Sanjay Nishad are working on BJP's campaign in this region. Shobhavati Verma, wife of SP MP Lalji Verma, is SP candidate. **Majhawan (Mirzapur):** Majhawan's MLA, Vinod Kumar Bind, vacated his seat after winning the Bhadohi Lok Sabha election. The Nishad Party, led by Sanjay Nishad, is lobbying to contest this seat in the bypolls. The BJP has assigned ministers Anil Rajbhar, Ashish Patel, Ravindra Jaiswal, and Ramkesh Nishad to prepare the party's strategy in this constituency. Jyoti Bind is SP candidate from this constituency. **Phulpur (Prayagraj)** Praveen Singh Patel vacated Phulpur after his successful run for the Phulpur Lok Sabha seat. The Yogi government has tasked ministers Rakesh Sachan and Daya Shankar Singh with ensuring

a strong BJP performance in this seat. Mustafa Siddiqui is SP candidate from this constituency. BSP has given ticket to Shibran Paasi. **Kundarki (Moradabad):** Zia-Ur-Rahman Barq's resignation after winning the Sambhal Lok Sabha seat has left Kundarki open for contest. The BJP has deployed ministers Dharmpal Singh, JPS Rathore, Jaswant Saini, and Gulab Devi to lead their campaign in the area. **Khair (Aligarh)** Anoop Singh vacated the Khair seat to contest the Hathras Lok Sabha seat. With the RLD now part of the NDA, the BJP hopes to leverage the significant presence of Jat voters in this constituency. Lakshmi Narayan Choudhari and Sandeep Singh are leading the BJP's campaign efforts here. **Merrapur (Muzaffarnagar):** Chandan Chauhan of the RLD resigned from Merrapur to run in the Bijnor Lok Sabha seat, which he won. The BJP, which lost to

## SC bans civic police from hospitals, schools, police stations

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

The Supreme Court on Tuesday banned civic volunteers from the hospitals, schools and police stations and directed the Bengal Government to submit before it the details of recruitment process of civic volunteers, one of which is the prime accused in the August 9 rape and murder of an on-duty lady doctor inside the seminar room of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. After acquiring a verbal data of the civic volunteers thus applied by the State Government the bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra which has been suo motu hearing the RG Kar case --- associated with its wider implications --- directed the Government to present through an affidavit the recruitment process of civic volunteers. "It is a nice process of conferring political patronage on unverified persons," the Supreme Court said seeking affidavit in 3 weeks after hearing that over 1,500

civic volunteers were working under its "Rattirer Sathi" scheme to secure the medical colleges and similar other facilities. The Court wondered whether the prime accused in the RGKMC case too was a civic volunteer or not. The Court directed the Central Bureau of Investigation to file additional status report in the next hearing after going through the one filed on Tuesday. The CBI apprised the Court about the chargesheet filed against Sanjoy Roy the prime accused in the Sealdah Court. Much in line with the Apex Court's order on the deployment of civic volunteers, the Election Commission of India too had shown its distrust for the "blue police" as they often are called in the State banning them from electoral process in the 2024 general elections. Incidentally the Bengal political opposition too had for long been complaining against the manner in which the civic volunteers are appointed and the way they are used by the Government to man security system, more so in vil-

lages and other remote areas. "These civic volunteers that had been introduced by the Left Front Government as Green Police to assist the traffic police is today used to perpetrate all kinds of crime including electoral rigging in the panchayat elections, extortion similar things," a senior BJP leader said. Meanwhile, the junior doctors once again attacked the State Government for telling lies before the Supreme Court on the implementation of the security infrastructure in medical colleges. "They told the Court that about 95% to 98 percent of the planned infrastructure and security upgrades across government hospitals in Bengal have been completed, excluding the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital but it is not true at all ... come to our colleges and we will show you what has been done ... let alone 95 percent they have not been able to complete 59 percent even ... they are all lying," said a junior doctor from Rampurhat Medical College.

## Doctors' Droh Carnival contrasts Didi's Durga Carnival

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

The Bengal Government suffered yet another judicial discomfiture with the Calcutta High on Tuesday throwing out an administrative order issued by the Kolkata Police prohibiting a public fete --- christened Droh Carnival organized by the senior doctors and a section of the civil society. The Droh Carnival or Carnival of Revolt --- coinciding with the much touted Durga Puja Carnival a pet scheme of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee involving a parade of Durga idols down the historic Red Road --- was called in support of a 10-point demand including the demand for justice for the victim of Kolkata doctor rape and murder case. "The Bench of Justice Ravi Kapoor has thrown out the imposition of Section 163 of the BNS --- formerly Section 144 of CrPc --- saying the prohibitive order is incongruous with the constitutional right to freedom ... the right to take out peaceful rallies and celebrations cannot



be abridged, the Court has iterated ... this order breaks and dissolves all the arrogance of this Government ... and if still they are not taking any lesson out of this and continue to act in an undemocratic manner then this means they are on their way out," said senior advocate and Rajya Sabha MP Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya. "The police had imposed Section 163 in anticipation of some mischief in the Durga Puja Carnival which is an yearly event attended among others by foreign dig-

State's biggest festival with about 100 Durga Puja committees participating in the fete parading down the Red Road Durga idols along with their respective themes. Earlier apprehending disturbance Kolkata Police Commissioner Manoj Verma in exercise of his magisterial powers issued an order that read "there is a strong possibility of people not being able to attend the Durga Puja Carnival. In view of this, Section 163 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) (Power to issue order in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger) has been implemented for one day in the areas around Red Road." Moments after the High Court order thousands of people including doctors and the members of civil society playing drums and flutes and blowing conch shells, ululating and raising slogans of justice spilled on to the Rani Rashmoni Avenue barely two hundred meters away from the Durga Puja Carnival. "We have never heard of similar protest in history of India

post Independence ... perhaps it is first major such protest after the one in 1905-06 against the Partition of Bengal," said Dr Subarna Goswami one of the senior doctors leading the movement. Meanwhile, the indefinite fast held by the junior doctors at the Rani Rashmoni Avenue entered its 11th day on Tuesday with two more doctors joining the fast. "There is no need of imposing prohibitive orders and other such paraphernalia ... instead of that the Government should concede to the 10 point demand that includes foolproof security measures, removal of the Health Secretary, installation of CCTV cameras, restrooms for on duty doctors, centralized referral system with real time monitoring and last but not list giving a specific date for college elections so that the syndicate and mafia raj in the medical colleges which is the main source of all anomalies including the incidents of sexual harassment, rape etc," said Debashis Halder a junior doctor.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## souring relations

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

The already tense relations between India and Canada have hit a new low, with both countries expelling each other's diplomats. New Delhi expelled six Canadian diplomats, including Acting High Commissioner Stewart Ross Wheeler after Ottawa's expulsion of 'targeted' Indian diplomats. These diplomats were allegedly involved in 'violent criminal activity in Canada.' The situation deteriorated after Trudeau accused Indian intelligence agents of being linked to the Nijjar's murder in British Columbia in 2023. During a press conference, Trudeau, announced the expulsion of six Indian diplomats from Canadian soil, citing their involvement in a 'targeted campaign' against Canadian citizens. India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has responded with forceful rebuttal, describing the allegations as 'preposterous imputations.' The MEA criticised Canada's decision to expel the Indian diplomats, dismissing the accusations as politically motivated and linked to the Trudeau government's domestic challenges. India on its part has expelled six Canadian diplomats to leave the country by October 19, 2024, and announced the withdrawal of its High Commissioner from Canada.



The root cause of the conflict lies in the ongoing issue of Sikh separatism and Canada's handling of the Khalistan movement. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a prominent Khalistan supporter, was a Canadian citizen who had long advocated for an independent Sikh state. His murder in 2023 remains a contentious issue, with Canadian authorities suspecting the involvement of Indian agents. India, however, has consistently denied any role in the killing and has accused Canada of providing a safe haven for extremist elements that threaten India's national security. It is rather unfortunate that two friendly countries should snap diplomatic relations with each other. Justin Trudeau's electoral compulsions, with elections just a year away, could be behind his recent actions. Justin Trudeau's perceived support for Sikh separatists, particularly those advocating for a Khalistan, stems from a complex blend of domestic political considerations and Canada's multicultural policies. Trudeau's Liberal Party has historically sought the support of the Sikh diaspora, a significant and politically active community in Canada, which includes a segment advocating for Sikh rights and in some cases, Khalistan. By engaging with Sikh community leaders, including some who may have Khalistani sympathies, Trudeau aims to secure votes in regions with a strong Sikh presence. This standoff could affect many areas where people in both countries could be net sufferers. Trade negotiations, immigration policies, and cultural exchanges between the two countries would indeed be affected. The expulsion of diplomats and withdrawal of ambassadors signifies more than just diplomatic posturing; it represents India's sovereignty, security, and the role of foreign governments in its domestic affairs. With both sides showing no signs of backing down, the road to reconciliation appears to be fraught with challenges.

India's national security. It is rather unfortunate that two friendly countries should snap diplomatic relations with each other. Justin Trudeau's electoral compulsions, with elections just a year away, could be behind his recent actions. Justin Trudeau's perceived support for Sikh separatists, particularly those advocating for a Khalistan, stems from a complex blend of domestic political considerations and Canada's multicultural policies. Trudeau's Liberal Party has historically sought the support of the Sikh diaspora, a significant and politically active community in Canada, which includes a segment advocating for Sikh rights and in some cases, Khalistan. By engaging with Sikh community leaders, including some who may have Khalistani sympathies, Trudeau aims to secure votes in regions with a strong Sikh presence. This standoff could affect many areas where people in both countries could be net sufferers. Trade negotiations, immigration policies, and cultural exchanges between the two countries would indeed be affected. The expulsion of diplomats and withdrawal of ambassadors signifies more than just diplomatic posturing; it represents India's sovereignty, security, and the role of foreign governments in its domestic affairs. With both sides showing no signs of backing down, the road to reconciliation appears to be fraught with challenges.

### PICTALK



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

# The untold story of Captain Rameshwar Thapa's heroics



ASHOK K MEHTA

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

When you think of rotary wing aircraft in Nepal, some names will crop up: Tula Bahadur Thapa, Narain Singh Pun, Madan KC, all Army Colonels, but among civilians a pioneer is Capt Rameshwar Thapa, the first Russian Mi17 helicopter pilot who trained the then Royal Nepal Army on Mi17 and was later requisitioned by Security Forces during the Maoist People's War. Let's call the Captain, RT who has written the English version of his book in Nepali, Barud Mathi Uddaa titled Into The FIRE, a book 'based on hard facts'. It encapsulates the Maoist insurgency that aimed to capture the state: they came perilously close to doing it. But for RT's heroic efforts, on April 8, 2005 in saving Khara, the epic battle waged by Maoists, by flying in 20 Special Force Rangers after an SOS- 'if no reinforcements in 20-30 minutes, Khara will go'. Despite his helicopter being hit by Maoists on surrounding hills he made a second attempt in a vertical descent to land reinforcements at base camp. Khara was a battle for prestige and honour for both sides, especially Maoists but Rangers saved the day. At the time, I had written reams on the first and second Khara battles, describing Khara II's criticality. RT rightly calls Khara the turning point, for soon after, their defeat at Khara Maoists sued for peace: choosing ballot over bullet. They signed the 12-point agreement in New Delhi in November 2005 which led to the political transformation of Nepal - restoration of democracy and mainstreaming of Maoists. The rest, of course, is history. Into the Fire essentially covers the personal experiences of a co-pilot elevated to Pilot in Command as Mi17 initially had pilots from Russia and Central Asian Republics. Their mission was rescue, relief, reinforcements, casualty evacuation and acting as morale boosters. The Maoists were terrified of helicopters which were later ingeniously improvised by RNA as armed platforms to drop 81 mm mortar bombs and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Many battles in both east and west Nepal are described mainly from



the humanitarian angle of saving lives and security posts at great personal risk. RT turns out to be a cat with nine lives having taken numerous hits and a life-threatening crash landing near Everest Base Camp. Initially, he joined Everest Air which was regularly supplying helicopters to the police as they had none; later, he flew for the Armed Police Force and RNA. King Gyanendra who had usurped power first in 2002 and done a coup in 2005, did not allow the RNA to aid or assist the police which suffered on account of it. He did not even allow PM GP Koirala to use it to break the siege of the Holleri post when 76 policemen were taken hostage. Koirala had to resign but Holleri was an avoidable blot on police's unprofessional record. The Army was only pressed into service after Maoists during a ceasefire and talks attacked Army barracks in November 2001 at Dang. Flying for the army RT became an 'enemy of the Maoists' and was advised to send his family abroad for their safety. Major encounters revive memories of fighting, their horror, ferocity and barbarity. Villages and towns have not forgotten



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

the atrocities committed by both sides. RT has narrated several human interest stories like once evacuating a female Maoist who later became a minister and married a fellow Maoist minister. There is a conversation with elders in a village who tell him that they prefer to give their daughters to RNA rather than letting Maoists take them away to join the movement. His underground life at Oasis Hotel in Nepalgunj is cloak-and-dagger stuff. RT has not shied away from writing about RNA's November 2004 Pandaun, Kailali 'propaganda' attack under the lyricist Divisional Commander, Gen Rajendra Thapa. The Army claimed it had killed 200 to 300 Maoists whereas only 4 to 5 bodies were found ( Maoists had an honour code not to leave behind any bodies). One of the Army's self-afflicted disasters was enacted at Pili in August 2004 when an Engineer Regiment was ordered to crash-build a road for King Gyanendra's visit. Their prize was a huge cache of explosives stored at Pili for road construction. Nearly 160 soldiers were killed as RT conducted casualty evacuation flights. Elsewhere he mentions current President Ramchandra Poudel writing an article in Kantipur

daily titled 'Maobadi Paradise: Nirmal Nivas', which was Prince Gyanendra's residence. Having been as 'busy as a bee' in the People's War, as a 24X7 helicopter pilot, his life changed after violence ceased. He mentions India's constructive role in the peace process. In his post-conflict avatar, RT became an aviation company czar, a media mogul - with newspapers, radio and TV - and an interest in politics. His list of awards will fill a page. So will his contribution to corporate social responsibility. Into The Fire: was released in Delhi last month to a packed house. Striking in the book is the note written by Janardhan Sharma who was the architect of the Khara debacle-while recently Nepal's Finance Minister. Sitting next to me on the dais RT was a picture of modesty and humility, few people realised his crucial role in the People's War. Immodestly I could not resist mentioning my book The Royal Nepal Army: Meeting the Maoist Challenge released in 2005. But his is a first-hand account. (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

#### RTI POWER FADES

Madam - It is really unfortunate that the RTI Act, which came into effect in 2005, promising a new era in transparency in government functioning, has almost died its own death, with the executive not showing any keenness to infuse a fresh life into it. The Act has slowly weakened due to unwarranted amendments, over-reach of the executive and restrictive judicial interpretations. Lack of adequate infrastructure and shortage of staff in government offices to deal with RTI applications is another cause for worry. Ever since its ratification, several attempts have been made to deliberately dilute this law and hamper access to information by the public.

The proposed amendments were dropped due to widespread public defiance. In the administration and functioning of a democratic government, the right to access and seek information is a sine qua non for transparency, openness and accountability. Unless citizens are empowered with the right to ask questions, democracies cannot and will not survive. The need of the hour is to promote the free flow of information to limit tyrannical tendencies and reinforce democratic ideals.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

#### RAILWAY SAFETY NEGLECTED

Madam - Gone are the days when a Railway minister used to apologise for a train accident and even tender his resignation for it. Now, it is too much to expect even an explanation for the snail's pace at which the Train Collision Avoidance System is being installed and the lack of manpower that makes even loco pilots do the extra shifts. In such a scenario, there is no wonder why train accidents have become a regular event in our country. Train Collision Avoidance System, which was later renamed as Kavach, is an automatic train protection system that helps prevent collisions if two trains are on the same tracks. Senior railway officials said that a field trial was

### Peacekeepers under attack



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

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

On the contrary, Israel has been continuously attacking the peacekeepers since last week. Dozens of peacekeepers have been injured so far. UNIFIL, a mission of about 9,500 soldiers of various nationalities, was created after Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978. It is currently tasked with monitoring the ceasefire that ended the 33-day war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006. Israel's actions have been criticised by the whole world, except the US.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

started for Kavach in 2016. But it has been installed only in less than 1,500 km of tracks out of the total 70,000 km covered by the Indian Railways across the country. That means this lifesaving device has so far been placed in only a little over 2 per cent of railway tracks in eight years after its field trials! An RTI reply says that of 1,27,644 sanctioned posts of loco pilots and assistant loco pilots, 18,766-nearly 15 per cent - were vacant as of March 1 this year. Indian Railways have been playing with our lives by not filling up vacant posts and by forcing their personnel, even loco pilots, to overwork. How can a loco pilot remain alert if he has to do extra shifts?

Sujit De | Kolkata

#### LAW AND ORDER CRISIS

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

law and order in the state which is certainly going to be used as ammunition against the government in the electoral campaigning. There is no doubt this issue will resonate with the people of the state. If important political leaders and ex-ministers are not safe, what hope is there for the common citizen? Another disturbing fact is that the alleged kingpin is overseeing operations from jail.

With the right connections, jails seem to have become a holiday resort with all facilities available, like cell phones and wi-fi. The assailants are said to be in the ages of 19-21, and another one is supposedly said to be a minor. The lack of education and scarcity of jobs play their part in getting the young people sucked into the criminal world. Usually, the criminals come from the Northern Hindi belt. Those in charge of the states must find ways and means to stop the young people from entering the world of crime.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The invisible battle for mental health in India

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

As a psychologist, I've seen how health in India isn't just a battle of the body—it's a struggle of the mind. Behind every disease is a person dealing with fear, frustration and, at times, loneliness. Whether in rural areas, where diseases like tuberculosis persist or in urban centres where lifestyle illnesses are on the rise, the emotional toll is often invisible but deeply felt.

In rural India, patients face challenges that go beyond medical diagnoses. I remember a man from a small village battling tuberculosis, but what weighed on him most wasn't just his illness—it was the isolation. He felt forgotten and cut off from the world because healthcare facilities were far away, and his family didn't know how to support him. This emotional isolation is something many rural patients experience, and it can be as damaging as their physical symptoms, compounding their sense of hopelessness. In cities like Gurgaon, the struggles are different but equally pro-



found. I think of Anjali, a young woman overwhelmed by anxiety. To the outside world, she seemed to have it all—a great job, a busy social life, and a bright future. But inside, she was spiralling. She hesitated for months before seeking help, afraid that admitting to her struggles would make her appear weak. This fear of judgment keeps many people from asking for help, and it's heartbreaking to see how common this is in urban environments. Mental health remains an afterthought in our healthcare system.

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

conditions—but the emotional weight people carry is often ignored. I've seen people suffer for years in silence, feeling their emotional pain isn't valid because it can't be measured like a physical illness. There's an urgent need for change. India's healthcare system mirrors this divide. In cities, private care offers options, but mental health services are still limited and expensive. In rural areas, mental health is rarely even discussed. Socioeconomic barriers, especially for women, make it even harder to access mental health care. Women often put their health—both emotional and physical—on the back burner,

prioritising their families' needs over their own. One of my patients, a mother of two, delayed seeking help for her anxiety for years. She was exhausted, overwhelmed, and losing her sense of self. But like so many women, she felt guilty for even considering that her health deserved attention.

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

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

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



KAVITA KABIRA



## FIRST COLUMN

## CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

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



RAVI VALLURI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

# Migration issue polarises Canada ahead of 2025 election

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SHIV PRAKASH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Today, India must recognise and learn from this history,

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

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

Mahatma Gandhi's vision for

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

Despite progress, India faces

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

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







# PM Modi advocates ethical global digital framework

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

# India poised to lead global 6G: Scindia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

# Government planning development beyond elections: Vaishnav

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

# Coal India digitises fuel supply agreements process

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

# Government to verify air purifier claims amid pollution

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

# Soybean output reaches 126 lakh tonnes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

# ASSOCHAM, Savlon lead handwashing drive in NDMC schools

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

# Lakshya, Malvika make first-round exits at Denmark Open

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

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



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



## Alex Ferguson to step down as club ambassador

**AP ■ MANCHESTER (ENGLAND)**

Manchester United great Alex Ferguson will step down from his role as club ambassador at the end of the season, a person with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press on Tuesday. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the move has not been publicly announced. Ferguson will be 83 in December and the person said the ending of his ambassadorship was "amicable" and he would "always be welcome at Old Trafford." Ferguson won 13 Premier League titles with United and is widely regarded as one of the finest managers in the history of soccer. He is United's most successful manager, having won 28 major trophies. He has been a club ambassador since retiring after leading United to its last league title in 2013. His imminent departure comes at a time when the club is undergoing major change following the partial buyout by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe in February. United has undergone an extensive restructuring program following Ratcliffe's investment of \$1.3 billion for a 27.7% stake and implemented cost-saving initiatives that it said included staff redundancies of around 250 roles. United reported losses of 113.2 million pounds (\$148 million) in its latest accounts. Ferguson was hired by United in 1986 at a time when the club had long-since lost its place as the pre-eminent force in English soccer. He ended its 26-year wait for the league title in 1993 and went on to dominate the Premier League era right up until his retirement when United was crowned champion with an 11-point lead over Abu Dhabi-backed Manchester City. He also won two Champions League titles and an unprecedented treble of trophies in 1999 when leading United to victory in the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup. He has been a regular spectator at United games since his retirement, watching the team home and away during a time when the club has been in obvious decline on the field. Ratcliffe assumed control of United's soccer operations as part of his minority investment. The sporting side had previously been under the control of the majority owning American Glazer family. A new CEO, Omar Berrada, and sporting director, Dan Ashworth, have been installed, while key figures at Ratcliffe's Ineos Sport, Dave Brailsford and Jean-Claude Blanc, have been appointed to the board.

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

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
 Indian defender Udita Duhane emerged as the costliest buy in the first half of the Hockey India League women's auction after she was acquired by Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers for Rs 32 lakh here on Tuesday. Dutch star drag-flicker Yibbi Janssen was the second most expensive player and was bought by Odisha Warriors for Rs 29 lakh. Indian players Lalremsiami (for Rs 25 lakh to Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers), Sunelita Toppo (for Rs 24 lakh to Delhi SG Pipers), and Sangita Kumari (for Rs 22 lakh to Delhi SG Pipers) attracted significant attention in the first half of the auction. Several overseas players, including Belgium's Charlotte Englebert (for Rs 16 lakh to Soorma Hockey Club), Germany's Charlotte Stapenhorst (for Rs 16 lakh to Soorma Hockey Club), and Australia's Jocelyn Bartram (for Rs 15 lakh to Odisha Warriors) were the notable buys. Veteran India striker Vandana Katarriya fetched Rs 10.5 lakh from Shraichi Rarh Bengal Tigers.



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

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

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
 Rani Rampal waited for the women's Hockey India League as a player for years but now that the league will finally see the light of the day, the former India captain will wear a different hat. Rani, who captained India to a historic fourth place finish at the Tokyo Olympics, will be the mentor and coach of Soorma Hockey Club of Punjab and Haryana in the women's HIL which will make its debut later this year. "Hockey is my passion and I played my entire career with that. It was always in my mind that I will definitely accept any opportunity to serve Indian hockey. Hockey was always on my mind," Rani said on the sidelines of the HIL women's auction here on Tuesday. "I tried a lot to make a comeback in the national team but could not do so before the Paris Olympics. I had waited for many years for this women's league and when it started, it felt very good to be a part of the coaching staff and not as a player," said the 30-year-old Padma Shri awardee, who has scored 134 goals in 212 matches for India. "Asked why she opted out of the



league as she had not officially announced her retirement yet, Rani said: "I am a female player and I have faced a lot of struggles. A player is always a player. The desire to play never ends. "But sometimes you have to make a difficult decision and I decided to join the coaching staff. "It is difficult to talk about retirement right now. Now I will face a new challenge in the league and after that I will take a final decision." Rani admitted that India's failure to qualify for the Paris Olympics was a setback for women's hockey in the country, but said there is no point in thinking about the

# Bangladesh coach Hathurusingha suspended



Chandika Hathurusingha



Phil Simmons

**PTI ■ DHAKA**  
 The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has suspended men's team head coach Chandika Hathurusingha due to inappropriate conduct by him during last year's ODI World Cup in India. Hathurusingha, the former Sri Lanka all-rounder under whom Bangladesh recently endured a forgettable tour of

India where they were whitewashed in both the Test and T20I series, will be sacked and replaced by former West Indies player Phil Simmons. "According to ESPNcricinfo, Simmons, who was also an all-rounder and opened the batting for the West Indies in the early and mid 1990s, will be in charge of the Bangladesh team until next year's ICC Champions

Trophy. "Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha has been suspended following allegations he slapped a player at last year's ODI World Cup. His contract will be terminated after 48 hours of suspension, with Phil Simmons to take over until next year's Champions Trophy," the website said. "The BCB investigated an

allegation from a player that the coach had slapped him during the World Cup last year. "The contract of the 56-year-old Hathurusingha, who rejoined the Bangladesh team in February last year for a second stint with the Asian side, was to expire after the 2025 Champions Trophy. 'He will therefore not be present with the team for the upcoming two-match Test series at home against South Africa. 'He took the team to India on the back of a historic Test series sweep in Pakistan only to suffer an embarrassing 0-2 defeat in the two-Test series against Rohit Sharma's side and a 0-3 loss in the T20I series. 'His exit marks an underwhelming end to his brief stint as Bangladesh coach with debacles in the 2023 ODI World Cup and the 2024 T20 World Cup.

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

**AP ■ LONDON**

Arsenal Women manager Jonas Eidevall quit on Tuesday, less than a month into the new season. The English team has won just one of its first four matches in the Women's Super League and lost its opening game in the Champions League group stage, 5-2 at Bayern Munich. Eidevall joined in June 2021 from FC Rosengard in his native Sweden and led Arsenal to two League Cup titles as well as the Champions League semifinals in the 2022-23 season. It was the first time in 10 years Arsenal reached that stage in Europe's top club competition. His last game in charge was a 2-1 home loss to Chelsea in the Super League on Saturday. Arsenal said Eidevall



resigned with immediate effect. "We have great respect for the dedication and commitment he showed to our women's first team," Arsenal sporting director Edu Gaspar said of Eidevall, "and recognize the role he has played in the growth and development of Arsenal Women." Assistant coach Renée Slegers will take charge of the team on an interim basis, starting with the home match against Valerenga in the Champions League on Wednesday.

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

**AP ■ UDINE**

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

started on Oct. 7 last year, the national soccer team played in Kosovo and Andorra last November. All Israel matches since then have been in Hungary, including last month's game against Belgium in the Nations League after the Belgian Football Association refused to host the game for security reasons. "We are going to play this match with the hope of convincing ever more people of the wrongness of war," Italy coach Luciano Spalletti said. "There are many Israelis who don't want it and we must convince ever more people that this is something that has to stop." When Spalletti's team played its "away" match against



Israel last month in Hungary, a group of about 50 Italy fans clad in all black turned their backs in apparent protest during Israel's national anthem. There were boos from some fans in Udine when the Israeli anthem was played on Monday but the rest of the stadium tried to drown that out with loud applause - just as they had done when the Israel team was read out. At least one Palestinian flag was held up. There was a highly visible group of around a dozen Israel fans and they loudly chanted their support. Fewer than 12,000 tickets were sold for Monday's match - less than half the capacity of the 25,000-seater Stadio Friuli - amid stringent

security measures, that also included armed military personnel on the roof of the stadium. Areas around the stadium were blocked off 48 hours before kickoff and declared a "red zone," and only fans with tickets could pass through the tall metal barriers. Supporters were strongly advised to arrive early because of rigorous checks. Hundreds of extra police officers were called up from surrounding areas. Around 1,000 people took part in a pro-Palestine demonstration earlier in the city center. Among the placards, there were several posters calling on soccer's governing bodies to ban Israel.

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

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

deliveries from pacers, but a trace of the old failing still remains. In Chennai, Bangladesh pacer Hasan Mahmud troubled him with nip-backers before eventually grabbing his wicket. Similarly, Jaiswal has a penchant to go for expansive shots against pace bowlers to get dismissed, evidenced by his three dismissals recently against Bangladesh quicks. In all, the left-hander has fallen to pacers 12 times in 20 innings, and he would want a better record before facing a clutch of top-class Australian pacers. While these concerns are not deeply rooted, they serve as cautionary points against a New Zealand attack that has capable hands in pacers Matt Henry, William O'Rourke and the experienced Tim Southee, if he gets to play here after a sharp decline in his form. There is another angle to the emergence of Jaiswal and Gill as the pillars of the Indian line-up, as Kohli and Rohit have not precisely set the field ablaze. Rohit, who has played 15 innings this year, has made two hundreds but managed only one fifty in the remaining 13, totaling 497



runs in eight Tests at just over 35. Kohli, 53 runs shy of 9000 Test runs, has not made even a fifty in six innings this year,

and while Rohit often perishes in his attempt to grab the momentum, his colleague offers a much more curious case. The 35-year-old Kohli

has not been able to convert the two starts he got this year, ending up with 46 (vs SA) and 47 (vs Bangladesh), stirring the uncomfortable memories

of that great slump between 2019 and 2023. The master batter will also have to keep an eye on New Zealand left-arm spinners -

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

said in the pre-match press meet here on Tuesday. "From a batting point of view. You have a lot of match winners who can take a game away from you pretty quickly. We're looking forward to the challenge. Hopefully, we can lean back on the experiences that we've had here the last couple of times that we've toured," he added. In that context, Latham said the Kiwis will miss the presence of former captain Kane Williamson, who has been ruled out of the early part of this tour owing to a groin injury. "It's disappointing not to have Kane here. Fingers crossed he'll be ready as soon as possible. I think



Youngie (Will Young) will play. He'll bat at three. He's batted all over the order. I guess it's his opportunity to put his hand up. "Yeah, obviously, disappointing when you miss a senior guy like Kane, but it gives opportunities for other guys to put their hand up," he said. However, Ben Sears getting ruled out because of a knee injury has opened up a chance for out of form veteran Tim Southee to get a place in the eleven. "Absolutely, I think last time they played a Test here, Tim took 7 for 60. Obviously, Ben Sears has been ruled out, so I guess if we do end up going with the three seamers, then obviously Tim will come right into the equation."

Latham admitted that the build-up to this series was not ideal after a 0-2 series defeat against Sri Lanka, but hoped to carry over the learning from that contest. "Obviously, results weren't ideal in Sri Lanka. I think that first Test was a reasonably small margin in terms of the defeat. But we actually did a lot of good stuff in that tour. "And, yeah, I guess you come here to India, it's slightly different conditions. That wicket at Galle didn't offer a lot from a bowling point of view," he noted. Latham is no stranger to captaincy but being in the hot seat on a permanent basis from the three-match series against India excites the Canterbury man.