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Extradite Bishnoi gangsters: India to Canada

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid ongoing diplomatic tensions between the two countries, India on Thursday said it had sought extradition of Lawrence Bishnoi gang members from Canada a few years back but it has not yet responded. Making this assertion here, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal also said similar extradition requests of syndicates linked to the Bishnoi gang were made recently as well, but did not get any response

from Canada. He also informed there are 26 extradition requests from India pending with the Canadian side for a decade or so. The MEA gave names of Gurjit Singh, Gurbinder Singh, Arshdeep Singh Gill, Lakhbir Singh Landa, Gurpreet Singh for extradition, saying that the members of the Bishnoi gang were among them. "We informed Canada about the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and its syndicates and requested their provisional arrest and extradition some years back, and also recently. However, there has been no response from Canada so far", he said during a media

briefing. "We had shared some requests with the Canadian side for the arrest of those from Lawrence Bishnoi's gang. They haven't taken any action on our core concerns. There is a political motive also behind this," Jaiswal said. He also reiterated that Canada did not share any evidence in connection with the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. "We have made our position very clear on this particular matter. You would have seen that several press releases have been issued in the last two days



putting out our position. Since September 2023, the Canadian government has not shared any shred of information with us", he

asserted. The Ministry also said Canada always brought forth 'freedom of speech' as their argument whenever India sought action against anti-India and separatist elements. The government's statement came a day after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau named gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, who was earlier mentioned by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for being allegedly involved in Nijjar's murder in September last year. Trudeau alleged that Indian diplomats were collecting

information on Canadians and passing it to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Trudeau, who testified before the country's foreign interference inquiry, claimed that the Canadian agencies tried to work behind the scenes with India before he went public with the allegations in the Nijjar killing. Jaiswal also said the current diplomatic row with Canada has been precipitated by the Trudeau government's "baseless" allegations, and reiterated that "no evidence" has been shared in support of Ottawa's serious allegations against New Delhi.



15 bomb hoax threats received in a day

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The pattern of domestic airlines receiving bomb threats to their flights continued for the fourth consecutive day as Air India got a threat for five flights - Mumbai-London (AI 129), Delhi - New York JFK (AI 119), a Chennai-Singapore and two domestic - IndiGo and Vistara threats for two flights each, were targeted in the similar manner on Thursday. Air India Express is also learnt to have got similar messages for six flights but a confirmation is awaited from the airline. Four of these flights were still on the ground, while three were airborne at the time when the threats were received. The number of flights that have received such threats is now close to around three dozen since Monday, forcing flight diversions and delays, piling up massive operational costs.

On Thursday a Mumbai-bound Vistara flight from Frankfurt with 147 persons on board was immediately taken to security checks on its arrival from Frankfurt following the Boeing 787 aircraft receiving a bomb threat. The flight, UK 28, was over Pakistan when it transmitted the code 7700, having 134 passengers and 13 crew onboard indicating a general emergency at around 6 am (IST) on Thursday, landed in Mumbai at approximately 7.45 am. At the same time, an IndiGo flight operating from Istanbul in Turkey for Mumbai also received a bomb threat and was taken to an isolation bay here for the security agencies to carry out a comprehensive security check. "The Vistara flight UK 028 operating from Frankfurt to Mumbai on October 16, 2024 was subject to a security threat received on social media," the airline said.



Police shoot at, arrest Bahraich prime accused

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Sarfaraz alias Rinku, the sprime accused in the murder of 22-year-old Ram Gopal Mishra, was reportedly injured in a police encounter near the Nepal border. Alongside Sarfaraz, another suspect, Talib, sustained bullet injuries during the exchange of fire. Both suspects were shot in the legs and were admitted to a State-run hospital for treatment. No fatalities have been reported as of now. They were among the five suspects arrested in this case.

Additional director general (ADG) Law and Order, Amitabh Yash, confirmed the encounter, stating, "The police have arrested five suspects. Two were injured in an encounter." Yash, who also leads the Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh Police, said that the Bahraich police, which is investigating the murder and subsequent violence, has established a link involving one of the accused in Nepal. Bahraich Superintendent of Police Vrinda Shukla said the suspects were attempting to flee to Nepal when the Special Task Force (STF) and Bahraich police received a tip-off regarding their whereabouts. Acting on this information, the police intercepted the suspects near the Handa Basehari canal in the Nanpara Kotwali area.

Hooch returns to haunt Bihar, leaves 25 dead in its wake

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

In one of the biggest hooch tragedies in Bihar since the state went dry in 2016, at least 25 people have died after consuming spurious liquor in the adjoining districts of Siwan and Saran, a top officer said on Thursday. Director General of Police Alok Raj said that while Siwan accounted for 20 fatalities, five deaths have been reported from Saran even as 12 people have been arrested for allegedly selling spurious liquor and they were likely to be "tried under the most stringent laws and punished by the court". Chief Minister Nitish Kumar chaired a high-level meeting to review the situation where he instructed officials concerned to visit the site and ensure strongest possible



action against those found guilty. Kumar, who is the state's longest-serving CM, also made an impassioned appeal to the people of the state to "be on guard against elements who are trying to encourage consumption of liquor which plays havoc with people's lives and disrupts peace in families". Notably, the state government had confirmed more than 150 deaths on account of hooch since the ban on liquor came into force. Police said two special investigating teams have also been set up in the aftermath of the incident.

Team India gifts match to NZ



(L-R) Virat Kohli, Sarfaraz Khan, KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja and R Ashwin walking off the ground after being dismissed for a duck during the second day of the first Test cricket match between India and New Zealand, at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, in Bengaluru, Thursday PTI

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

Taking the sparkle out of the Diwali mood, team India was bowled out for just 46 runs in a span of the first session of day's play on Thursday. India after winning the toss missed the opportunity to give their bowlers a crack against New Zealand in overcast conditions after day one got washed out due to rain, which bamboozled their batting strength on day two in Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru.

India's total of 46 has now become the lowest team score at home after 75 all out against West Indies in Delhi (1987). India who were riding sky high in ICC world Test Championship (2023-2025) got stunned by Kiwi bowlers. Matt Henry and William O'Rourke were the star performers under the grey sky. Indian skipper Rohit Sharma was the first wicket down by Tim Southee, Virat Kohli who came after one down which usually is not his position to bat on test matches on

unfriendly conditions for batters, this move shifted KL Rahul to number six. However both Virat and Rahul went scoreless and were dismissed by William O'Rourke. Matt Henry who achieved a five wicket haul against India's batting lineup dismissed Sarfaraz Khan, R.Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja on ducks and William O'Rourke took four wickets. India's scorecard includes five ducks which were the talking point of debaters in India's innings.

Work for national development: PM to NDA allies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

All the 13 Chief Ministers and 16 Deputy CMs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies such as Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Janata Dal (United), Shiv Sena viz chief ministers of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Sikkim, Nagaland, and Meghalaya vowed to work together for national development during the meeting of the National Democratic Alliance Chief Ministers' Council in Chandigarh, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The meeting was called to discuss national development issues. The meeting schedule holds significance as it has come ahead of the Maharashtra and Jharkhand Assembly polls, and soon after the historic victory in Haryana and formation of a new government in Jammu and Kashmir. Twenty CMs of the NDA, and their deputies engaged in the half-day conclave, the first of its kind after many years. "Chaired a meeting of NDA Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers. We had extensive discussions on aspects of good governance and ways to improve people's lives. Our



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Health Minister JP Nadda with NDA Chief Ministers during National Democratic Alliance Chief Ministers' Council Meeting, in Chandigarh, Thursday PTI

alliance is committed to furthering national progress and empowering the poor and downtrodden," Modi said on his social media handle soon after the meeting. The proceedings of conclave commenced immediately after the swearing-in ceremony of newly-elected Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP National President J P Nadda, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu were present in the meeting. According to sources, the deliberations in this meeting covered a structured agenda covering all aspects of national development. "It also discussed subjects like observance of Sanvidhan Ka Amrut Mahotsav and



J and K politics in peace, terror groups to target forces

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With the peaceful culmination of the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan-based terrorist groups, operating in the Pir Panjal region, are once again planning to target security forces in the area. Late Wednesday night, alert troops after observing suspicious movement of a group of heavily armed terrorists challenged them in the thickly forested area of Gursai top in Poonch. Taking advantage of the pitch-dark conditions and undulating hostile terrain the group of terrorists may have managed to flee the area. To track down their footprints, the security forces swiftly launched a massive search operation at Mohri Shashar in the Gursai top area of Poonch district.



Nayab Singh Saini takes oath as the Chief Minister of Haryana for the second time during the swearing-in ceremony, in Panchkula, Thursday PTI



BY RAJESH KUMAR

As Delhi is grappling with congested roads and the increasing volume of traffic, the Central Road Research Institute (CRR) in one of its report had suggested that construction of flyovers and underpasses, and widening roads or right of way are not better approaches and solutions to deal with congestion and heavy road traffic. The report found that new infrastructure projects like flyovers and underpasses can actually increase the number of cars on the road and worsen sustainability. The report, titled: "Gradual sustainability approach for urban transport through subtle measures", highlights that within a few years of construction, such approaches have increased the number of personal vehicles on roads and worsened sustainability without reducing

congestion. The report was based on a study conducted at five key Metro stations in Delhi. To understand the traffic situation on the ground, the CRR selected five key Metro stations - Karol Bagh, Laxmi Nagar, Kailash Colony, Lajpat Nagar and Inderlok - in the most crowded locations in the city that always see heavy traffic outside the premises. These are also stations where not only vehicle users face problems, but Metro users as well as pedestrians complain of discomfort in movement and safety issues. The study has clearly demonstrated that parking related policies (including segregated parking lanes for cycle rickshaws and electric-rickshaws) can result in improvement in vehicular speed by two to six km/h in the influence zone of the selected metro stations for all categories of motorised vehicles.



This is expected to result in total daily savings of 593 litres of petrol, 103 litres diesel and 643 kg CNG, and total CO2e (equivalent) reduction of 3.5 tonne/day in all the five metro stations. It is evident that the sustainable scenarios (viz. segregation/shifting of on-street parking, signal design, etc.) or similar to those that have been suggested, would result in

significant reduction in fuel consumption and corresponding CO2e (equivalent) emissions. This report also shows that minor corrections on roads like improving facilities for sustainable modes, no new construction for vehicle users, implementing on-street parking, lane and segregated parking for cycles and e-rickshaws and better crossing facilities for pedestrians can reduce congestion. Further, it is also suggested that for effective improvement measures (covered through alternate scenarios), the following areas need to be addressed while preparing traffic circulation plans: (i) On-street parking needs to be channelised and preferably on minor roads. (ii) Segregated parking lanes for cycle rickshaws and e-rickshaws. (iii) Redesign of signals, including 'no free left' turn and 'all red' phase around metro stations. (iv) Pedestrian crossing at-grade as

well as through metro stations. (v) Alternative bus stops locations suited to traffic and road users. (vi) Providing bus stops with 'bus bays' only for roads with less than two-lane carriageway. (vii) Possibility to provide segregated pick-up/drop off zones underneath metro stations for taxis, private vehicles and autos. (viii) Explore potential spaces for utilisation of different road users, metro commuters. The Unified Traffic and Transportation Infrastructure (Planning & Engineering) Centre, the nodal agency for traffic planning for the National Capital has specific guidelines for road construction including desirable aspects such as drainage and pedestrian and cycling tracks. But frequently, footpaths, where they exist, turn into parking lots or are encroached upon, while the roads themselves have no consistency in terms of lanes, width or signage.

New flyovers, underpasses are pretty, but useless

Central Road Research Institute report suggests these add to the problem

Vehicle checks at inter-state and inter-district borders intensified

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

As the Assembly Elections 2024 approach, the Jamshedpur administration has ramped up efforts to ensure a free, fair, and peaceful election process. Acting on the orders of District Election Officer Ananya Mittal, a robust security and surveillance system has been established, with inter-state and inter-district check posts now fully operational across all six assembly constituencies of the region.

In a bid to prevent unlawful activities that could influence the election outcome, the administration has set up 12 inter-state and 6 inter-district check posts. These locations are being monitored around the clock to curb the movement of illegal

liquor, cash, gift items, weapons, ammunition, and anti-social elements. The vehicle checking campaign is part of a broader initiative to maintain law and order during the election period.

To control the flow of goods and people from neighboring states, check posts have been set up along the borders of West Bengal and Odisha. The main inter-state check posts include: West Bengal's Jhargram District: Chakulia block, Shishakhun (Shantinagar) of Chakulia block, Darisol in Baharagora block, Cheingjoda in Ghatshila block. West Bengal's Purulia District: Kesharpur picket in Ghatshila block, Bara Suni in Bodam block, Patamda block cutting Odisha's Mayurbhanj District: Jamshola in Baharagora block,



have been positioned at the borders adjacent to Seraikela. These include: Haata-Rajnagar in Potka block, Ranggate, Jugsalai in Jamshedpur Sadar block, Bistupur-Adityapur, Paridih, Bosenagar - Kapali

Kamargoda of Azadnagar police station and Sonari-Domuhani Bridge in Sonari police station. Within Jamshedpur city, several checkpoints have also been set up to prevent illegal activities, including:

OVER RS. 7 LAKHS SEIZED IN TWO DAYS

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In preparation for the upcoming assembly elections, authorities have intensified vehicle checks at inter-state and inter-district check posts to ensure a free, fair, and fear-free election process. Over the past two days, a total of Rs. 7.28 lakh has been seized during these checks, with Rs. 1.1 lakh released after proper veri-

fication by the magistrate. On October 16, Rs. 1,42,600 was seized from a vehicle in Potka. The following day, October 17, vehicle checks at the Kesharpur picket near Galudih police station in Ghatshila block resulted in the seizure of Rs. 2,39,600 from a pick-up vehicle, and an additional Rs. 2,36,500 from another pick-up vehicle, totaling Rs. 4,76,100. Rs. 1,10,000

was also recovered from another vehicle and later released after verification. District Election Officer Ananya Mittal has directed authorities to thoroughly inspect all vehicles, including two-wheelers, four-wheelers, cargo trucks, and VIP vehicles, to prevent illegal transportation of cash, liquor, drugs, or any gift items that could influence the election process.

To avoid inconvenience, the general public has been advised to carry valid documents, particularly when traveling with cash, valuable items, or other goods. Vehicles will be inspected thoroughly, and any suspicious items or individuals will be subjected to further checks.

The administration, under the leadership of Ananya Mittal, is determined to maintain strict vigilance throughout the election period. The initiative aims to protect the democratic process by preventing the flow of illegal resources and by keeping anti-social elements in check. By conducting these inspections, the administration seeks to uphold law and order while ensuring that the elections are held in a peaceful and unbiased manner.

Removing non-agitators from power most important for Jharkhand: Dr. Suraj Mandal

PNS : RANCHI

Former MP, former Vice President of Jharkhand Autonomous Council (JAC) and President of Jharkhand Mazdoor Morcha, Dr. Suraj Mandal has said that the upcoming election of Jharkhand Assembly is actually a fight to remove non-agitators, corrupt and criminal minded people as well as opponents of Jharkhand from power in Jharkhand, which must be won at all costs.

Presiding over an important meeting of Jharkhand Andolankari Morcha at Dhumakudia Bhawan situated at Karamtoli Chowk here on Thursday, he said that the long standing presence of Jharkhand's opponents in the state is the root cause of the major and grave problems here and because of this all the dreams that were



seen during the Jharkhand State Formation Movement for the development of this state and the happiness of the tribals, natives and the people of this state have been shattered. Dr Mandal said that this is the only way left to free Jharkhand from problems and just as the agitators have taken a separate state, in the same way they will take the key of power in their

hands and make Jharkhand a developed and prosperous state.

Mandal said that the government's focus is on whitewashing its corruption and saving power.

Speaking on this occasion, Jharkhand agitator Prabhakar Tirkey said that agitators should be mobilized in all the five divisions and candidates who have been

agitators for the formation of a separate state should be fielded in the election. Expressing his views in the meeting, former MLA Bahadur Oraon said that there is a need for an angry fight by Jharkhand agitators under the leadership of Suraj Mandal because only this will improve the situation of Jharkhand. He said that there was a lot of faith in BJP

but elements with criminal tendencies have also joined it.

Today's meeting was addressed by Pushkar Mahato, Ravi Nandi, Surendra Raj (Gomia), Sanjeev Kumar Verma (Ramgarh), Ramji Bhagat (Pakur), Abdul Kalam (Daltanganj), Jayshree Das, Manav Ghosh, Kinu Hembram, Sukhdev ji, Arun Kashyap, Zubair Ahmed Ansari, Shafiq Alam and many other agitators. In this meeting, the main problems of the agitators as well as the current political situation of the state were specially discussed and it was decided to move forward with unity. In the meeting, a 16-member core committee of Jharkhand agitators was formed and committees were formed for all the five divisions, whose first meeting will be held within a week.

Awareness Programme on Cyberhygiene and Cybersecurity at SAIL Units Ranchi

PNS : RANCHI

As part of the Campaign Mode for Vigilance Awareness Week 2024, an awareness programme on Cyberhygiene and Cybersecurity was organized by the Vigilance Department of Ranchi-based SAIL Units headed by Vishal Sinha, GM (Vigilance) & ACVO, and saw enthusiastic participation from the spouses of SAIL Units Ranchi employees.

The Chief Guest for the programme, Ved Prakash, ED (SDDT), SAIL, emphasized the importance of the programme in today's increasingly digital world, highlighting the critical need for awareness and education in cybersecurity. Sanjay Dhar, CGM (HR-L&D), MTI, and Atanu Mukherjee, GM V/c (Academics), MTI, also addressed the audience, reinforcing the urgent necessity for Cybersecurity



and Cyberhygiene awareness.

The faculty for this programme Kumar Saurabh, Cyber Consultant for Law Enforcement Agencies in Jharkhand covered essential topics including:

Understanding Cyber Threats: Identifying different types of cyber threats and vulnerabilities.

Safe Online Practices: Best practices for online safety, including password management and recognizing phishing attempts.

Incident Response: Steps to take in case of a cyber incident to mitigate risks and report breaches effectively.

The programme not only raised awareness but also equipped participants with practical knowledge to protect themselves and their families in the digital age. The collective effort highlighted the ongoing commitment of SAIL to foster a secure and informed environment for its employees and their families.

BSL Vigilance Dept organizes drawing competition for School students

PNS : BOKARO

As part of the three-month-long Vigilance Awareness Campaign 2024, a drawing competition was organized on October 17 for 127 students of Bal Mandir School, Cooperative Colony, run by the Women's Committee. The event was supported by BSL's CSR department.

Chief General Manager (Vigilance) and ACVO, Gyanesh Jha, graced the event as the chief guest, accompanied by Assistant General Managers of the Vigilance Department, Shani Ranjan, Anjani Kumar Singh, Divyanshu Pant, and Senior Manager of CSR, Neeraj Kumar Tripathi.

The event aimed to raise awareness among young students about the importance of integrity and moral values in their formative



education. The drawing competition, themed "Integrity: The Foundation of Prosperity for the Nation," was held for students from pre-nursery to grade 5. Winners of the competition will be awarded at the closing

ceremony of Vigilance Awareness Week on November 2, 2024.

The program was coordinated and hosted by school in-charge Neetu, assistant in-charge Asha Raj Mishra, and principal Savita Kumari.



A delegation of Federation of Commerce and Industries meets Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar at Raj Bhawan in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

'How India Borrows 2024' - A Study by Home Credit India

RANCHI : Home Credit India, a local arm of the leading global consumer finance provider, has released the findings of its annual consumer study - How India Borrows - today. The sixth edition of the study reported a significant shift in borrowing patterns among the lower-middle-class consumers, transitioning from survival-driven borrowing to one fuelled by aspirations, entrepreneurship, and long-term investments. This transformation reflects India's evolving socio-economic landscape, where consumers are increasingly focused on improving their quality of life, empowered by greater access to credit and the growth of digital platforms.

City commissioner asked to oversee Panki Constituency

PNS : DALTONGANJ

DC Palamu Shashi Ranjan has directed the city commissioner Md Jawed Hussain an IAS officer to 'see Panki assembly constituency'.

This Panki assembly constituency is not simply an arena of electoral fight this vidhan sabha election rather it is a war field of extreme religious bigotry.

There is a leader here who never stops widening the chasm between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Quite recently there happened a case where a Muslim boy eloped with a Hindu girl.

The case was purely a criminal case and the police were well capable of handling it and the police handled it well. But, passions were aroused in the name of the religion. There were public exhortations to teach a salutary lesson to the boy's family. SP Reeshma Ramesan said our police acted swiftly and it saved the situation from going any worse.

Here in the Panki assembly constituency leaders give away "Aam ki Larki" to Chhath devotees. Can this be given when model code of conduct is enforced?

Again sarees are offered to women irrespective of performing Chhath Puja or not. Can this freebie be allowed in the model code of conduct?

There is one version that it's a matter of Astha (faith) hence it can't be tamed. It is allowed. But, there is another version that these two items come in the categories of freebies which the model code of conduct just prohibits it sternly.

All eyes are on the instructions of the state chief electoral officer Jharkhand K Ravi Kumar.

This correspondent spoke to CEO K Ravi Kumar on Thursday today who said "When model code of conduct is enforced such distribution is strictly prohibited. It will be a violation of the model code of conduct."

K Ravi Kumar further said "No leader or candidate can go for distribution of cash or kind at all. No such material as you said, can be doled out. Let it be very clear to one and all."

DIPLOMACY NEEDS PATIENCE



BY BANSHIDHAR RUKHAIYAR

The Indo-Canadian diplomatic standoff, which is almost on the brink of a total breakdown, is a rare phenomenon in the realm of diplomatic relationship. The problematic issue that led to this situation is the murder of Nijjer', a self-styled Khalistani leader by unknown gunman in Canada. This was a simple problem of law and order, given the fact that the Lawrence Bishnoi gang was blamed by the Canadian police for this crime. But the Sikhs residing

in Canada are very influential and they constitute an important vote bank. The Sikhs in general and the Sikhs advocating the cause of Sikhs in the name of a separate Sikh nation Khalistan are two distinct groups. It would be a folly to believe that the Sikhs living in Canada are supporters of Khalistan. They are not. A handful of Sikhs run a movement for Khalistan in Canada and they don't have a substantial support of the Sikhs living over there. These Sikhs are wanted criminals in India and the Canadian government should have treated them that way. Instead, they are protected and patronised by the Canadian government and are being used as a leverage against India to woo the Sikh voters in Canada. Every politician is guided by the vote bank politics but one should know the limit otherwise one is likely to land in trouble.

India has withdrawn its top six diplomats because the Canadian government was dragging their names in the Nijjer murder case. At the same time, India has expelled Six top Canadian diplomats and they have been asked to leave the country before midnight of 19th October. Therefore, the diplomatic relationship between India and Canada has reached a flashpoint. Now the US and UK have shown support to the

unfounded Canadian allegation and asked India to cooperate in the matter. This development clearly shows that the Canadian allegation against India is well scripted and America is behind the whole issue to arm-twist India to toe its line in international politics. The UK has declined as a power and America is on decline. The US hegemony in Asia can only be resurrected with the help of India. The US led NATO can not take on the formidable alliance of China, Russia and Iran because of their demographic poverty. The Allied Powers won the first and second world wars with the support of Indian men and materials. Any big war in future involving many nations or possibly the third world war can not be won by the US led West without the support of India. That's why the US led West is restless to bring India to its side. The present Indian government is strong and the American Deep State tried its best to throw spanners on the way of BJP led NDA to return to power for the third consecutive term but failed, though it dented the majority of the BJP.

The Nijjer issue and for that matter the Pannu issue in America are the manifestation of the desire of the West to destabilize India. S. Jaishankar gave a brilliant reply to all these forces in Pakistan while

attending the SCO summit. He rightly said that co-operation can be given only when independence and sovereign of a nation is respected. The unfounded Canadian allegation against India in the Nijjer murder case and the American allegation against India regarding attempted assassination bid on Pannu is an unwarranted encroachment upon the sovereignty of India. India should throw these allegations to the dustbin of diplomacy as China does time and again. No power in the world, including America, has sufficient resources of men and material to take on India and China. The Western audacity to test the patience of an emerging strong India would land them in great trouble. Just imagine, a strong alliance between India, China and Russia and the decimation of the western powers that would follow. It is poor diplomacy on the part of the West to push India into forming such an alliance.

Diplomacy is the game of patience and instead of acting as a bully, the West should try to adjust to the emerging world order and maintain peace in the world.

THE WRITER IS A NOTED ACADEMICIAN AND POLITICAL COMMENTATOR. VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE ARTICLE ARE PERSONAL.

Bandhan Life and Bandhan Bank announce strategic partnership

Jamshedpur: Bandhan Life and Bandhan Bank announced a strategic partnership to distribute life insurance. The partnership was kicked off with the launch of two new products: iGuaranteee Vishwas, a savings insurance plan with guaranteed returns, and iInvest II, a unit-linked insurance plan. Starting October 2024, these plans will be available at 181 Bandhan Bank branches across Bihar and Jharkhand. Existing customers of Bandhan Bank can get a policy in a matter of a few minutes, subject to fulfillment of the conditions for insurance. The product portfolio will expand further as new par product 'Shubh Samridhhi' and other savings products will be added in the coming weeks. A comprehensive range of products will be available nationwide by the end of 2024, thereby adding strength to Bandhan's long standing vision of empowering Indians financially.

ASSEMBLY POLLS 2024

Nominations for 43 assembly constituencies to begin today

PNS : RANCHI



CEO K Ravi Kumar alongwith others during a press conference at his office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

CEO K Ravi Kumar has said that nominations for the first phase of assembly elections will start from October 18. The last date for nomination is October 25. Nominations will be from 11 am to 3 pm. Nominations will not be done on holidays.

Kumar said that all the candidates will ensure compliance with the guidelines of the Election Commission during nomination and during this time only three vehicles will be allowed within 100 meters of the nomination site. "Only four people will be able to go to the nomination room with the candidate. Proposal

of 10 people will be mandatory for the nomination of the candidate. Every general

candidate will have to deposit Rs 10,000 as security deposit. Whereas for Scheduled Caste

and Tribe this amount will be Rs five thousand," he added.

The CEO said that every candidate will have to clearly fill Form 26 as an affidavit. Candidates will have to advertise information related to their criminal cases in at least three newspapers and also display it on their social media accounts. He said that every candidate should open a separate bank account for the details of election expenses. He was addressing a press conference at Nirvachan Sadan, Dhurwa on Thursday.

Kumar said that a two-day art festival related to the assembly elections is starting from Friday at the Jaipal Singh Stadium, its inauguration will be done on Friday at

11 am. "In the festival, 81 renowned artists will exhibit their art on cultural concerns related to the 81 assembly constituencies of Jharkhand. Many types of cultural activities will also be held on this occasion," he added.

The Chief Electoral Officer invited all the voters on this occasion and appealed to come with their families. He said that since the implementation of the Model Code of Conduct, a total of Rs 37 lakh worth of illegal goods and cash have been seized so far.

Joint Chief Electoral Officer Subodh Kumar and Deputy Director, Public Relations Anand were present with Kumar in the press conference.

Congress ready with its election manifesto

Congress senior leader Rahul Gandhi will reach Ranchi on Saturday



Jharkhand Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmed Mir and State Congress President Keshav Mahato Kamlesh and others after a meeting in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Ratan Lal

PNS : RANCHI

The state Congress's assembly election manifesto has been prepared. Now it will be discussed with the allies so that there is uniformity in the manifestos of the allies. After this, after discussing with the top leadership and finalizing it, the manifesto will be released. Jharkhand Congress manifesto committee chairperson Bandhu Turkey revealed the facts after meeting with members of committee.

Turkey said that the party want that there should be uniformity in manifesto and the manifesto of the allies in the elections, for this the manifesto will be discussed with the allies so that we can go to the public with the same issues.

An attempt has been made to include Jharkhandi sentiment in the Congress manifesto. The heritage, civilization, culture, water-for-est, land here are the basic foundation of our manifesto. The priority has been given in the manifesto to set paths for the development of the people living in Jharkhand for decades. We have prepared a manifesto for the prosperity of Jharkhand keeping in mind all communities and languages.

Giving information about the meeting, State Congress spokesperson Sonal Shanti

said that in the meeting, the main points of the prepared manifesto were discussed in detail as per the consultation done by organizing Chaupal with the general public, civil society, intellectuals of the society, youth, student organizations of the entire state. After an in-depth discussion on the prepared manifesto with the implication of the general public, it was decided to include some other major issues. On the basis of suggestions received from all over the state, this time the manifesto has been prepared keeping "Sarvajan Hitaya" in front and an attempt has been made to emphasize on completing the issues in a timely manner.

Meanwhile, in other development State Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmed Mir along with State Congress president Keshav Mahato Kamlesh reached Ranchi from Delhi. Talking to the media at Birsa Munda Airport, in-charge Ghulam Ahmed Mir said that the assembly elections in Jharkhand have been announced. Congress MP Rahul Gandhi is coming to Ranchi on October 19. After 19, Congress will release its first list of candidates. Mir said that he is involved in the alliance in Jharkhand since 2019. In such a situation, there is no tussle regarding

the seat. The formula on seat sharing has been filed. The candidates in Jharkhand will be announced after the CEC meeting. Probably the names of the candidates will be announced by 21st. Let us tell you that Congress is now completely in election mode. Today many big leaders of Congress are coming to Ranchi. Let us tell you that RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav will reach Ranchi tomorrow i.e. on 18th October. Tejashwi Yadav will hold a meeting with CM Hemant Soren.

Many Congress leaders will also be present in this meeting. Leaders of the Left parties will also be present in this meeting. A decision will be taken on the seat sharing of the India Alliance in the meeting. At the same time, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will also come to Ranchi on 19th October. Rahul Gandhi will participate in the Samvidhan Samman Sannam organized in the Shourya Auditorium of Doranda. Along with this, he will hold meetings with various social organizations, caste organizations, constitutionalists, educationists and enlightened people of the society. Five hundred representatives have been called in the conference. Here the party and different organizations are busy preparing for the conference.

Supporters of BJP leaders clash in Dumka over fake candidates' list

Man stabbed by supporters of a particular BJP leader



PNS : RANCHI

A man was injured in a clash with supporters of a BJP leader in Dumka after a 'fake' list of BJP candidates for Jharkhand assembly elections went viral on social media on Wednesday.

The list claimed that former MP Sunil Soren would be made the BJP candidate from Dumka in place of former minister Louis Marandi. Leading to this Louis Marandi supporters and Sunil Soren supporters clashed with each other. The matter escalated

from heated arguments and debate to stabbing.

The factionalism going on within the BJP in Dumka is well known. From the Lok Sabha elections to the assembly elections, the discord going on within the party keeps coming out from time to time.

On Wednesday night, the bloody result of the factionalism going on within the BJP and the viral claims on social media of Sunil Soren being made the candidate from Dumka in place of Louis Marandi was seen, when a heated debate took place between Sunil Soren supporters and Louis Marandi supporters in Indira Nagar Jarwadih locality over the viral list.

The matter escalated so much that Sunil Soren's supporter Sitaram Mishra and his son stabbed Louis Marandi's supporter Anuj Singh with a knife. Anuj Singh was injured in the knife attack after which he was admitted to Phooljhanoo



Medical College Hospital for treatment. After consulting doctors, Anuj Singh is resting at his home.

Police have started investigating the whole matter. The accused Sitaram Mishra is said to be absconding since the incident. After the incident, supporters of Louis Marandi are said to be angry.

Anuj Singh has said in his statement to the media that the accused was saying wrong things about Louis Marandi's ticket being cut, due to which he clashed with Sitaram Mishra.

Chirag Paswan discusses seat sharing with Biswa Sarma

PNS : RANCHI

BJP, AJSU Party, JD(U), LJP-Ram Vilas Party will contest the elections together in the NDA fold this time. Union Minister and LJP chief Chirag Paswan and Assam Chief Minister and Jharkhand BJP election co-in-charge Hemant Biswa Sarma met on Thursday to reach a consensus on seat sharing.

It is being discussed that in the talks between Himanta Biswa Sarma and Chirag Paswan, there has been an effort to reach a consensus on contesting elections together in Jharkhand. BJP is ready to give one seat to Chirag Paswan's party.

However, Chirag's party has staked claim on five seats. Chirag Paswan's party wants to contest elections on Dhanbad, Latehar, Chatra, Chhatarpur and Jamshepur West seats. Earlier, Himanta Biswa Sarma had announced in a conversation with the media in Ranchi that the seat sharing will be announced after Chirag Paswan returns from abroad. It is said that Himanta Biswa Sarma is trying to convince Chirag

Paswan to contest only one seat under the NDA alliance. While going to the swearing-in ceremony of the Chief Minister of Haryana, Himanta Biswa Sarma and Chirag Paswan also discussed about the Jharkhand elections in the special plane.

Earlier on Wednesday, two MPs of Chirag Paswan's party met Himanta Biswa Sarma and Babul Marandi. They expressed their desire to contest at least three seats. It is believed that Himanta has convinced Chirag to contest on a single seat. On the other hand, JD(U) is demanding an increase in the two seats being given by BJP in Jharkhand. Due to this, the announcement of seat sharing is getting delayed. It is discussed that BJP wants to give only two seats to JD(U) in Jharkhand.

Jamshepur West and Tamar seat, JD(U) state president Khiru Mahato says that the party is ready to contest on 11 seats in the state. BJP has almost finalized the seat sharing formula in Jharkhand NDA. It is likely that BJP will contest 68 out of 81 seats, while AJSU is expected to get 10 seats.

Marandi terms JMMSY as 'Maiya Apmaan Yojana'

PNS : RANCHI

BJP State President and former Chief Minister Babul Marandi said that Maiya Samman Yojana has become Maiya Apmaan Yojana. Marandi targeting the State Government said that Maiya Samman Yojana was launched keeping an eye on election as Hemant Soren, who has been cheating women for the last 5 years, started Maiya Samman Yojana due to show-off politics, but Maiya Samman Yojana is coming out to be Maiya Apmaan Yojana.

He said that the fraud going on in the name of Maiya Samman Yojana is being exposed every day in the state. Sometimes money is being taken in the name of form, sometimes in the name of getting the name included in the list, and sometimes money is being taken even for sending money to the account.

Marandi said that insulting mothers and sisters has been an old tradition of JMM-Congress. Taking this forward, the Hemant government is taking every step to insult women. Mothers and sisters can be cheated. Their rights can be snatched and their honor and pride can be hurt.

The state president told Chief Minister Hemant Soren that no more. Now the time for change has come. The mothers and sisters of the state have understood your dishonest intentions very well. The public has also understood your intentions of collecting money by running schemes in the name of mothers and sisters, the result of which you will see in the upcoming elections.

Meanwhile in another development Bharatiya Janata Party Scheduled Caste Front Jharkhand Pradesh paid floral tribute on the birth anniversary of Maharishi Valmiki. Former Union Minister of State, Government of India, Kaushal Kishore said that Brahma Ji appeared pleased with Ratnakar's penance. A mountain of termites was formed on Ratnakar's body. Therefore, he named Ratnakar as Valmiki, because the house of lamps is called Valmiki. Brahma Ji also inspired Ratnakar to compose Ramayana. After this, Ratnakar is known as Valmiki. In this way, by chanting the name of Ram, robber Ratnakar became Maharishi Valmiki.



CEO holds meeting with nodal officers of postal ballot of all districts

PNS : RANCHI



CEO K Ravi Kumar alongwith senior officials during a meeting at his office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

Chief Electoral Officer K. Ravi Kumar has said that in the assembly elections, it has to be ensured that all the employees associated with essential services and the employees engaged in election work vote through postal ballot. For this, coordinate with the officers of all essential services and get the list. He was holding a review meeting with the nodal officers of postal ballot of all the districts through video conferencing from the Election House on Thursday.

Kumar said that in the assembly elections, form 12D should be made available to the voters above 85 years of

age or handicapped voters who are unable to go to the polling booth for voting from home. He said that along with

the announcement of elections, there is a guideline by the Election Commission of India to allocate the postal

ballot forms to the concerned voters. Comply with this and ensure its availability to all concerned in time.

Additional Chief Electoral Officer Dr. Neha Arora strictly instructed the nodal officers of postal ballot of all the districts to complete all the formalities related to postal ballot by late evening today on Thursday and report. She said that special care should be taken that no voter who is eligible to vote by postal ballot should be deprived of exercising his/her right to vote.

On this occasion, OSD of Chief Electoral Officer Office, Geeta Chaubey and all the officers of the Postal Ballot Division were present.



Vehicles ply on a city road amid rains in Ranchi on Thursday. Ranchi has been witnessing rains due to depression in the Bay of Bengal. PNS

DC inspects Dispatch Center

PNS : RANCHI

Ranchi District Election Officer cum Deputy Commissioner Ranchi (DC), Varun Ranjan inspected the dispatch center at the football stadium located at Morhabadi, Ranchi on Thursday. During this, Deputy Election Officer Ranchi, Vivek Kumar Suman, Nodal Officer EVM Cell, Mukesh Kumar, Assistant Director Social Security Ranchi, Ravi Shankar Mishra, District Nazarat Deputy Collector Ranchi, Sudesh Kumar and other related officers were present.

All the concerned officials were instructed to ensure compliance of all the guidelines given by the Election Commission of India regarding the assembly elections on November 13 and November 20.

The District Election Officer gave information regarding the distribution of EVMs and making them available to the presiding officer from the material cell and many necessary guidelines were given. Ranjan specifically told all the concerned officials that all the concerned officials should ensure that all the guidelines given by the Election Commission of India are followed.



Ranchi DC Varun Ranjan inspects dispatch centre at Morhabadi in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS



Bollywood actress and BJP MP Hema Malini and her daughter and actress Esha Deol during a programme in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

PM criticises Congress for neglecting India's culture, urges embracing of Buddha's teachings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after India recognised Pali as a classical language, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday criticised past Congress Governments for neglecting the country's cultural legacy after Independence and urged the global community to embrace Buddha's teachings to promote peace amid current geopolitical tensions.

In his address at an event held here to mark the International Abhidhamma Divas, he also referred to the current geopolitical scenario and called upon the whole world, "to learn from Buddha, keep the war away, and forge a path for peace". Modi said conferring the status of a classical language on Pali by the government recently, makes this occasion even more special. The prime minister said while every nation associates its heritage with its identity, India was left far behind.



Invaders tried to erase India's identity before its Independence, and those suffering from "slave mindset" did so afterwards, he said, adding that an ecosystem captured the country which took it in a direction opposite to its heritage. Modi said his government's policies and programmes have been guided by the teachings of Lord Buddha, reiterating that the world plagued by instability and insecurity can find

solutions to its problems in his teachings. The entire world can find solutions not in "yuddh" (war) but in Buddha, and it should learn from his teachings to pave the way for peace, he said. Buddha is not only relevant but also a necessity, he said, referring to the current geopolitical situations. "With a lot of faith, I call upon the whole world to learn from Buddha, keep the war away, and forge a path for peace,"

Modi said. In his address, he also quoted some lines from the teachings of Lord Buddha, and said, strife and discord do not lead to peace, and that there is no bigger happiness than peace. "Welfare for everyone this is the message of Lord Buddha," the prime minister told the audience which included a large number of monks, some diplomats and others. Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs said Minority Affairs Kiren Rijju, besides a few monks were also present on the dais. Modi underlined that Buddha is both 'bodhi' (consciousness) and 'shodhi' (research) subject, and his government was laying emphasis on both academics and research in this area. "I am happy that we have had the privilege of giving the status of a classical language to the Pali language in which the teachings of Lord Buddha have been inherited by the world," Modi said, adding, the honour

accorded to Pali "honours the great heritage of Lord Buddha". He lamented that this ancient language is not in use today, and said to preserve Pali is "the responsibility of all of us". Languages are the soul of a civilisation and culture and this step for honouring Pali is a "humble endeavour" of the government. Modi rued that Pali language took seven decades after Independence to get this status. Lord Buddha, he said, resides in India's soul, and his teachings will "guide us in this Amrit Kaal". He also said that "every language of ours, including Pali, has played an important role in nation building. Our new National Education Policy is becoming a medium for their preservation". Modi also paid tributes to B R Ambedkar, an iconic figure who hailed from Dalit community and converted to Buddhism later, noting that his government has been developing places associated with him and Buddhism.

SC upholds Section 6A of Citizenship Act



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a majority verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act which grants Indian citizenship to immigrants who came to Assam between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971. Section 6A was inserted into the Citizenship Act as a special provision to deal with the citizenship of people covered under the Assam Accord. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the Assam Accord was a political

solution to the problem of illegal migration. The CJ, writing for himself, upheld the validity and said the magnitude of influx of migrants in Assam is higher as compared to other states considering the smaller land size and the detection of foreigner is an elaborate process. Besides, Justice Surya Kant, who wrote for himself and Justices MM Sundresh and Manoj Misra, concurred with the CJ and held that Parliament had the legislative competence to enact such a provision. Justice JB Pardiwala, however, dissented and held Section 6A as unconstitutional.

The majority verdict held that cut off date of March 25, 1971 for entry into Assam and granting citizenship is correct. Mere presence of different ethnic groups in a state does not mean infringement of Article 29(1), it added. The bench rejected the petitions questioning the constitutional validity of Section 6A. Section 6A of the Citizenship Act grants Indian citizenship benefits to illegal immigrants - mostly from Bangladesh, who entered Assam between January 1, 1966, and March 25, 1971. The provision was incorporated in 1985 following the signing of the Assam Accord between the Rajiv Gandhi government at the Centre and the All Assam Students' Union (AASU). It says those who came to Assam on or after January 1, 1966, but before March 25, 1971, from specified territories, including Bangladesh, in accordance with the Citizenship Act amended in 1985, and since then are residents of the north-eastern state, must register themselves under Section 18 for acquiring Indian citizenship. As a result, the provision fixes March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to migrants, particularly those from Bangladesh, residing in Assam.

CDS launches framework for trustworthy AI in defence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Thursday here artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising warfare and stressed the need to ensure trustworthy AI defence systems are resilient to adversary attacks. He made this assertion while launching Evaluating Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (ETAI) Framework and Guidelines for the Armed Forces alongwith Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief Samir V Kamat. The ETAI Framework and Guidelines mark a pivotal role in the country's approach to integrate Trustworthy AI into critical defence operations. In his address, the Chief of Defence Staff underscored the urgent need to incorporate trustworthy AI, pointing out



that recent global conflicts have demonstrated how AI is revolutionising modern warfare. He stressed that it is essential to ensure these systems not only work as intended but are also resilient to attacks from adversaries. He congratulated Scientific Analysis Group for developing the ETAI Framework and praised their efforts in advancing the trustworthiness of AI in defence applications. The DRDO Chairman pointed

out that reliability and robustness are no longer optional, but are essential to prevent mission failures and unintended consequences. He highlighted that AI applications are required to be reliable, robust, transparent and safe for the success of future operations. Distinguished Scientist & Director General, Micro Electronic Devices, Computational Systems & Cyber Systems Suma Varughese stated that the ETAI

Framework is a risk-based assessment framework developed specifically for the defence sector. Its principles, criteria and measures are equally applicable to other sectors as well. She affirmed that DRDO will play a key role in implementing the framework and assured that all necessary support will be provided to ensure its success. The ETAI Framework focuses on five broad principles: Reliability & Robustness, Safety & Security, Transparency, Fairness and Privacy. It further defines a comprehensive set of criteria for evaluating trustworthy AI. Complementing the framework, the ETAI Guidelines provide specific measures to be implemented in the AI pipeline to meet these criteria. The framework and guidelines offer developers & evaluators, a structured approach to build and assess Trustworthy AI.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna recommended as next CJ

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has set in motion the process of appointment of his successor by recommending to the Centre the name of senior-most Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjiv Khanna. CJ Chandrachud had on Wednesday handed over the letter of his recommendation to Justice Khanna. Justice Khanna is set to become the 51st Chief Justice of India on November 11. Justice Khanna will have a tenure of little over six months. Elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on January 18, 2019, Justice Khanna will superannuate on May 13, 2025. He was elevated as an additional judge of the Delhi High Court in 2005 and was made a permanent judge in 2006. Born on May 14, 1960, Justice Khanna studied law at the



CJI DY Chandrachud shows Justice Sanjiv Khanna the letter recommending Justice Khanna as next Chief Justice of India. Justice BR Gavai looks on.

Campus Law Centre of Delhi University. Some of the notable judgments of Justice Khanna in the Supreme Court include upholding the use of EVMs in elections, saying the devices were secure which eliminates booth capturing and bogus voting. He was also part of the five-judge bench which

declared the electoral bond scheme, meant for funding of political parties as unconstitutional. Justice Khanna was also part of the five-judge bench which upheld the Centre's 2019 decision abrogating Article 370 of the Constitution which gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Youth can register for Yuva Sangam initiative

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Youth from across the country stand a chance to represent their respective states and Union Territories by participating in the "Yuva Sangam", an initiative of the Ministry of Education under the "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" programme, officials said on Thursday. Online registration for the fifth edition of Yuva Sangam is open till October 21. Interested candidates in the age group of 18-30 years, including students, NSS and NYKS volunteers, and employed or self-employed persons, may register through the Yuva Sangam portal before the deadline. Off campus youth, including those enrolled in online courses in different skilling institutions, can also register for the event.

US holds meeting with officials of India Enquiry Committee

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States had a "productive meeting" with visiting officials of the India Enquiry Committee, a State Department official said on Wednesday, adding they were satisfied with the cooperation from the Indian side. "We are satisfied with the cooperation. It continues to be an ongoing process. We continue to work with them on that, but we do appreciate the cooperation and we appreciate them updating us on their investigation as we update them on ours," State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters at his daily news conference. He was responding to a question on the visit of officials from the India Enquiry Committee, which is investigating the American allegations of



involvement of an Indian official in the assassination plot of a Sikh separatist, who is also an American citizen. "The meeting that occurred yesterday we updated we being the US government broadly updated members of the Committee of Inquiry about the investigation that the United States has been conducting.

We've received an update from them on the investigation that they have been conducting. It was a productive meeting and I will leave it at that," Miller said. "They did inform us that the individual, who was named in the Justice Department indictment is no longer an employee of the Indian government," he said in response to a question.

Researchers develop nasal delivery for TB drugs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A team of Indian researchers have developed a unique way to deliver Tuberculosis (TB) drugs directly to the brain bypassing the challenging blood-brain barrier (BBB) that limits the effectiveness of many brain TB medicines. This innovative drug delivery method can effectively treat brain TB, a life-threatening condition with a high mortality rate. TB that affects the brain, called Central Nervous System Tuberculosis (CNS-TB), is one of the most dangerous forms of TB, often leading to severe complications or death. One of the biggest challenges in treating CNS-TB is that the drugs used to treat TB struggle to reach the brain because of a protective barrier known as the blood-brain barrier (BBB). This barrier prevents many medicines from entering the



brain, limiting their effectiveness. Scientists at Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) used tiny particles made of a natural material called chitosan, to deliver TB medicines directly to the brain through the nose, bypassing the BBB. These tiny particles, known as nanoparticles, were then made into slightly larger clusters called nano-aggregates, designed for easy nasal delivery. They can hold TB drugs like

isoniazid (INH) and rifampicin (RIF). The drug delivery technology used was nose-to-brain (N2B) drug delivery, which utilizes the olfactory and trigeminal nerve pathways in the nasal cavity to bypass the BBB. By delivering the drug through the nasal route, the nano-aggregates can transport the drugs directly into the brain, significantly improving drug bioavailability at the infection site. Besides, chitosan is known for its mucoadhesive properties, and sticks to the nasal mucosa, which helps the nano-aggregates stay in place and

prolongs the time they can release the drug, enhancing its therapeutic effectiveness. When tested in the lab, these particles stuck well to the inside of the nose and were able to deliver much more medicine into the cells compared to regular TB drugs. When the new treatment was tested on mice infected with TB, the nasal delivery of these nano-aggregates reduced the number of bacteria in the brain by nearly 1,000 times more than in untreated mice. The new treatment could be applied to treat other brain infections, neurodegenerative diseases (like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's), brain tumours, and epilepsy by enabling efficient drug delivery to the brain. This study published in the journal Nanoscale (Royal Society of Chemistry), is the first to show that delivering TB drugs through the nose using these advanced particles can effectively treat brain TB.

CBI charges Congress MP Karti Chidambaram in visa bribery case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against Congress MP Karti Chidambaram and others in connection with alleged bribery in facilitating visas of Chinese nationals for a power company in 2011 when his father P Chidambaram was the Union Home Minister. In its charge sheet submitted before a special court here, the CBI has named Karti Chidambaram, the Lok Sabha MP from Sivaganga, his close associate S Bhaskaram, company Talawandi Sabo Power Ltd (TSPL), a subsidiary of Vedanta and Mumbai-based Bell Tools, through which bribes were routed. The CBI has invoked charges of criminal conspiracy, cheating, and forgery under the

Indian Penal Code and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act. Other charge-sheeted accused include Viral Mehta, Anup Agarwal, Mansoor Siddiqui and Chetan Shrivastava, said CBI. The agency has filed the charge sheet after two years of probe into its FIR registered in 2022 where it had alleged that the Punjab-based TSPL was setting up a 1980 MW thermal power plant and the work was outsourced to a Chinese company Shandong Electric Power Construction Corp (SEPCO). The project was running behind its schedule and the company was allegedly facing prospects of penalty. "In order to avoid penal actions for the delay, the said private company (TSPL) of Mansa was trying to bring more and more Chinese persons and professionals for their site at district



Mansa (Punjab) and needed project visas over and above the ceiling imposed by the Ministry of Home Affairs," the CBI said in a statement in 2022.

The CBI FIR, which contained findings of the investigating officer who probed the preliminary enquiry, alleged that an executive of TSPL approached Karti

Chidambaram through his "close associate/front man" Bhaskaram. "They devised a back-door way to defeat the purpose of the ceiling (maximum of project visas permissible to the company's plant) by granting permission to re-use 263 project visas allotted to the said Chinese company's officials," the agency had said after the registration of FIR and searches. Project visas were a special type of visa introduced in 2010 for the power and steel sector for which detailed guidelines were issued during Chidambaram's tenure as home minister but there was no provision for the re-issue of project visas, the FIR had alleged. "As per prevalent guidelines, deviation in rare and exceptional cases could be considered and granted only with the approval of the Home

Secretary. However, in view of the above circumstances, the deviation in terms of re-use of project visas is likely to be approved by the then Home Minister..." said CBI. A TSPL executive allegedly submitted a letter to the home ministry on July 30, 2011, seeking approval to reuse the project visas allotted to his company, which was approved within a month and permission was issued, the FIR had alleged. "On August 17, 2011, the executive, on being directed by Bhaskaram, sent a copy of the above a letter dated July 30, 2011 to him through e-mail which was forwarded to Karti... Bhaskaram after discussion with P Chidambaram, the then Home Minister, demanded an illegal gratification of Rs 50 lakh for ensuring the approval," said CBI.

The FIR had alleged that the payment of said bribe was routed from TSP to Karti Chidambaram and Bhaskaram through Mumbai-based Bell Tools Ltd with payments camouflaged under two invoices raised for consultancy and out-of-pocket expenses for Chinese visas-related works, the CBI FIR said, adding that the TSPL executive had later thanked Karti Chidambaram and Bhaskaram on email. Payment against the invoices was made by TSPL to Bell Tools Limited through cheque and then the said amount was paid in cash to Bhaskaram, it had alleged. "... Whereas the private company based at Mumbai was never in any kind of work relating to visas rather it was in an entirely different business of industrial knives," the

agency had said in a statement. "Information exists that Chidambaram had been on the board of Vedanta Group whereas his son Karti had taken financial favour from Sterlite Optical Technologies Limited, Mumbai (a Vedanta Group Company), which had lent Rs 1.5 crore in November 2003 to his company namely Meltraack India Limited, Chennai and the interest thereupon was waived off in August 2004 (when...P Chidambaram sworn as the Finance Minister," said the FIR of CBI. CBI charged that Karti Chidambaram and his frontman Bhaskaram indulged in the collection of undue payments for settling the issues pending with the offices under the influence of P Chidambaram as minister in various Ministries.

Nayab Singh Saini returns as Haryana CM for second time

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH

Senior BJP leader Nayab Singh Saini was sworn in as chief minister of Haryana for a second time on Thursday in a grand ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a galaxy of NDA leaders. Thousands of people packed into the Dussehra Ground to watch Governor Bandaru Dattatreya administer the oath of office to the low profile OBC leader and 13 others. For the BJP, the messaging was not just in its show of strength with a power packed dais seating its chief ministers, ministers and NDA partners but also in its choice of the day – Valmiki Jayanti. “For the third time with full majority, the BJP government will work with full energy for good governance, equality and welfare of the poor,” Saini said in a social media post after being sworn in for the second time as chief minister. Among those present were Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari and BJP president J P Nadda. Chief ministers of several BJP-ruled states, including Uttar Pradesh’s Yogi Adityanath, Assam’s Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chhattisgarh’s Vishnu Deo Sai, Gujarat’s Bhupendra Patel and Uttarakhand’s Pushkar Singh Dhami. NDA partner, TDP leader and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, was there too. The 54-year-old, who was the surprise pick to replace strongman M L Khattar as chief minister ahead of the assembly elections, proved his naysayers wrong by steering the BJP to a win in an election many thought would go to the Congress. Saini is heading the BJP’s third consecutive government in the state, a strategic victory after the Lok Sabha elections that many party leaders hope sets the pace for next month’s crucial assembly polls in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The BJP won 48 seats in the 90-member assembly. Three Independents, including



Chandrababu Naidu, was there too. The 54-year-old, who was the surprise pick to replace strongman M L Khattar as chief minister ahead of the assembly elections, proved his naysayers wrong by steering the BJP to a win in an election many thought would go to the Congress. Saini is heading the BJP’s third consecutive government in the state, a strategic victory after the Lok Sabha elections that many party leaders hope sets the pace for next month’s crucial assembly polls in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The BJP won 48 seats in the 90-member assembly. Three Independents, including

Hisar MLA Savitri Jindal, also extended support to the party. Haryana can have a maximum of 14 ministers, including the chief minister. The 13-member council of ministers includes the party’s most senior leader Anil Vij, Ahir leader Rao Narbir Singh and Jat leader Mahipal Dhandu. It also has two women – former Congress leader Shrutti Choudhary, daughter of Rajya Sabha MP Kiran Choudhary, and first time MLA Arti Singh, the daughter of Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh. Rajesh Nagar and Gaurav Gautam took oath as state ministers (independent charge).

SWEARING IN CEREMONY

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

After Nayab Singh Saini, Rao Narbir Singh (55), MLA from Haryana’s largest assembly seat Badshahpur, also took the oath. Rao Narbir Singh has become the state minister for the fourth consecutive time. Rao Narbir has become MLA from Badshahpur for the second time. In the year 2014, he was the one who made the lotus bloom for the first time in Badshahpur. Singh represented Jatusana, Sohna and Badshahpur constituencies in Haryana in 1987, 1996 and 2014 respectively. Singh held several ministries, including Public Works, Public Health Engineering, Architecture and Forest in the first Manohar Lal Khattar government from 2014 to 2019. In the 2014 Haryana polls, Narbir Singh won the Badshahpur seat by defeating independent candidate Rakesh Daultabad. Rao Narbir has inherited politics. His father and grandfather have been MLAs in the past. After Rao Inderjit Singh, Rao Narbir is considered the biggest leader of Ahirwal. He was also a minister in the Manohar Lal Khattar government in 2014.



But in 2019, the party did not give him a ticket. This time too, when there were talks of his ticket being cut, he announced to contest the elections. However, later he also met the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and got the ticket. Singh is one of the big leaders of the Ahirwal belt in Haryana. He is said to have a good hold in the Badshahpur area, which has the highest number of voters. He also has direct links with the high command. The biggest victory in the area is also registered in his name. In Haryana Assembly

Elections 2024, Rao Narbir Singh was the only leader who got a ticket directly from the BJP high command. Singh won the Badshahpur seat in the Haryana Assembly elections. Singh defeated Congress candidate Vardhan Yadav by a huge margin. Rao Narbir got a total of 1,45,503 votes in the election. He defeated Vardhan Yadav by 60,705 votes. As soon as the counting of votes for the assembly elections started, Rao Narbir Singh took the lead and then he kept increasing this margin and won.

BJP top brass present during Nayab’s Oath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEWS DELHI

With the top brass of BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, descending, the oath-taking ceremony of Nayab Singh Saini assumed the air of a grand event. All roads leading to Dussehra ground were choc-o-block as thousands of BJP supporters from across Haryana made their way to the ceremony. Saini, 54, an OBC face of the party in the state, on Thursday, took oath as the chief minister of Haryana in Panchkula. A total of 13 ministers also swore beside him. While the BJP formed the government for a third time in a row, Saini became the chief minister of Haryana for the second time. Ahead of the BJP’s estimate of over 50,000 people turning up at the ‘Shaphat Grahana Samaroh’, arrangements were made on a grand scale. After Saini took his oath, his supporters chanted ‘Nayab Saini ko Jai Shri Ram’ and ‘Bharat Mata ki jai’. A huge multicolour ‘pandal’ was set up to accommodate VVIP guests, which included several Union ministers,

chief ministers, NDA partners and BJP workers. Outside the venue, artists clad in traditional attire played Haryanvi folk music, featuring ‘been’ (used by snake charmers), ‘chimta’, and ‘dhol’. Flex boards with welcome messages were set up all along the road leading to the venue in Panchkula. Besides Modi, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and J P Nadda attended the event amid heavy security. Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Chirag Paswan, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Goa CM Pramod Sawant, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio, Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai, Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma and Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Dhami were also present at the swearing-in. BJP leader Tarun Chugh termed the ceremony “historic”. Hari Ram, a Saini supporter, said he was excited at the BJP forming government for the third time.

Need for new collective quantified goal on climate finance: UN Executive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

At the upcoming UN climate conference in Baku, countries must establish a new international climate finance goal that effectively addresses the needs of developing nations, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell said on Thursday. He emphasised that COP29 must be a “stand-and-deliver” conference, recognising the critical role of climate finance in protecting both the global economy and the livelihoods of billions affected by climate change. In a virtual event hosted by the Brookings Institution, Stiell stressed the necessity for a new goal that centers on public finance, with a



preference for grants or concessional funding to ensure accessibility for those in greatest need. During COP29, nations are expected to agree on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), which will

determine the annual amount developed countries need to mobilise starting in 2025 to support climate initiatives in developing nations. Historically, high-income countries have been responsible for providing

financial and technological support under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in 1992. These developed nations, which include the US, UK, Canada, and members of the EU, pledged in 2009 at COP15 to provide USD 100 billion annually by 2020 to assist developing countries. However, this commitment has not been fully realized. While a report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicated that developed countries surpassed the USD 100 billion target in 2022, with nearly 70% of funding coming in the form of loans, concerns remain about the adequacy and structure of this financial

support. Stiell pointed out that at COP29, nations will have the opportunity to decide on contributions, but he cautioned against renegotiating the Paris Agreement. Some developed nations propose broadening the list of contributors to include emerging economies like China and certain Gulf states, a move that developing countries argue undermines equity principles and shifts responsibility away from those historically responsible for emissions. “More work also has to be done to rapidly ramp up funding for adaptation and get international carbon markets working for everyone. We must fund a new generation of national climate plans,” he added.



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajya Sabha Dy. Chairperson Harivansh and Indian Parliamentary delegates on the sidelines of 149th Assembly of IPU in Geneva on Thursday.

Omar Abdullah met fire victims families in Kistwar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday flew to the remote area of Marwah in Kishtwar district to meet those families whose houses were ravaged in a massive fire incident on Monday. According to initial reports, over 70 houses were gutted leaving numerous families homeless. Omar’s deputy Surinder Choudhary also accompanied him. Before taking off from Srinagar, Omar chaired the maiden cabinet meeting in the civil secretariat complex. On his arrival in Kishtwar, Omar took stock of the relief and rehabilitation efforts completed so far by

the district administration and other relief agencies working on the ground to help the devastated families. During his visit, Omar Abdullah directed officials to expedite the rehabilitation process, ensuring food, shelter, and other necessities are promptly delivered. Briefing media persons, Omar said the government will approach the union government to get compensation for the affected families from the Prime Minister’s relief fund. He assured all help from the state government to rebuild their lives and homes. Meanwhile, during the inaugural cabinet meeting, key administrative issues were discussed, and the government’s immediate priorities were outlined.



The newly formed cabinet reviewed significant governance challenges, focusing on streamlining processes, addressing public grievances, and promoting transparency within the bureaucracy. The team also evaluated the

progress of ongoing development projects. The new government’s top priorities include bolstering infrastructure, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Intelligence failure and planned conspiracy cited in Bahaich communal clash: Probe Report

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

A preliminary investigation into the recent communal violence in Bahaich, which resulted in one death and significant property damage, has pointed to intelligence failures and evidence of a planned conspiracy as key factors behind the unrest. The report, now under review at the DGP headquarters, highlights major lapses by the Local Intelligence Unit (LIU) and Mahsi Circle Officer Rupendra Kumar Gaur. As a result, Gaur has been temporarily relieved of his duties, with Ravi Khokhar appointed as the new Circle Officer of Mahsi.

Sources involved in the probe revealed that Gaur was initially unaware of the rising tensions when a group carrying idols for immersion arrived at Maharajganj market, sparking an altercation. By the time he reached the scene, the situation had already escalated into violence. The report further criticizes the Bahaich LIU for failing to anticipate the potential for unrest on both Sunday and Monday. A separate, detailed report on the LIU’s shortcomings has been submitted to the state intelligence headquarters. It points out that the LIU lacked connections with key local figures in the affected areas

and was unable to gauge the area’s sensitivity. A senior official noted that the rapid assembly of sticks, tridents, bricks, and stones indicated a coordinated effort to incite violence and disrupt communal harmony. CCTV footage reviewed so far has shown the presence of certain individuals at the immersion site who were later seen engaging in acts of arson and vandalism. Investigations are also underway into several social media accounts that spread misleading videos and audio clips during the violence, further escalating tensions. Post-mortem confirms gunshot wound: The police have confirmed

that Ramgopal’s death resulted from a gunshot wound. They emphasized that there is no evidence of him being electrocuted or attacked with a sword before or after being shot. Additionally, there is no indication that his toenails were pulled out or damaged. According to departmental sources, the post-mortem report reveals that Ramgopal Mishra’s body had 30 to 35 pellets embedded, with most found in his face, neck, and chest. This suggests that he was shot with at least three or more country-made cartridges. Additionally, a shot was fired below his shoulders to confirm his death.

Taiwan inaugurates Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

Taiwan on Wednesday opened its third office in country in Mumbai after having been operated as Taipei Economic and Cultural Center (TECC) in New Delhi and Chennai. In his opening remarks TECC Representative Amb Baushuan Ger said this will be third mission in India-Taiwan relations. “In the 1995, Taiwan and India established representations, namely India Taipei Association in Taipei and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in New Delhi. The two offices have served as platforms for various collaborations between our



two countries, mainly on trade and investment, education and culture as well as science and technology,” Ger said. The opening of the third Mission of Taiwan in India

add momentum to cordial relations between two sides and will especially boost cooperation between Taiwan and Maharashtra and the neighboring states in west India in the years ahead.

In 2012, Taiwan set up its second mission in southern India TECC in Chennai to benefit Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh which attracted huge Taiwanese

investment, especially some key manufacturing industries to their shore. “More than 60 percent of Taiwanese investment has concentrated in these four southern States,” the Ambassador said. “Like President Lai Ching-te of Taiwan emphasized in his National Day Address on October 10th this year, Taiwan is a force for regional peace, stability and prosperity. Taiwan will more vigorously develop its five trusted sectors, namely semiconductors, AI, defense, security and surveillance and next generation communications and help expand their global presence,” added Baushuan Ger in an august presence of top dignitaries in Mumbai.

Existing time limit for advance reservation will be reduced: Railway Board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Railway Board has reduced the advance reservation period of seats from existing 120 days to 60 days with effect from November 1, 2024. “It has been decided that from 01.11.2024, the existing time limit for advance reservation by trains will be reduced from 120 days to 60 days (excluding the date of journey),” a Railway Board’s circular, dated Oct 16, 2024, said. All bookings done up to October 31 under the ARP (Advance Reservation Period) of 120 days will remain intact, it added. The



circular did not cite any reason for the reduction in ARP. According to the Board, cancellation of the booking made beyond the ARP of 60 days will, however, be permitted. “There will be no change in the case of certain day time express trains like Taj Express, Gomti Express etc

where lower time limits for advance reservation are, at present in force,” the Board’s circular said. There will also be no change in the case of a limit of 365 days for foreign tourists, it said. On March 25, 2015, the Ministry of Railways had increased the ARP from 60 days to 120 days.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Jaishankar holds a mirror

At the SCO Summit, S Jaishankar urges regional powers to tackle terrorism, extremism and separatism

At the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit held in Islamabad, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took the opportunity to deliver a pointed message to China and Pakistan, highlighting the erosion of trust in the region. His address focused on the principles outlined in the SCO Charter, underscoring the need for genuine cooperation, respect for sovereignty and an uncompromising stance against the 'three evils' of terrorism, extremism and separatism. Jaishankar's remarks came at a time when India's relations with China and Pakistan have reached a nadir. The minister subtly pointed out the prevailing trust deficit, stating, "If trust is lacking or cooperation inadequate, if friendship has fallen short and good neighbourliness is missing somewhere, there are surely reasons to introspect and causes to address." His words alluded to China's unilateral border violations along the Line of Actual Control and Pakistan's use of cross-border terrorism as state policy. A central theme of Jaishankar's address was the urgent need to combat terrorism, extremism and separatism—the 'three evils' that, according to him, have plagued the region. He argued that these threats undermine peace and stability, which are prerequisites for development. Without addressing these issues, the prospects for economic growth, trade, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges remain bleak. Jaishankar's participation at the Islamabad summit marked a significant moment in India's diplomatic strategy.



Despite the strained relations, his address indicated India's willingness to engage in dialogue—provided that the foundational issues of trust and security are addressed. The summit showcased the growing rift between India's expectations for regional conduct and the policies pursued by some of its neighbours. It remains to be seen whether China and Pakistan will introspect on Jaishankar's remarks or continue to pursue policies that hinder regional integration. India's position remains clear: trust must be restored through actions that respect the sovereignty and security of all nations. The ball is now in the court of its neighbours to demonstrate a commitment to peace and stability. In his address, Jaishankar effectively used the SCO platform to hold a mirror up to China's border aggressions and Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism, laying bare the challenges to regional cooperation. His words served not just as a critique but as a call for renewed commitment to the principles of the SCO Charter, signalling India's firm stance on upholding peace and good neighbourliness. The question now is whether China's and Pakistan's leaders will see the reflection and act accordingly, or if the region will continue to grapple with a status quo marked by distrust and discord.

PICTALK



A Royal Bengal tiger yawns at the National Zoological Park, in New Delhi

AI: Redefining learning in the 21st Century



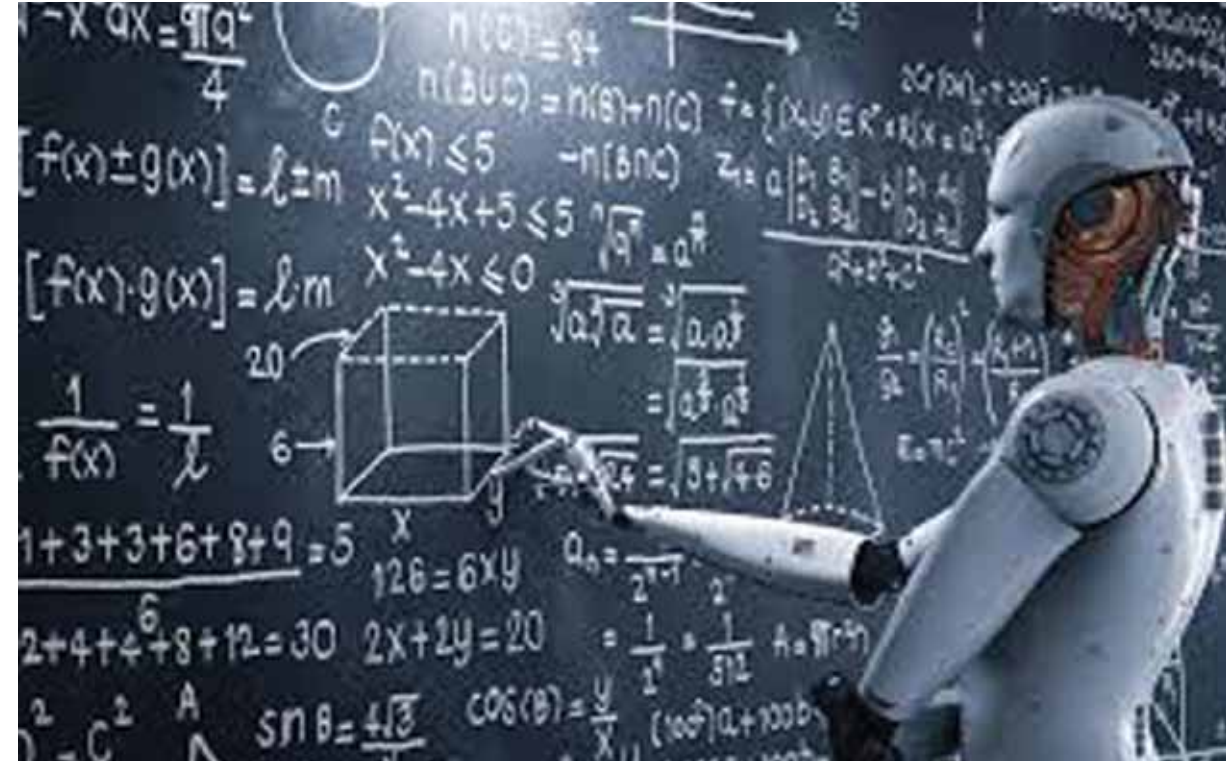
VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Teaching methods and workplace demands are evolving rapidly, pushing educational institutions to adopt new paradigms that keep pace with the changing times

It is now being increasingly recognised that artificial intelligence and technology use are going to alter the nature of learning, as few things have in the last 100 years. The fundamental nature of change and its pace is nothing new if one goes back over six or seven decades ago. The digitisation process altered the nature of learning numerals. The use of calculators rendered memorising multiplication tables substantially irrelevant. There was a sea change that has only increased its reach and depth with each passing decade. From calculators to the computerisation and successive upward scaling of computerisation competencies rendered not only the tables and the algorithms only marginally relevant, but even the log tables became a matter of history.

After some initial reluctance to allow a mechanical instrument into the classroom and the examination hall, the nature of learning was adjusted to the new realities. The machine-added reality became the new paradigm. The nature of learning changed slowly but surely from working through one's memory to getting used to machines and their algorithm. The orientation changed from falling back on mental collaborations to machine-led solutions. Changes in technology also needed learning but of a different order.

The dualism of specialisation was more in demand for staying current in the employment market. Indeed, machines started competing with each other in a manner of speaking and a classical example would be the different technology modes used in the manufacture of a jet plane (Ilyushin) in Russia and the technology used in a Boeing aircraft. The new realities required a new approach to what could be termed as 'new learning'. The nature of teaching arithmetic, mathematics, and more all underwent a change, and a revolution bigger than many had hit the classroom. The nature of this revolution was significant because it was a



continuing revolution, and today, it confronts the learner through various forms of artificial intelligence, also. The notions of mechanical search have not only revolutionised the search for information but even rendered encyclopedias decoration pieces in fancy drawing rooms. They have now, perhaps, become a showcase of how learning used to be not so long ago. All this has implications not only for the classroom but also for the workplace. The exact manifestation of this is not clear, but the rumblings go on. Whereas earlier on, learning organisations used to pay equal focus on how to teach. Now the focus is equally on what and how to teach. The pressure in both the classroom and the workplace is equally intense, calling for a paradigm shift. The real challenge for learning organisations lies in embodying the paradigm shift. It will be useful to remind oneself that learning



TODAY, LEARNING REQUIRES THE COMPETENCE TO APPRECIATE THE NEW AND EMERGING PATTERNS OF TECHNOLOGY. NOT SO LONG AGO, LITERACY WAS IMPORTANT TO THE USE OF A MACHINE BECAUSE ONE HAD TO PUNCH THROUGH THE ALPHABET

organisations is nothing new. As a proposition, the need to keep reinventing oneself has been commonplace. Not so long ago, the focus was on keeping the mind open. Much of that has now metamorphosed into almost a new paradigm: keeping the mind growing. Enhancing of skills and competencies continues to be a defining trait of a learning organisation. It is simply not possible to confine oneself just to 'keeping the mind open'. Today, learning requires the competence to appreciate the new and emerging patterns of technology. Not so long ago, literacy was important to the use of a machine because one had to punch through the alphabet. Now the situation has reached a context where even if one does not have the competence to punch into a machine and the machine will comply. At the moment, this process is at an early stage, but the problems that it means to tackle are

expanding every day. The change in the gamut of learning is important because if one can solve problems without being able to write, there indeed is a revolution in the entire paradigm of learning. The proposition, therefore of a learning organisation is undergoing several fundamental reformulations. There was a time in the 20th century when technology altered the nature of distance, and now there seems to be an emerging approach to technology that can alter the nature of time itself. Time present and time future are ready to merge into each other through technological interventions, allowing one to pass through a time machine, even if only temporarily. These are fundamental postulates and need rethinking far more deeply than what we have been able to do at present (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute; The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA-CANADA TENSIONS RISE

Madam — The Indian government has once again officially denied the allegations of the murder of Khalistani supporter Hardeep Singh Nijar levelled by the Canadian government. Not only this, it has also taken diplomatic revenge by ordering the Canadian ambassador in India and other officials to leave the country. Have we reached the lowest point in diplomatic history in our relations with Canada? Is it possible that all diplomatic relations between India and Canada come to an end? In some circles of India, even senior journalists of international affairs believe that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is playing all these games to save his chair. Is it really true that the Canadian Prime Minister, due to his lust for power, is hell-bent on ending diplomatic, political and business relations with India? I think this story is not so simple that it will remain just a story of the chair. Because many Sikhs have been murdered in the same way all over the world, for which the governments there have blamed India. For example, in Lahore, Pakistan, on 6 May last year, Parmjeet Panjwar was shot dead, and the Indian government was also blamed for it. Okay, let's assume that Pakistan is our enemy, so it can make false allegations against us. But the United States of America is our friend. It has also made a similar allegation against us. It had alleged that an Indian citizen was involved in the conspiracy to murder Khalistani separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in New York. Therefore, the Canadian government should also present evidence if it has it in the International Court of Justice and not just raise the issue by holding press conferences.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

EMPOWERING INDIA'S YOUTH

Madam — The government in its Budget this year had proposed to launch a scheme to provide internship opportunities to 10 million youths in the top 500

Tackle mental health challenges



The most admirable and analytical article 'The invisible battle for mental health in India' (October 16), encourages us to evaluate and recognise our mental wellness and seek counselling for physical illness. The worst part is that we are vitiating and spoiling our mental health despite warnings of being too much glued to our mobile phones, social media, late-night lifestyle, and orientation of ourselves, isolation and so many

other factors. Women suffer more from social and family pressures and they don't speak out. The major enemies are mobile phones and social media platforms, anxiety of getting too much in too little time, gaining public attention all the time, competition with the peers and us, working from home for longer hours, fear of failures, loss of family members, sensory issues and marital discord. The obvious symptoms are anxiety attacks, anger, depression, anger, misbehaviour and violence. However, many easily overcome these symptoms in public posture, delaying the solution and treatment. The work from home should be restricted to prescribed working hours only as scheduled. Yoga is the best option for mental wellness. Vacationing, holidaying, playing games, music, bhajans and romanticism with hobbies and passion are the self-healing methods to keep us happy and tranquil, cheerful and bubbly.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

companies over a span of five years. This helps youth to gain exposure to real-life business environments in different areas for a year. Internship schemes are as old as industrialisation as the means to perpetuate skill sets. With rapid mechanisation, it was losing impetus and formalisation.

A pilot for the scheme in 2024-25 was kicked off last week with internship opportunities in 24 sectors, including energy, hospitality, auto, and banking and financial services. Companies are expected to bear the cost of training and 10 per cent of internship costs from their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds. Major corporations over the years have been focusing on health, education and women empowerment. This new internship scheme hopefully should not affect their continued funding.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

PRIYANKA'S POLITICAL DEBUT

Madam — The bypoll for Wayanad has been announced by the Election Commission and the Congress leader

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is likely to make her debut for Lok Sabha. The seat went vacant when her brother Rahul Gandhi got elected to Lok Sabha also from Raebareilly in Uttar Pradesh in the general elections. When the elected members who hail from the same place have not used to visit their constituencies, where is the question of Priyanka serving the people of Wayanad once she gets elected? One should recall the promise of the Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi that he vowed that the Congress would construct 100 houses for those who lost their dwellings in the landslides at Chooralmala and Mundakkai during his visit on August 2, 2024. Winning elections matters most for the leaders and by consolidating the dynastic politics, the Congress can increase their numbers on the floor by wooing the voters but there is no justification to serve the people of the constituency in a real sense.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Pinarayi Vijayan: A tale of U-turns and controversies

CM Pinarayi's U-turn on sensitive data disclosures, coupled with the BJP's election triumph in Thrissur suggests a shifting balance of power

Man, woman and Child was a novel by best-selling author Erich Segal (1937-2010) which has been translated into many languages. It was made into a movie in English as well as in many languages. Our own Shekhar Kapur shot the movie *Masoom* based on the same novel.

Well, Masoom, and "Man, Woman and Child" came to mind after seeing the plight of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan over the last fortnight. Vijayan, known for his determination, decisiveness and dictatorial tendencies, was a pale shadow of his old self during the last few weeks. Though he was seen laughing at flippant questions put to him by some of the journalists "studying to become Kerala's own Lutyens media", it was visible that Vijayan had lost most of his demeanour which in the past had silenced his detractors and rivals alike. The U-turn made by him viz-a-viz the data about the seizure of smuggled gold and hawala cash from Malappuram had shocked even his critics. Various Islamist organisations expressed their displeasure



over the quantity of gold and amount of illegal money seized from Malappuram which houses the Calicut International Airport. Though the Chief Minister had disclosed these figures in the 140-minute long press meet held on September 21 at Thiruvananthapuram, newspapers and TV channels did carry it in their reports. The present controversy in Kerala had its roots in the meetings held by M R Ajith Kumar, Additional Director General of Police with two senior RSS leaders in 2023 and the fiasco of the 2024 edition of Thrissur Pooram, Kerala's mega cultural extravaganza, the impressive victory scored by the BJP candidate Suresh Gopi in the Lok Sabha poll from Thrissur constituency and the unprecedented increase in gold smuggling and hawala dealings in Malappuram dis-

trict are much ado about nothing. The ADGP has every authority to meet the people of his choice as part of his policing job is known to one and all. Many IPS officers and intelligence officers with whom this issue was taken up were unanimous in their view that there was nothing wrong with the ADGP calling on RSS leaders.

One of the severe critics of the meeting between Ajith Kumar and RSS bosses is Binoy Viswam, the CPI Kerala secretary, who has been crying for the ADGP's blood for violating the Lakshman Rekha (or is it the Lenin Rekha?). But what is left unsaid is that Surya Binoy, daughter of Binoy Viswam, is a standing counsel of the BJP Government the Centre, yet another branch of the RSS! Binoy Viswam, who considers himself the global face of Communism and a stickler for propriety should openly admit that his criticism of RSS is with an eye on the minority vote bank. The Congress, CPI and the Muslim League allege that the CPI(M) had a tacit under-

standing with the Sangh Parivar to ensure the victory of Suresh Gopi in the Lok Sabha election. How is it possible for the CPI(M) to make Suresh Gopi emerge as a winner in a high pitch election which saw about 11 lakh voters turning out to cast their votes? The internal fights in Congress and the ire among the Christians over the CPI(M) bending backwards to placate the Muslims are seen as the factors that led to Gopi's win.

What made Vijayan disown what he had said on September 21 press meet and which was used by the reporter of the Chennai-based daily on September 30 is yet another proof of the Islamists tightening their control over Kerala. P Jayarajan, a CPI(M) strongman, had told in a TV interview last month that the dreaded IS and Islamist extremists have made Kerala into a hub for recruiting jihadis to fight in Syria and Kashmir. This too was blacked out by the secular and liberal media in the State. Who is calling the kettle black?

(The writer is South India bureau chief of the Pioneer; views are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN



FIRST COLUMN

UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE

By living according to dharma, we can strive for a higher quality of life



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

What is this Big Picture, that finds mention in spiritual talks? Simply stated, it means to know something in its totality. For example, we wish to know about ourselves in great detail, i.e. who we are; where have we come from; where are we going; and so forth. These and many more questions can be answered if we go to the source of everything, i.e. God, who is everything. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 7.19) We, souls, are His parts (15.15); we exist eternally; we are presently in material bodies. This happened because that is all we qualified for. There are superior planets like Heaven and, of course, the Vaikuntha – God's planet (15.6). How are we judged? It is purely based on 'karmas' (our acts), both material and spiritual. Most of us are engaged mainly in material acts. We may have a slight percentage of spiritual acts like occasional visits to a temple, hearing a spiritual talk, etc. These count but are not enough to go to the highest planet, i.e. the Vaikuntha. We keep on getting born on the earth's planet with an occasional visit to Heaven.

What is the role of God in all these? God is the creator of all that we see; He is its controller also. Logically, God must know the Big Picture. He does; God is omniscient. He knows past, present and future also. Just as our present is the result of our past, our future will be the result of our present. God is aware of how we will use our free will because that is influenced by our nature – part of our fate. As the Creation is to last for a very long time, control must be exercised to ensure its continuity. God does that. He uses the



Divine Authority to assist Him; it works under His superintendence. (9.10) They in turn reward and punish us based on our karma. There is nothing like chance, whatever happens to us is already preordained. In short, there are three levels of control. God is the head. Then comes the Divine Authority and, lastly, it is the material nature, which has been set in motion by God.

That is how we have seasons, rains, etc. We must live in synchronisation with it to have a healthy life. Our all acts must be 'yukta', i.e. appropriate according to the highest principles known as 'dharma'. These rules have been formulated by God Himself. The Big Picture won't be complete without a detailed description of our souls and how we can get help from God to improve our lives. We are many, eight billion plus on the earth planet itself. Surely, we are small and need help all the time, especially from God, who only knows the Big Picture. We are relocated after the present lifespan is over, which is preordained. Quality of life is all-important for all of us.

Unfortunately, we seek it from material objects, which are never satisfied. We must serve other souls to be served in turn by others. How can we improve the quality of our lives? We must begin by accepting the reality. This is where the Big Picture enters our lives, whatever we can know with our limitations.

This includes accepting the Cosmic Design, and having faith in God and His System. We should try to be good in whatever we do; we generally know what that is. We must be useful to others, otherwise the world would not have any use for us. We need to be tolerant, because the earth planet is no heaven, but is not a concentration camp either. One can have a reasonably good life.

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

Empower urban local bodies for climate resilience



SONAL SINGH

Despite their economic importance, most urban areas are ill-prepared for the growing risks of climate change; these local bodies must be trained to fight climate changes



Cities are centres of economic growth, contributing around 63 per cent to India's GDP while housing approximately 36 per cent of its population. This urban population is expected to reach 50 per cent by 2050, further intensifying the challenges cities face from extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts as recently witnessed in Wayanad, Chennai, New Delhi and other cities. According to a study by IIT Gandhinagar, the proportion of urban areas exposed to extreme weather events is set to increase significantly as global temperatures rise beyond 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. While the growing vulnerability is felt across rural and urban centres, the multiplier effect of damage caused to urban infrastructure, lives and livelihood on the larger socio-economic conditions as cities drive national GDP. Moreover, most of the cities are ill-equipped to tackle these climate risks. A lack of clearly mandated roles in climate response, insufficient financial allocations, and limited institutional capacities exacerbate this challenge. To enable transformative, city-led climate action, it is essential to align Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the specific needs and capacities of cities. This requires designing enabling frameworks to help urban areas build climate resilience. Without such frameworks, cities may struggle to cope with mounting climate risks. India has played a very proactive role in shaping policy and strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The country's early adoption of environmental policies can be traced back to the Environmental Protection Act of 1986, a direct result of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in 1972. This laid the foundation for key initiatives such as the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in 2008 and the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) in 2015. India has also spearheaded international efforts, including the establishment of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for

Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

At the sub-national level, 34 States and Union Territories have prepared State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) to address state-specific vulnerabilities in line with the NAPCC framework. Although the concept of city-level Climate Action Plans (CAPs) is relatively new in India, cities are developing these plans to address local risks such as heatwaves, water scarcity, and flooding for example, Mumbai, Coimbatore, Rajkot, Siliguri, and Udaipur.

These climate action plans are often in collaboration with international networks like C40 cities supported by global donor agencies. However, a major limitation remains: Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) do not have a clear mandate to respond to climate challenges. While the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 assigns ULBs certain responsibilities, such as urban forestry and environmental protection, "climate change" is not explicitly mentioned among the 18 functions designated to ULBs. This creates a significant governance gap at the local level. Although the National Mission for Sustainable Habitat (NMSH) 2.0 encourages ULBs to design action plans as one of the key strategies, it falls short of providing concrete guidelines, financial assistance, or incentives to assist city governments in these efforts.

The absence of a designated decision-making authority at the city level further compounds the problem.

While the SAPCC guidelines call for establishing climate cells at the state level, there is no similar provision for cities. Even when ULBs do develop climate action strategies, their implementation is hampered by overlapping mandates across multiple agencies and

parastatals, with no centralised body to oversee or coordinate these efforts.

Additionally, national climate policies such as the Net Zero by 2070 target and NDCs do not mandate the collection of city-level greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data, limiting the ability to undertake data-driven climate actions. As India transitions towards a more urban future, with 50 per cent of the population estimated to live in cities by 2050, amid rising climate risks, the devolution of powers to ULBs for climate governance becomes crucial. Empowering local governments through the principle of "climate subsidiarity"—which ensures that climate action is undertaken at the most appropriate level by adequately resourced and empowered agencies—can be a key step toward achieving climate resilience and national climate goals. One such long-term measure often suggested by experts involves amending the Constitution to include "climate action" as one of the functions of ULBs.

While constitutional amendments may be a long-term goal, an immediate step could involve making a comprehensive central law on climate mitigation and adaptation with the city as a unit of governance. Also, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) could update NMSH 2.0 with detailed guidelines for city-level Climate Action Plans. Such guidelines would ensure a standardised approach across cities while allowing for localized strategies aligned with national goals. Additionally, providing financial incentives—such as climate finance or additional transfers from the State Finance Commission (SFC) or Central Finance Commission (CFC)—would encourage ULBs to initiate climate risk assessments, imple-

ment green mobility projects, and undertake other climate-resilient initiatives.

Institutionalising climate governance at the local level is only the first step. Local governments must also be given clear and measurable targets, necessitating the localisation of NDCs and SDGs. Incorporating cities into future updates of the NAPCC and SAPCC would allow for a more bottom-up approach to planning adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Furthermore, establishing a centralised decision-making body at the city level would facilitate better collaboration among city agencies, ensuring a more coordinated response to climate risks.

As global and national conversations on climate action gain momentum, it is imperative to build a similar focus at the sub-national level to ensure tangible results. The dynamism seen at the national level must be replicated in cities, towns, and districts, which are at the frontline of climate impacts. This will require a realignment of governance structures and a re-evaluation of climate strategies to bring the focus to the smallest units of governance—cities and ULBs.

A blend of long-term strategies and short-term action plans must be developed with sub-national governments to ensure accountability and cohesion in how cities perceive and address climate change. By empowering ULBs with the necessary resources, mandates, and institutional support, India can ensure that its urban centres are not just engines of economic growth but also pillars of climate resilience. This is essential if the country is to meet its ambitious goal of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070.

(The writer is Research Associate, TERI; views are personal)



MOST OF THE CITIES ARE ILL-EQUIPPED TO TACKLE THESE CLIMATE RISKS. A LACK OF CLEARLY MANDATED ROLES IN CLIMATE RESPONSE, INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS, AND LIMITED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES EXACERBATE THIS CHALLENGE

Aurangzeb: A contested legacy shaping India's political discourse

The portrayal of Aurangzeb as a ruthless oppressor reflects a blend of folk tales and myth rather than a verified account of his reign

The figure of Aurangzeb remains deeply embedded in India's contemporary political and cultural landscape, reflecting a blend of historical memory, myth and modern political rhetoric. His name frequently surfaces in electoral campaigns and public debates, evoking emotions and controversies centuries after his reign.

When leaders criticise each other with references to Aurangzeb, it signifies how his legacy continues to shape national politics. In the modern narrative, Aurangzeb is often depicted as a ruthless tyrant—a figure equated with notorious symbols of intolerance, such as Hitler or extremist ideologies. This perception paints him as someone who dedicated his life to eradicat-



NIHARIKA DWIVEDI

ing Hinduism and oppressing Hindus. Consequently, there's a prevalent notion that contemporary Indian Muslims are somehow connected, either by ancestry or ideology, to the Mughal emperor's legacy, which is accused of inflicting harm on India's cultural and religious heritage.

This view draws heavily on VS Naipaul's concept of India as a "wounded civilisation," enduring centuries of subjugation by

foreign invaders, including Muslim rulers who allegedly dismantled the country's glorious past. Yet, the belief in deliberate, systematic destruction by Muslim conquerors is not a continuous historical memory nor entirely grounded in verified historical records. Instead, it reflects deep emotional and cultural wounds, often fueled by present-day anti-Muslim sentiments.

Historically, Aurangzeb was the last significant Mughal ruler, governing much of the Indian subcontinent for nearly five decades. His reign is marked by controversies, such as imprisoning his father, Shah Jahan, his perceived orthodoxy, and the inability to consolidate the Deccan region into the Mughal Empire.

Central to the debates on Aurangzeb is the question of his motivations and policies. Some historians, such as Sir Jadunath Sarkar, argue that his primary aim was to establish an Islamic state in India by enforcing Sharia law and converting the population. Pakistani historian Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi asserts that Aurangzeb's policies were intended to preserve Muslim dominance and to maintain the empire's unity. This included discouraging religious pluralism that could undermine Muslim hegemony in a state where they were responsible for defence and administration. However, Aurangzeb's actions were not always consistent with the idea of enforcing an Islamic state. For example, while he did



destroy certain Hindu temples, including the Vishwanath temple in Banaras, there is little evidence supporting the claim of a widespread, systematic campaign of temple destruction. Many temples, like those in Vrindavan, continued to receive royal patronage. The destruction of some temples appeared more politically motivated than religiously driven, often tied to punitive

actions against local rebellions or defiant rulers. Aurangzeb's revival of the jizya tax in 1679, a levy on non-Muslims, further complicates the interpretation of his policies. While some scholars, like Sarkar, view this as an attempt to pressure Hindus into conversion, others argue that the tax was intended more as a political tool to rally support from conservative Muslim factions. Its reinstatement after two decades of the rule suggests it was not a priority-driven solely by religious zeal but rather a measure aimed at consolidating power during times of conflict, particularly against the Rajputs and Marathas. Qureshi contends that Aurangzeb sought to reverse the damages caused by Akbar's more liberal policies, which

had integrated Hindus into administrative roles. Ironically, the number of Hindus in government service increased during Aurangzeb's reign, reaching 33 per cent by 1689, despite the emperor's reputation for religious intolerance. Dr RP Tripathi view Aurangzeb's actions as primarily politically motivated, aimed at consolidating power in a diverse and vast empire. His policies, while sometimes harsh, were not necessarily born from a deep-seated animosity toward Hindus. Instead, they reflected the complexities of ruling an expansive and multi-ethnic empire where shifting political, social, and military factors required adaptable strategies. Modern scholarship increasingly emphasises the need to

view Aurangzeb beyond simplistic labels of heroism or villainy. His reign is better understood within the broader context of socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics of the time. While his orthodox leanings and authoritarian tendencies shaped some of his policies, his actions also mirrored the challenges of ruling a fragmented and turbulent subcontinent. Aurangzeb's legacy, thus, remains a complex and contested chapter in Indian history. It serves as a reminder of the intricate interplay between history and politics, and how the past is continuously invoked to influence the present.

(The author is a freelance writer and a documentary filmmaker; views are personal)

US stealth bombers target underground bunkers of Yemen's Houthi rebels

US long-range B-2 stealth bombers launched airstrikes early Thursday morning targeting underground bunkers used by Yemen's Houthi rebels, officials said. It wasn't immediately clear what damage was done in the strikes. However, there are no previous reports of the B-2 Spirit being used in the strikes targeting the Houthis, who have been attacking ships for months in the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. The Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel reported airstrikes around Yemen's capital, Sanaa, which the group has held since 2014. They also reported strikes around the Houthi stronghold of Saada. They offered no immediate information on damage or casualties. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement that the B-2 bombers targeted "five

hardened underground weapons storage locations in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen." The strike also appeared to be an indirect warning to Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor, which has targeted Israel with ballistic missile attacks twice over the past year. The B-2 would be used in any American attack on hardened Iranian nuclear facilities like Natanz or Fordo given it is the only aircraft in service that can drop the GBU-57, known as the "Massive Ordnance Penetrator." "This was a unique demonstration of the United States' ability to target facilities that our adversaries seek to keep out of reach, no matter how deeply buried underground, hardened, or fortified," Austin said. Austin and the US military's Central Command offered no immediate assessment on the damage done. However, Central Command said in a statement that initial assessments suggested no civilians

had been killed. The Red Sea has become a battlefield for shippers since the Houthis began their campaign targeting ships traveling through the waterway, which once saw \$1 trillion of cargo pass through it yearly. Houthis have targeted more than 80 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October 2023. They have seized one vessel and sunk two in the campaign that has also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets, which have included Western military vessels. The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the US or the United Kingdom to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran.

The Houthis also continue to launch missiles targeting Israel and have shot down a number of US military MQ-9 Reaper drones. The rebels have threatened new attacks in response to Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon and its killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. The description and locations named by the Houthis on Thursday correspond to known underground bases operated by the rebels, who have been locked into a stalemate war with a Saudi-led coalition since 2015 that's decimated the Arab world's poorest nation. The Houthis have refurbished tunnels that once held Scud missiles for Yemen when it was ruled by strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh during his 33-year reign, according to an analysis in April by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Those sites include the al-Hafa and Jabal Attan military bases, the former Presidential House and the

Yemen state television compound in Sanaa, analyst Fabian Hinz wrote. The Houthis have built what appears to be their own large-scale tunnel network near Saada as well, Hinz added. "The fact that the Houthis began constructing major new installations after the agreement of the cease-fire with the Saudi-led coalition suggests that the group is focused on entrenching themselves and bolstering their military capabilities," he wrote. Iran similarly relies on a network of underground missile bases. The nuclear-capable B-2, which first saw action in 1999 in the Kosovo War, is rarely used by the US military in combat as each aircraft is worth some \$1 billion. It has dropped bombs in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya as well. The aircraft are based at Whiteman Air Base in Missouri and typically conduct long-range strikes from there, though some B-2s were in Australia in September.

I represent a new generation of leadership: Kamala Harris

PTI ■ WASHINGTON



US Vice President Kamala Harris on Wednesday said she represents the next generation of leadership and her presidency would be different from that of her boss President Joe Biden and Republican rival Donald Trump. "My presidency will not be a continuation of Joe Biden's presidency. Like every new president that comes in to office, I will bring my life experiences, my professional experiences, and fresh and new ideas. I represent a new generation of leadership," Harris said in an interview for Fox news channel. "I, for example, am someone who has not spent the majority of my career in Washington, D.C. I invite ideas, whether it be from the Republicans who are supporting me, who were just on stage with me minutes ago, and the business sector and others, who can contribute to the decisions that I make about," she said. "You've been vice president for three and a half years. So, what

are you turning the page from?" she was asked. "Well, first of all, turning the page from the last decade in which we have been burdened with the kind of rhetoric coming from Donald Trump that has been designed and implemented to divide our country and have Americans literally point fingers at each other; rhetoric and an approach to leadership that suggests that the strength of a leader is based on who you beat down instead of what we all know. The strength of leadership is based on who you lift up," Harris asserted.

"The strength of an American president which is one who understands that the vast majority of us have more in common than what separates us. That is turning the page on rhetoric that People are frankly exhausted of," she said. Harris slammed her Republican rival Trump and said he is unfit to run for presidency. "If he's as bad as you say, that half of this country is now supporting this person who could be the 47th president of the United States? Why is that happening?" she was asked. "This is an election for president of the United States. It's not supposed to be easy. It is not supposed to be a cakewalk for anyone... If you listen to Donald Trump, if you watch any of his rallies, he's the one who tends to demean and belittle and diminish the American people. He's the one who talks about an enemy within, an enemy within, talking about the American people suggesting he would turn the American military on the American people," Harris said.

Israeli Army says it may have killed Hamas chief Sinwar

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The Israeli military said Thursday it was looking into whether Hamas' top leader Yahya Sinwar was killed in a military operation in Gaza, while an Israeli airstrike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinians killed at least 15 people, including five children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The military said in a statement that three militants were killed during operations in Gaza, without specifying where or elaborating further. It said the identities of the three were so far not confirmed, but it was "checking the possibility" that one of the three was Sinwar. Sinwar was one of the chief architects of Hamas' attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and Israel has vowed to kill him since the beginning of its retaliatory campaign in Gaza. Throughout the war, Sinwar has been in hiding. For years Hamas' top figure in Hamas, Sinwar was chosen as its top leader following the assassination of Ismael Haniyeh in July in an apparent Israeli strike in the Iranian capital

Tehran. Israel has also claimed to have killed the head of Hamas' military wing Mohammed Deif in an airstrike, but the group has said he survived. The report came as Israeli forces continued a more than week-old major air and ground assault in the Jabalya refugee camp in northern Gaza, where the Abu Hussein school was hit Thursday. Fares Abu Hamza, head of Gaza Health Ministry's local emergency unit, confirmed the toll from the strike and said dozens of people were wounded. He said the nearby Kamal Adwan Hospital was struggling to treat the casualties. "Many women and children are in critical condition," he said. The Israeli military said it targeted a command center run by Hamas and Islamic Jihad inside the school. It provided a list of around a dozen names of people it identified as militants who were present when the strike was called in. It was not immediately possible to verify the names. Israel has repeatedly struck tent camps and schools sheltering displaced people in Gaza. The Israeli military says it car-

ries out precise strikes on militants and tries to avoid harming civilians, but its strikes often kill women and children. Israel launched its campaign in Gaza to eliminate Hamas after the militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250 others. Some 100 captives are still inside Gaza, about a third of whom are believed to be dead. Israel's offensive has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It does not differentiate between civilians and combatants but says women and children make up a little more than half of the fatalities. Northern Gaza was the first target of Israel's ground invasion nearly a year ago and has suffered the heaviest destruction of the war, with entire neighborhoods in Gaza City and other towns reduced to rubble. Most of the population fled after Israel issued evacuation orders in the opening days of the war, but about 400,000 are believed to have remained despite the harsh conditions.

China prefers Harris over Trump as US president, says top official

PTI ■ BEIJING

China will prefer Kamala Harris to Donald Trump as the next US presidential candidate, a top Chinese official said Thursday. The Chinese government prefers not to comment on the US presidential election because it doesn't want to be accused of interfering in American domestic politics, Jia Qingguo, member of the Standing Committee of the national advisory body CPPCC said. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) is a key component of the state governance system and a distinctively Chinese political institution. The views of the Chinese general public are divided over Harris and Trump, but "I would prefer Harris because of the bad experience with Trump. We don't want to have that experience again," he told BBC in a rare comment voicing Beijing's preferred choice in the US presidential election. During Trump's presidency, the relations declined sharply and the two countries ended up in seri-

ous confrontation. "From China's point of view, US Vice President Kamala Harris, who has worked under President Biden, represents the continuity," he said. Trump, during his Presidency, was quite emotional and spread a lot of bad information about China, said Jia, who is also the Director of the Institute of Global Cooperation and Understanding of the Peking University. "We have problems with the Biden administration too," but Biden inherited a lot of tough measures initiated by Trump against China for the reasons of domestic politics and perhaps out of his ideological conviction, he said, adding, "Under Biden, the US policy towards China is more stable, predictable." "We are re-engaging with each other. Officials are meeting with each other, talking about issues," which he said is stabilising the relations. While following a tough policy towards China, including firming up US policy to challenge Beijing's claims over the disputed South China Sea and Taiwan, and restricting China's ambitious move to export its electric vehicles, Biden, however, has maintained regular dialogue with President Xi Jinping to keep the tensions under control.

'Broken immigration system needs to be repaired'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States has a broken immigration system that needs to be repaired, Vice President Kamala Harris said on Wednesday in a rare interview with the Republican-leaning news channel during which she sparred with its popular host. Harris made these remarks in an interview with Fox News anchor Bret Baier. Baier repeatedly pressed the Democratic presidential nominee on illegal immigration, taxpayer support for gender transition surgery and other areas that closely aligned with former President Donald Trump's regular attacks against her. With 20 days before the election, Harris tried to defend her record on immigration and the economy. On being asked how many undocumented immigrants have illegally entered the US under the Biden-Harris administration. Harris did not give a number. Harris responded: "Bret, let's just get to the point, OK? The point is that we have a broken immigration system that needs to be repaired." "So, your Homeland Security Secretary said that 85 per cent of

apprehensions," Baier interjected. "I'm not finished. We have an immigration system," Harris tried to continue with her answer. "It's a rough estimate that 6 million people have been released into the country," the Fox News anchor interrupted again. "And let me just finish. I'll get to the question. I promise you. I was beginning to answer," the vice president pleaded. "When you came into office, your administration immediately reversed a number of Trump border policies. Most significantly, the policy required illegal immigrants to be detained through deportation, either in the US or in Mexico. And you switched that policy. They were... released from custody awaiting trial. So instead, included in those were a large number of single men, adult men, who went on to commit heinous crimes. So looking back, do you regret the decision to terminate Remain in Mexico at the beginning of your administration?" Baier asked again. "At the beginning of our administration, within practically hours of taking the oath, the first bill, practically within hours of taking the oath, was a bill to fix our

immigration system," Harris said as Baier kept on interjecting in between. "We recognised from day one that this is your first question. It is a priority for us as a nation and for the American people. Our focus has been on fixing a problem. From day one, then, we have done a number of things, including addressing our asylum system and putting more resources, getting more judges, what we needed to do to tighten up penalties and increase penalties for illegal crossings, and what we needed to do to deal with points of entry between border, entry points," she said. "We worked on supporting what was a bipartisan effort, including some of the most conservative members of the United States Congress, to actually strengthen the border. That border bill would have put 1,500 more border agents at the border, which is why I believe the Border Patrol agents supported the bill. It would have allowed us to stem the flow of fentanyl coming into the United States, which is a scourge affecting people of every background, every geographic location in our country, killing people," she said.

Secret Service needs fundamental reform, says panel probing attack on Trump

AP ■ WASHINGTON

An independent panel investigating the attempted assassination of Donald Trump at a Pennsylvania campaign rally faulted the Secret Service for poor communications that day and failing to secure the building where the gunman took his shots. The review also found more systemic issues at the agency such as a failure to understand the unique risks facing Trump and a culture of doing "more with less". The 52-page report issued on Thursday took the Secret Service to task for specific problems leading up to the July 13 rally in Butler as well as deeper one within the agency's culture. It recommended bringing in new, outside leadership and refocusing on its protective mission. "The Secret Service as an agency requires fundamental reform to carry out its mission," the authors

wrote Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas of the Homeland Security Department, the Secret Service's parent agency, in a letter accompanying their report. "Without that reform, the Independent Review Panel believes another Butler can and will happen again." One rallygoer was killed and two others wounded when Thomas Michael Crooks climbed onto the roof of a nearby building and opened fire as Trump spoke. The former president was wounded in the ear before being rushed off the stage by Secret Service agents. That shooting, along with another incident in Florida when Trump was golfing — a gunman there never got a line of sight on the president or fired a shot — has led to a crisis in confidence in the agency. The report by a panel of four former law enforcement officials from national and state government follows investigations by

members of Congress, the agency's own investigators and by Homeland Security's oversight body. The panel echoed previous reports that have zeroed in on the failure to secure the building near the rally that had a clear line of sight to where Trump was speaking and the multiple communications problems that hindered the ability of the Secret Service and local and state law enforcement to talk to each other. "The failure to secure a complex of buildings, portions of which were within approximately 130 yards of the protectee and containing numerous positions carrying high-angle line of sight risk, represents a critical security failure," the report said. The panel faulted the planning during Secret Service and the local law enforcement, and said the Secret Service failed to ask about what was being done to secure the building: "Relying on

a general understanding that the locals have that area covered" is simply not good enough and, in fact, at Butler this attitude contributed to the security failure." The panel also cited the fact that there were two separated command posts at the Butler rally: one with various local law enforcement and another with the Secret Service. "This created, at the highest level, a structural divide in the flow of communications." There were other communications problems. The Secret Service had to switch radio channels because radio traffic of agents protecting first lady Jill Biden at an event in Pittsburgh was popping up on the channels of agents covering the Butler rally. The panel also noted that all the law enforcement personnel on the ground were using a "chaotic mixture" of radio, cell phone, text, and e-mail throughout the day to communicate.

UN seeks probe into attack on Afghan migrants by Iranian border forces

AP ■ DUBAI

A United Nations expert is calling for an investigation into reports that an attack by Iranian security forces on the border with Afghanistan killed and wounded migrants. Iran has denied any shooting took place Sunday near Saravan, a town in the country's restive southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan, which borders Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. However, anti-Afghan migrant rhetoric has escalated in Iran in recent months as Western sanctions grind down its economy, with the country's police chief claiming some 2 million migrants would be deported in the next six months. The Taliban said on Thursday they will provide updates once their investigation into the reported attack is complete. Their chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said earlier that rumours were circulating

about the deaths and injuries of Afghans on the Iran border. "The information has not yet been confirmed. The necessary decision will be taken after clarification of the matter," he said on social media platform X. HalVash, an advocacy group for the Baluch people that is broadly focused on Iran, has issued a series of reports over the shooting, citing two unnamed witnesses to the attack and others claiming a death toll that ran at least into the dozens, with more wounded. It published images of what appeared to be several corpses and others with gunshot wounds. HalVash alleged Iranian security forces used both firearms and rocket-propelled grenades in the attack. The Associated Press has been unable to independently confirm the attack. Verifying information remains difficult in Sistan and Baluchistan, which for decades has been home to cross-border

insurgency and violence involving heroin traffickers. However, Richard Bennett, the United Nations' special rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, has called for a probe into the reports, saying he was "seriously concerned." "I call for authorities to investigate transparently. Clarity is urgently needed," he wrote on X. "These reports don't stand in isolation. More dignity and safety is needed for Afghans worldwide." On Wednesday, Iran began to push back on the reports. Gen. Reza Shojaei, a commander of the provincial border guard, called the reports of a shooting "basically false". Hassan Kazemi Ghomi, the Iranian president's special representative for Afghanistan affairs, also called the claims "not true" on X and blaming the story's spread on "the frenzy of the lying media". Large numbers of Afghans have called Iran home for decades, from the

1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, through the first rule of the Taliban, the 2001 US-led invasion and the 2021 Taliban takeover. The United Nations' refugee agency estimates 3.8 million displaced people live in Iran, the vast majority of them Afghans. Some in Iran suggest the number of Afghans is even higher. Police and authorities are signalling they want to deport more Afghans. Iranian police chief Ahmad Reza Radan earlier this month signalled the country planned to deport 2 million undocumented migrants in the next six months, though he stopped short of identifying them as Afghans. He said some 500,000 already had been deported. "We cannot allow individuals to enter the country illegally, reside, and work," he said. "Citizens and business owners should know that employing these individuals and housing illegal foreign nationals is a crime."

Zelenskyy heads to EU, NATO seeking support for his 'victory plan'

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Thursday that support from his embattled nation's Western allies is key to his "victory plan" to end the country's devastating war with Russia as he laid out details of the plan to European Union leaders. He told reporters the plan aims "to strengthen Ukraine" and pave the way for a diplomatic solution to end the conflict on Europe's eastern flank. "I think that this plan doesn't depend on Russian will, only on the will of our partners," he said before addressing leaders at an EU summit. Zelenskyy was later shut-

ting across Brussels to meet with NATO defence ministers. The EU is a key supporter of Ukraine, a candidate member of the 27-nation bloc, as it fights Russia's invasion that began more than 2 1/2 years ago. Zelenskyy outlined the five-point plan to Ukraine's parliament on Wednesday without disclosing confidential elements that have been presented in private to key allies, including the United States. The Institute for the Study of War in Washington said that Russian President Vladimir Putin is seeking to draw out the war and he believes "that Russian forces can outlast Western support for Ukraine

and collapse Ukrainian resistance by winning a war of attrition." NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte was muted in his response to the plan on Wednesday. On Thursday he said that Kyiv can rest "absolutely assured that 32 allies are united in making sure that collectively, we will do whatever is needed to make sure that Ukraine can prevail, that (Russian President Vladimir) Putin will not get his way." Rutte reiterated that Ukraine's place is among NATO's ranks, but he would not say when it might join. Zelenskyy insists that a membership invitation is central to

his "victory plan" and would provide his country with the ultimate security guarantee to protect it from Russia. "Ukraine will be a member of NATO in the future," Rutte said. "The question is exactly about the when. I cannot answer that now." However, Rutte said, Putin must understand that "we are in this, if necessary, for the long haul. And obviously we want to be in a place where Zelenskyy and Ukraine, from a position of strength, is able to start talks with Russia." Major points of the plan include an invitation for Ukraine to join NATO and permission to use Western-supplied longer-range missiles to

strike military targets deep inside Russia, steps that have been met with reluctance by Kyiv's allies so far. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz downplayed the chances of Berlin changing its opposition to the use of long-range weapons against Russian targets. "You know Germany's position on the questions that are touched on here; nothing will change about this," he said. Zelenskyy said he needs to "move some partners forward" on the issue. "And I think only with the unity in EU we can move and can move not only EU leaders, we can move other leaders." A draft copy of EU summit

conclusions — a text that will likely be tweaked before publication at the end of Thursday's meeting — reaffirms the bloc's "unwavering commitment to providing continued political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed. Russia must not prevail". Thursday's talks in Brussels come as Ukrainian troops are struggling to hold off better-equipped Russian forces, especially in the eastern Donetsk region where they are gradually being pushed back. Kyiv is surviving with Western help, but Ukraine says it is coming too slowly.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda criticized slow Western decision-making over Ukraine and said it "would be a great mistake to think that our hesitance is the best way to de-escalation". If Western allies bolstered support to Kyiv, leading to gains on the ground for Ukrainian forces, "then I think Putin would be pressed to go to negotiations table. Right now, he thinks he is prevailing," he said when entering the EU summit. Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said EU leaders "have to give a strong signal and unified signal that we continue to support Ukraine as much and as long as needed".

At their summit in Washington in July, the 32 NATO members declared Ukraine on an "irreversible" path to membership. But for now, NATO is in a holding pattern. Its biggest and most powerful member, the United States, is facing a presidential election. European allies expect little movement on Ukraine until a new president takes office in January. Beyond that, the United States and European heavy-weight Germany remain deeply concerned about being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia, and they lead a group of countries that oppose allowing Ukraine to join NATO until the conflict ends.

Mexico's security chief sentenced in US for taking cartel bribes

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

The man once heralded as the architect of Mexico's war on drug cartels was sentenced to more than 38 years in a U.S. prison on Wednesday for taking massive bribes to aid drug traffickers.

Genaro Garcia Luna, Mexico's former secretary of public security, was convicted by a New York jury in 2023 of taking millions of dollars in bribes to protect the violent Sinaloa cartel that he was supposedly combating. He is the highest-level Mexican government official to be convicted in the United States.

At his sentencing hearing before a federal judge in Brooklyn on Wednesday, Garcia Luna continued to maintain his innocence and said the case against him was based on false information from criminals and the Mexican government.

"I have a firm respect for the law," he said in Spanish. "I have not committed these crimes."

Garcia Luna, 56, led Mexico's federal police before he served in a cabinet-level position as the top security official from 2006 to 2012 under then-President Felipe Calderon. At the time, Garcia Luna was hailed as an ally by the U.S. in its fight on drug trafficking.

But US prosecutors said that in return for millions of dollars, he provided intelligence about investigations against the cartel, information about rival gangs and the safe passage of massive quantities of drugs.

Prosecutors had asked for a life sentence. Garcia Luna's lawyers had argued that he should get no more than 20 years.

US District Judge Brian Cogan said he wasn't moved by past accolades that Garcia Luna received for his work in the war on drugs.

"That was your cover," Cogan said before imposing the sentence. "You are guilty of these crimes, sir. You can't parade these words and say, I'm police officer of the year."

Besides the sentence of 38

years and four months, the judge imposed a \$2 million fine.

During the trial, photos were shown of Garcia Luna shaking hands with former President Barack Obama and speaking with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former Sen. John McCain.

But prosecutors said Garcia Luna secretly advanced a drug trafficking conspiracy that resulted in the deaths of thousands of American and Mexican citizens. He ensured that drug traffickers were notified in advance of raids and sabotaged legitimate police operations aimed at apprehending cartel leaders, they said.

Drug traffickers were able to ship over 1 million kilograms of cocaine through Mexico and into the United States using planes, trains, trucks and submarines while Garcia Luna held his posts, prosecutors said.

During former Sinaloa kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's trial in the same court in 2018,

a former cartel member testified that he personally delivered at least \$6 million in payoffs to Garcia Luna and that cartel members agreed to pool up to \$50 million to pay for his protection.

"He enabled the cartel. He protected the cartel. He was the cartel," Assistant US Attorney Saritha Komatreddy told the judge Wednesday.

Garcia Luna enabled a corrupt system that allowed violent cartels to thrive and distribute drugs that killed multitudes of people, she added.

"It may not have been the defendant pulling the trigger, but he has blood on his hands," Komatreddy said.

Prosecutors also said Garcia Luna plotted to undo last year's verdict by seeking to bribe or corruptly convince multiple inmates at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn to support false allegations that two government witnesses communicated via contraband cellular phones in advance of the trial.

Saudi Arabia's new initiative for stronger bonds with Indian, expats

PTI ■ RIYADH

Saudi Arabia has launched a new initiative that aims at promoting quality of life and developing stronger bonds between the local society and the Indian and other expatriate communities through cultural promotion.

Unveiling the Global Harmony initiative here on Wednesday night, Saudi deputy minister for media Khalid bin Abdulqader Al-Ghamdi, said, "This initiative will also showcase the different cultures of the expats and how they are living in harmony." The Global Harmony initiative is a part of Saudi Arabia's Quality of Life programme to attain its 'Vision 2030' objectives.

Ambassador of India Suhel Ajaz Khan and top diplomats of many other countries were present on the occasion.

After the launch, Al-Ghamdi said Indians living in Saudi Arabia are contributing in a large way to the greater Saudi

society.

Khan said Indians are the largest expat community in Saudi Arabia with an approximate 2.6 million people. "The Indian community is increasing. Last one year itself, the community has increased by about 2,00,000 people," he added.

Khan attributed the increase in the numbers to multiple reasons.

"There are big economic opportunities because of Vision 2030. But the most important factor is that there is immense goodwill for Indians in this country and that is something which makes people rely more on the Indian workers."

"Over the years, the profile of Indian workers has also changed. More and more skilled Indian workers are here now," he added.

Khan also said bilateral relations are on an upswing as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited the Kingdom twice and the Saudi crown prince was also in India for the G20

Summit.

There have also been landforce and naval exercises between the two countries, he said.

The Global Harmony initiative is showcasing the diverse lives of residents in the kingdom, from across countries and cultures from October 13-21 at the ongoing Riyadh Season at Al-Suwaidi Park here.

Besides India, the other participating countries are the Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Bangladesh and Egypt.

The Al-Suwaidi Park venue has live performances by different dance troupes, music groups and singers from India.

Among the participants from India are musician Himesh Reshammiya, rapper Emiway Bantai and cricketers Umran Malik and S Sreesanth, the organisers said.

A separate bazaar area has also been set up with Indian cuisines, clothing items and handicrafts.

The Global Harmony initiative aims to showcase the diverse lives of residents in the kingdom, highlight their professional and family life, social and recreational activities, contributions to the economy, success stories, and cultural integration in the Saudi society.

It also highlights the government and the private sector efforts to improve the quality of life in Saudi cities.

Launched in 2016, 'Vision 2030' is a blueprint for diversifying the economy, empowering citizens, creating a vibrant environment for both local and international investors, and establishing Saudi Arabia as a global leader. There are three stages, each lasting five years and building on the last.

The Global Harmony event, being held in partnership with the General Entertainment Authority, is part of the 45-day Riyadh Season, considered one of the world's largest winter entertainment events that started on Sunday.

Over 250 students held as protesters ransack campuses in Pakistan

PTI ■ LAHORE

At least 250 students were arrested on Thursday in Rawalpindi for violence during protests against an alleged on-campus rape in a Lahore college as the agitation spread to other cities of Punjab province in Pakistan.

The protests erupted on Monday in at least four boys' and girls' campuses of the privately-owned Punjab Group of Colleges following social media reports that a female student at the Gulberg girls' campus in Lahore had allegedly been raped by a security guard in the institution's basement.

Police claimed they have the suspect in custody, but he has denied the allegation.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has blamed jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for spreading fake news on social media and said that no such incident had taken place.

On Wednesday, a large number of students held demonstrations in Jehlum, Faisalabad, and Gujrat, demanding justice for the alleged rape victim.

On Thursday, protests spread to Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Attock, Sargodha, and Vehari districts of Punjab.

The student protesters ransacked a college building in Rawalpindi, forcing police to fire tear gas to disperse them.

Later, 250 students were taken into custody, the police said.

The police said legal actions were being taken against those involved in disrupting peace. The guilty would be punished, they added.

"Police personnel have been deployed at various locations across the city," Rawalpindi Police said on X, adding that it was fully prepared to deal with any law and order situation.

"Parents are requested to keep their children away from illegal activities. The future of children can be ruined in case of

legal action," it added.

"Students clashed with security guards of the Punjab College Gujrat and the police, causing critical injury to three students and the death of one security guard yesterday (Wednesday)," a senior police official told PTI on Thursday.

He said Azhar Hussain, the security guard, was killed during the violent attack by students.

"A murder case has been registered against about 200 students," he said.

The police have also registered cases against over 400 students for attacking and damaging the chain of Punjab group of colleges owned by Dunya media group in Gujrat.

Maryam has vowed to deal with the protesters with an iron hand and said those spreading fake news on social media would be arrested.

On Thursday, the police arrested a YouTuber in this connection.

Bangladesh tribunal issues arrest warrant against Hasina

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on Thursday issued arrest warrants against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted after student-led protests in August, and 45 others for alleged crimes against humanity.

The warrants against Hasina, 77, and others, including her party Awami League's top leaders, were issued on the first day of the judicial proceedings

begun by the re-constituted tribunal, Dhaka Tribune newspaper said.

The Tribunal, led by its chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Majumdar, passed the orders after the prosecution filed two petitions seeking arrest warrants, Chief Prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam was quoted as saying by the Daily Star.

The ICT also directed the authorities concerned to produce Hasina and 45 others before it by November 18.

So far more than 60 complaints of enforced disappearance, murder and mass killings have been filed at the ICT against Hasina, other leaders of her Awami League party and the 14-party alliance, journalists and former top officials of law enforcement agencies.

Following unprecedented anti-government protests over a controversial quota system in government jobs that peaked on August 5, Hasina resigned as prime minister and fled to

India and is currently believed to be living at an undisclosed location there. Hundreds of people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government, taking the death toll to more than 1,000 since the massive protest by students against a controversial quota system in government jobs first started in mid-July.

After taking over on August 8, Bangladesh's interim govern-

ment had said it would try in the International Crimes Tribunal those involved in the killings during the mass movement of the students against the Hasina-led government.

Hasina faces almost 200 cases mostly for murders during the mass student protests.

Advocate Tajul Islam, the chief prosecutor of the tribunal, said on Sunday that Interpol's assistance would be sought to bring back fugitives, including Hasina.

'Human-induced climate change behind intense rains in Nepal'

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The late September floods that killed more than 240 people in Nepal were driven by rainfall made about 10 per cent more intense by human-caused climate change, a rapid analysis by a team of leading scientists said on Thursday.

The analysis by World Weather Attribution (WWA) also underscored the urgent need for Nepal to limit development in low-lying, riverside areas of Nepali cities to prevent and protect people from future floods. WWA is a collaboration of international scientists that analyses and communicates the possible influence of climate change on extreme weather events, such as storms, extreme rainfall, heat waves, and droughts.

The floods in Nepal followed three days of extreme rainfall starting September 26. As records were broken across central and eastern Nepal, with some weather stations recording more than 320 mm on September 28, massive floods and landslides claimed at least

244 lives and caused a heavy loss to the country.

"Climate change was responsible for the extreme three day downpours in Nepal about 10 per cent more intense. Bursts of rainfall will become even more heavier, risking more destructive floods until the world replaces fossil fuels with renewable sources of energy," the WWA analysis said.

The flooding witnessed by Kathmandu valley had never occurred before in the past, according to eye-witnesses. More than 50 people were killed and properties worth billions of rupees were damaged due to the heavy rainfall that hit the capital city recently. Highlighting how rapid development greatly worsened the impacts of the flood, the study said, Kathmandu, the largest city in Nepal and amongst the hardest-hit districts by the floods, is built around the Bagmati river in a bowl-shaped valley and has experienced rapid growth in recent decades.

"Limiting development in flood-prone urban areas will

reduce the number of people in harm's way and save lives when floods occur in the future," the researchers said and also suggested scaling up of early warning systems and prompt action to avoid repeat flooding disasters.

Public Notice

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India's logistics cost will come down to single-digit in two years: Nitin Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said India's logistics cost will come down to single-digit within the next two years. Addressing an event organised by NITI Aayog, Gadkari said the ministry is constructing several highways and expressways, which will help reduce India's logistics cost. "Within two years, we are going to reduce our logistics cost to 9 per cent," he added. According to quick estimates of the economic think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), logistics costs in

India ranged between 7.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent of GDP for the fiscal 2021-22. Gadkari said there is huge potential for India to export alternative fuels and biofuels. He also pointed out that low-quality coal is useful for making methanol. The minister added that India is making significant strides in the biofuel sector, especially in methanol. Further, Gadkari said he aimed to make the Indian automobile industry number one in the world. Last year, India had overtaken Japan to become the third-largest automobile market in the world, only behind the US and China, he said.



The size of India's automobile industry rose from Rs 7.5 lakh crore in 2014 to Rs 18 lakh crore in 2024 and this industry is creating a maximum number of jobs, Gadkari added. Gadkari highlighted that materials like recycled tyre powder and plastic are being utilised in road construction, which helps in the reduction of bitumen import. He also emphasised how the

initiative of using crop waste is helping to increase the incomes of farmers across the country. Gadkari spoke about the stubble-burning problem in Punjab and Haryana. He said that right now, "we can process one-fifth of the Parali, but with better planning, we can reduce the seasonal air pollution from stubble-burning by using parali as raw material for alternative fuels." The minister said that India needs to move ahead with a policy which is cost-effective, indigenous, import substitute and employment-generating to address the major issues of rising pollution and fossil fuel imports.

Hyundai Motor India records ₹27,870 cr fully subscribed IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The initial public offer of Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the Indian arm of South Korean automaker Hyundai, got fully subscribed on the third day of the bidding on Thursday. The Rs 27,870 crore initial share sale got bids for 14,07,68,187 shares against 9,97,69,810 shares on offer, translating into 1.41 times subscription, as per NSE data till 13:21 hours. The quota for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got 3.88 times subscription while the portion meant for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) received 44 per cent subscription. The non-institutional investors part fetched 39 per cent subscription. Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) on Monday raised Rs



8,315 crore from anchor investors. This is the largest IPO in the country, surpassing LIC's initial share sale of Rs 21,000 crore. The IPO has a price band of Rs 1,865-1,960 per share. The IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of 14,21,94,700 equity shares by promoter Hyundai Motor Company (HMC), with no fresh issue component. This is the first initial share sale by an automaker in over two decades, following Japanese carmaker Maruti Suzuki's listing in 2003. Since the public issue is

completely an OFS, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the second largest carmaker in India after Maruti Suzuki, will not receive any proceeds from the IPO. HMIL stated that it expects that the listing of the equity shares will enhance its visibility and brand image, and provide liquidity and a public market for the shares. At the upper end of the price band, the IPO size has been pegged at Rs 27,870 crore (USD 3.3 billion), and the company's market valuation at around Rs 1.6 lakh crore (about USD 19 billion) post-issue. HMIL commenced operations in India in 1996 and currently, sells 13 models across segments. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, Citigroup Global Markets India Private Ltd, HSBC Securities and Capital Markets (India) Private Ltd, J P Morgan India Private.

Andhra eyes Rs 10 lakh cr investment in clean energy, net zero by 2047

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh is eyeing Rs 10 lakh crore investment in the clean energy sector in the state as it unveiled a new policy that incentivises investments across solar, wind and round-the-clock renewable energy projects to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2047. Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu unveiled the AP Integrated Clean Energy (ICE) Policy that envisages incentives ranging from hassle-free land acquisition at reasonable price to power subsidy to certain sectors. The ICE Policy will involve a proposed investment outlay of Rs 10 lakh crore, creating direct and indirect employment for 7,50,000 workers, the policy document said.



The policy looks to leverage the state's vast renewable energy potential across wind, solar and hybrid sources, storage capabilities through pumped storage projects, a long coastline, six operational ports (with four under development) and skilled manpower availability as it pivots energy transition. The Andhra Pradesh government is committed to promoting generation from renewables by creating a more conducive policy and investment framework to spur competition and private participation in the sector while maintaining a balance in the interests of all stakeholders, it said. The policy will aid in setting up of projects that generate electricity from abundant sunlight and wind energy as well from pump-storage projects on water bodies. Andhra Pradesh is targeting 78.5 gigawatts of solar capacity, 35 GW of wind energy, 22 GW of pumped storage and 1.5 million tonnes per annum of green hydrogen manufacturing capacity. It is also looking to set up 25 GWh of battery energy storage as well as projects to manufacture ethanol and biogas from biomass and 5,000 EV charging stations. It is also looking at 25-30 GW of cleantech manufacturing

DGCA releases 2024 domestic winter flight schedule

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday released Domestic Winter Schedule 2024, in which Indian carriers will operate 25,007 flights every week to and from 124 airports in the winter schedule starting October 27, higher by three per cent, than the flights operated during summer period this year. In comparison to the winter schedule 2023, the number of flights has increased by 5.37 per cent. As per Winter Schedule 2024 (effective from 27th October 2024 till 29th March 2025) of the scheduled domestic airlines has been finalized after the slot conference meeting held in September 2024. "Out of these 124 airports, Pondicherry airport is proposed by the scheduled airlines whereas operations



from Pakyong and Tezpur airport were suspended in the winter schedule 2024," the DGCA said in a release. More than half of the total 25,007 domestic departures per week during the winter schedule will be handled by IndiGo. The Gurugram-headquartered airline will see

13,691 departures per week, up 4.91 per cent from 13,050 departures per week in the on-going summer schedule. Also, Tata Group, which currently has three airlines -- Air India, its subsidiary Air India Express and, its JV airline with SIA Vistara -- will have a total of 7,611 departures per week during

this winter, as per the DGCA. Of this, Air India will handle 2,586 departures per week, 13.52 per cent more compared to 2,278 departures per week in the summer schedule of this year, while Air India Express (which saw the merger of AIX connect with it this month) will see 2,832 departures per week

during the winter schedule, up 16.21 per cent from 2,437 departures per week in the summer schedule of 2024. Vistara, however, will see 5.64 per cent less departures per week at 2,193 from 2,324 departures per week in the summer of this year, it said. Budget carrier SpiceJet will also handle less number of departures at 1,297 per week from 1,657 departures per week in the summer schedule of this year, a drop of 21.73 per cent, according to the DGCA. Akasa Air, as per the DGCA, has filed for 989 departures per week for the winter schedule of 2024, which would be an increase of 9.52 per cent compared to the summer schedule. Out of these 124 airports, Pondicherry airport is proposed by the scheduled airlines whereas operations from Pakyong and Tezpur airport were suspended in the Winter Schedule 2024.

Nestle India Q2 profit dips on high costs, soft demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

FMCG major Nestle India Ltd on Thursday reported a marginal decline of 0.94 per cent in its net profit at Rs 899.49 crore for the second quarter that ended September 2024 as some of its key brands faced softer consumer demand and high commodity prices. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 908.08 crore in the July-September period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Nestle India. However, Nestle India's revenue from the sale of products was up 1.3 per cent to Rs 5,074.76 crore in the September quarter. It was at Rs 5,009.52 crore in the corresponding period of last fiscal. Commenting on the results Chairman and Managing Director Suresh Narayanan said, "Despite a challenging external environment with muted consumer demand and high commodity prices, especially for coffee and cocoa, we remained resilient in our pursuit to deliver growth."

"This quarter, 5 of our top 12 brands grew at double-digit. However, some key brands witnessed pressure due to softer consumer demand and we focus on them and have in place robust action plans," he said. Nestle India's domestic sales were up 1.23 per cent to Rs 4,883.14 crore, as against Rs 4,823.72 crore in the corresponding July-September period. In the domestic market, Nestle India delivered growth in organised trade, which includes retail chains, hypermarkets etc "spurred by noodles, beverages and overall premiumisation," according to an earnings statement by the company, which owns brands like Maggi, Nescafe, KitKat and Milkmaid etc. Similarly in the Out of Home (OOH) segment, Nestle India has a "robust growth" helped by portfolio transformation, premiumisation, new customer acquisition and driving reach beyond metros. "Our Out-of-Home business continues to be one of our fastest growing businesses with strong double-digit growth," said Nestle India



adding that while in e-commerce, Nestle India has accelerated growth by almost 38 per cent. This was "primarily driven by Quick Commerce and fueled by brands such as Kitkat, Nescafe, Maggi and Milkmaid." "E-commerce delivered high double-digit growth, which was the highest in the last seven quarters contributing to 8.3 per cent of domestic sales," it said. Growth on this new age channel was also supported by premiumisation, new user acquisition, festive participation and targeted digital communications. Its petcare business Purina

also witnessed a strong e-commerce momentum, it added. "Felix and Friskies cat food continued to receive positive feedback from trade and cat parents. Building on the superpremium pillar, Pro Plan dog food witnessed strong growth," said Nestle India. Its revenue from exports was also up 3.13 per cent to Rs 191.62 crore in the September quarter. Its export business "continued to expand its footprint by introducing new SKUs across categories to Canada, Middle East, Maldives and Papua New Guinea," it said.

Infosys Q2 net profit rises 4.7 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Infosys Ltd on Thursday reported a 4.7 per cent rise in the September quarter net profit and raised revenue guidance after broadbased growth. Net profit of Rs 6,506 crore in July-September was up 4.7 per cent when compared to Rs 6,212 crore earnings in the same period last year. It was 2.2 per cent higher quarter-on-year, according to a company statement. Revenue was up 4.2 per cent at Rs 40,986 crore. Infosys for the second consecutive quarter raised the 2024-25 fiscal year revenue guidance. It now anticipates a growth of 3.75 to 4.50 per cent in revenue in the fiscal year April 2024 to March 2025, up from 3-4 per cent band it had given in the previous quarter. The company had in July raised the revenue guidance for the fiscal from 1-3 per cent anticipated previously.

Sarla Aviation, Bengaluru airport launch electric flying taxis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport is set to be a key hub for cutting-edge urban air mobility solutions with Sarla Aviation joining hands with the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) to launch electric flying taxis. Last month, the two entities signed a statement of collaboration to explore sustainable air mobility, specifically electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. This initiative, developed in Karnataka, aims to revolutionise air travel by introducing seven-seater electric flying taxis, which promise faster, cleaner, and more efficient transportation. While operations may still be two to three years away, Sarla



Aviation's electric taxis promise a cleaner, quieter, and more cost-effective alternative to traditional helicopter services previously offered in Bengaluru. The Bengaluru-based company, co-founded by Adrian Schmidt, Rakesh Gaonkar and Shivram Chauhan, is at the forefront of this transformation. Sarla Aviation plans to focus on four of India's most congested cities-Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, and Pune -- bringing affordable electric aerial taxis to the public. The

company's proposed taxi from Bengaluru Airport to Electronics City would take just 19 minutes, compared to the 152 minutes required by road, with a fare of Rs 1,700. "We aim to redefine urban air transport with operational efficiency, reduced carbon emissions, and scalable infrastructure. Our electric flying taxis will set new benchmarks in reliability and performance, aligning with global standards for sustainable aviation," said Schmidt, Sarla Aviation co-founder and CEO.

Collective responsibility to improve corporate governance, follow global standards: NFRA Chief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) Chairperson Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey on Thursday underscored the need for improving corporate governance and aligning Indian auditing with global standards to attract investors. Observing that there is a need to continue to take cognizance of corporate governance reforms, he said company management, independent directors and audit committee, statutory auditors, shareholders, and regulators constitute five lines of defence to improve corporate governance. "It is our collective responsibility...We should continue to create trust. Improve the corporate governance, and we should work in that direction," he



said, addressing an event organised by industry chamber ASSOCHAM here. Adopting global auditing standards would improve the trust of global investors in the Indian economy, which is on its way to becoming the third largest from the present fifth position, he said. Making a pitch to align Indian audit practices with the global standards, Pandey said it is in the interest of corporates. Adopting global audit norms

is easier as "we have global precedents", he said. "We cannot have Indian accounting standards in isolation while not adhering to global standards...Some big corporate failures have been due to related party transactions and subsidiaries siphoning off funds...We must take corrective action like new Standard of Quality Management, changes in the auditing standard SA 600 to reduce the probability of frauds via subsidiaries," he said. These will lead to early detection of frauds, he said, emphasising that India cannot be a developed economy by 2047 without audit reforms. He expressed confidence that Indian accountants and CAs can dominate the world with adherence to global standards.

INBRIEF

TATA AUTOCOMP SYSTEMS ACHIEVES DOUBLE DEMING RECOGNITION
NEW DELHI: A leading automotive components conglomerate serving Indian and global OEMs, announced today that two of its entities— Tata AutoComp Composites Division & Tata Ficos—have been awarded the prestigious Deming Prize for 2024.

GNU A-ZONE YOUTH FESTIVAL INAUGURATED
AMRITSAR: The A-Zone (Amritsar District Colleges) Youth Festival of Guru Nanak Dev University was inaugurated here today in the Dasmesh Auditorium of the University/Monday to Saturday, 8 AM to 2 PM.

POWERGRID ACQUIRES THREE ISTS PROJECTS
HARYANA: – a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power has on 15th October 2024 acquired three (03) Project Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) to execute Inter-State Transmission Projects related to transmission of renewable energy.



A PHOTO JOURNALIST'S JOURNEY LIFE BEHIND THE LENS

In 'Viewfinder' by veteran photojournalist *Jagdish Yadav*, readers are taken through the life of a photojournalist, uncovering the challenges and achievements that shaped his career. The book offers an extensive look into the power and ethics of photojournalism in capturing the truth behind the headlines, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



In today's society, where we are constantly bombarded with photographs and visuals, the deeper meaning and impact of photography can sometimes be lost or overlooked. With the fast-paced nature of digital media, where images are produced and consumed at lightning speed, it's easy for the essence of what a photograph conveys to fade into the background.

In contrast, *Viewfinder* by *Jagdish Yadav* offers a thoughtful examination of photojournalism, urging readers to consider how powerful storytelling can be when captured through photography. It highlights the importance of understanding not just the technical aspects of taking a photo, but also the stories and emotions behind the images. Essentially, it positions photography as a vital medium for narrative and expression in a visually saturated world.

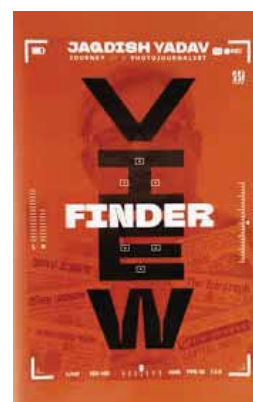
Yadav begins with a compelling analogy, describing photojournalism as the "writing of stories through light." This powerful concept resonates throughout the book, drawing readers into the essence of photography as a universal language capable of going beyond barriers. His unique perspective highlights the intricate relationship between light, structure and narrative, an often-overlooked aspect that enriches the understanding of both seasoned photographers

and novices. By establishing this foundation, *Yadav* encourages a deeper appreciation for the medium that conveys emotions and narratives that words alone cannot capture.

The personal narrative work with professional insights makes *Viewfinder* particularly impactful. *Yadav* candidly recounts his rural upbringing in Uttar Pradesh, revealing the stark contrast between his humble beginnings and his eventual success in journalism. He details the struggles he faced, including language barriers and educational hurdles, creating a relatable picture for readers who may have encountered similar challenges. His resilience in the face of adversity serves as a source of inspiration, proving that determination can lead to remarkable outcomes.

The author also provides a timely commentary on the evolution of journalism, particularly the impact of digital media. He argues that, in today's fast-paced world, where attention spans are fleeting, the importance of powerful imagery has never been greater. A striking photograph, he asserts, can convey emotions and narratives that text alone fails to articulate. This reflection on contemporary relevance makes *Viewfinder* not only a recounting of the past but a significant contribution to discussions about the future of photojournalism.

A standout point *Yadav* makes is how



ABOUT THE BOOK
Book: VIEWFINDER
by JAGDISH YADAV
Publication: IIP ACADEMY
in association with
MANAK Publication
₹1200.00

a gateway for readers to dive deeper into the article, establishing a connection that pure text might struggle to create.

The book explores the technical and ethical responsibilities of photojournalists. *Yadav* highlights the importance of collaboration between reporters and photographers to ensure that images not only match the narrative but also enhance it. The photojournalist, he argues, must make real-time decisions about how to frame a story visually, often needing to act independently of the editorial team. *Yadav* offers a technical breakdown of how photo composition, whether horizontal or vertical, parallels the structure of a well-crafted article, ensuring that the image tells a complete and coherent story.

Through a mix of anecdotal experiences and professional insight, *Yadav* stresses the need for photojournalists to remain vigilant, especially in today's fast-paced media environment where the public's attention span has shrunk. In this context, a well-timed, well-composed photograph can convey the news in a fraction of the time required to read an article.

Viewfinder is a thoughtful reflection on the role of photography in journalism. *Yadav* shows how photojournalists not only document events but also interpret them, offering the public a lens through which to see the

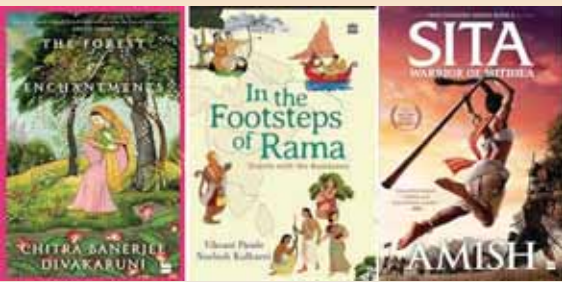
unfiltered reality. His accounts, often humorous and always candid, bring to light the challenges and triumphs of a profession that is crucial but often overlooked.

Jagdish Yadav's Viewfinder is a must-read for anyone interested in the power of images in media. For those interested in photojournalism or seeking an inspiring life story, this book offers a window into the experiences of someone who has spent decades capturing the world through their lens. *Yadav's* reflections on the evolving landscape of photography create a compelling narrative that resonates long after the final page is turned.



Festive Reads!

HarperCollins Picks for Your Festive Reads!



The Forest of Enchantments

By CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI (PRICE: ₹799, PAGES: 372)

In *The Forest of Enchantments*, *Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni* offers a captivating retelling of the Ramayana, centering the narrative around Sita and other often-overlooked women of the epic, such as Kaikeyi, Surpanakha, and Mandodari. This powerful novel explores themes of duty, betrayal and the quest for autonomy in a patriarchal society. Through Sita's eyes, *Divakaruni* poses vital questions about women's rights and treatment in relationships, transforming an ancient story into a contemporary tale of resilience and empowerment.

In The Footsteps Of Rama: Travels with the Ramayana

By VIKRANT PANDE and NEELESH KULKARNI (Price: ₹599, Pages: 272)

In *In The Footsteps Of Rama*, *Vikrant Pande* and *Neelesh Kulkarni* embark on an enlightening journey to retrace Rama's travels during his exile. Beginning with their quest to locate Chitrakoot, they explore significant sites mentioned in the Ramayana, traveling from Ayodhya through the Dandakaranya forest, Panchavati, Kishkindhya, Rameshwaram, and even Sri Lanka. Along their adventure, they uncover the deep connections between the epic's narrative and local folklore, revealing how the stories of the Ramayana continue to resonate with the people of the land. This book is a delightful read for both armchair travelers and enthusiasts of epic tales.

Sita: Warrior of Mithila (Ram Chandra Series Book 2)

By AMISH TRIPATHI (PRICE: ₹399, PAGES: 376)

In *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, set in 3400 BCE India, chaos reigns as the nation grapples with division, resentment, and corruption. The demon king Raavan of Lanka grows ever more powerful, exploiting the vulnerabilities of the Sapt Sindhu. In this tumultuous time, two tribes seek a savior and discover an abandoned baby, protected by a vulture from a pack of wolves. Adopted by the ruler of Mithila, this seemingly ordinary child is destined for greatness. This thrilling sequel in the Ram Chandra Series chronicles the rise of Sita, an orphan who evolves into a prime minister and ultimately becomes a goddess.

Faith and Morals of Hinduism

A Clear Path for the Curious Mind

In 'Quintessence of Hinduism' by *Girdhari Lal Chaturvedi* explores the core beliefs and moral principles of Hinduism, providing an insightful guide for young readers to rediscover and understand their faith.

ABHISHEK SONKAR

The Book offers a concise, comprehensive and insightful exploration of the core beliefs and moral principles that define Hinduism. The book, authored by *Girdhari Lal Chaturvedi*, is divided into 14 chapters, beginning with a historical overview of Hinduism and delving into the significance of the Bhagavad Gita as a philosophical text on faith. The author's aim is to create a guide for Hindu youth, who are often misinformed about their own faith, while also making the book a valuable resource for beginners and those familiar with Hinduism who wish to deepen their understanding.

However, the book struggles to fully achieve its purpose. The author emphasises that Hinduism, unlike many other religions, does not have a single founder or a rigid doctrinal structure. Instead, he describes it as a "bipolar faith." This term is problematic, as it can be misinterpreted to suggest conflicting or mutually exclusive aspects within Hinduism. In reality, Hinduism is a pluralistic tradition that has evolved through diverse paths and perspectives. Describing it as bipolar oversimplifies its inherently multifaceted nature.

The book extensively addresses critics of Hinduism, particularly from other religious backgrounds, who present Hinduism as a religion lacking in moral values. Yet, Hinduism is unique in that it has a long history of self-reflection and reform, with many philosophers and movements challenging established norms. This quality of self-critique is one of the aspects that sets Hinduism apart from other world religions.

Chaturvedi provides readers with a deeper understanding of the fundamental aspects of Hindu philosophy, including faith, morality and spirituality, and explains how these elements shape the daily lives of Hindus. The book also explores central texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, Vedas and Upanishads, offering summaries and interpretations of these works. The author does an admirable job of breaking down complex Sanskrit verses and ideas from the Bhagavad Gita into simple, relatable language without diluting their essence. This is one of the book's major strengths.

The author also discusses key Hindu concepts such as dharma (moral duty), karma (the law of cause and effect), and the nature of the atma (soul) and Brahman (universal consciousness), illustrating how these concepts are interconnected and central to Hindu philosophy. One of the book's main strengths is its ability to explain complex philosophical ideas in

an accessible manner while retaining their depth and significance. The clear and well-researched writing style makes the book a valuable resource for readers with little prior knowledge of Hinduism.

Chaturvedi highlights the accommodating nature of Hinduism, which encompasses a wide variety of beliefs, practices, and paths to spiritual realisation. Whether one follows a path of devotion (bhakti), knowledge (jnana), or selfless service (karma), all are considered valid approaches within the Hindu framework. However, there are limitations. Readers without prior knowledge of Sanskrit may find some sections challenging and those seeking a more detailed and nuanced exploration of specific texts or schools of thought may not find the depth they are looking for. These aspects could be viewed as potential shortcomings of the book.

'Quintessence of Hinduism' provides a useful introduction to Hindu philosophy and its moral framework. While it may not satisfy those looking for an in-depth scholarly analysis, it serves as a helpful starting point for anyone interested in exploring Hindu philosophy and is particularly recommended for readers who already have some familiarity with Hinduism.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: Quintessence of Hinduism: Fundamentals of Hindu Philosophy of Faith and Morals
by GIRDHARI LAL CHATURVEDI
Pages: 383
₹600.00
Availability: Amazon

HINDUISM, UNLIKE MANY OTHER RELIGIONS, DOES NOT HAVE A SINGLE FOUNDER OR A RIGID DOCTRINAL STRUCTURE. INSTEAD, HE DESCRIBES IT AS A "BIPOLAR FAITH"

BUOYANT NEW ZEALAND FACE UPBEAT WEST INDIES IN T20 WORLD CUP SEMIFINAL

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Buooyant New Zealand will seek to continue their inspirational run in the women's T20 World Cup when they face the West Indies in the second semifinal here on Friday.

New Zealand has undoubtedly been the story of the tournament so far in which they got the better of Asian sides India and Sri Lanka to make the final four from Group A, putting behind their 10-match losing streak before the competition.

With her towering presence, Sophie Devine has rallied the Kiwis troops impressively. Their success story features solid contributions at the top from Georgia Plimmer and veteran Suzie Bates, along with the all-round threat posed by Amelia Kerr further down the order.

Kerr has been at the forefront of the Kiwis attack with 10 wickets and 85 runs in what has been a largely low-scoring tournament, providing New Zealand with a lot of impetus. Rosemary Mair has also been



at the helm of New Zealand's success in this World Cup with seven wickets on slow pitches of the UAE.

Eden Carson set up the tone for New Zealand's high profile clash against India and the Kiwis will hope that the right-arm spinner is at the top of her game against the West Indies, who are coming off a huge win over England.

Hayley Matthews' West Indies topped Group B and like New Zealand they also lost one game in the group stage, but overall the winners of the 2016 edition have put together robust performances.

The West Indies have qualified for their first semifinal since hosting the tournament in their back yard in 2018, while the biggest moment for the Caribbean side arrived in this edition when they pipped England in their last group stage match.

The West Indies had lost 13 matches in a row against England before the two teams met in their last Group B

fixture, but their run-chase of 142 showed no signs of mental fatigue against this opponent.

Matthews teamed up with the young Qiana Joseph to shut England out of the tournament with a rapid 102-run stand in which both the batters brought up their respective half-centuries.

While Matthews is the only Caribbean batter to have crossed the 100-run mark in the competition, Sarah Taylor and Deandra Dottin remain vital cogs in their batting.

Spinners Afy Fletcher (8 wickets) and Karishma Ramharack (5 wickets) have been the most successful bowlers for the Caribbean side.

New Zealand hold upperhand against the West Indies when it comes to bilateral record, having won 15 out of 23 matches so far with two tied games and one without a result.

The winner of this contest will take on the triumphant team from the first semifinal, to be played in Dubai on Thursday between the six-time winner and defending champions Australia and South Africa.



Vivaan wins silver medal, Naruka claims bronze in Shooting World Cup Final

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vivaan Kapoor claimed silver in men's trap event after compatriot Anant Jeet Singh Naruka's bronze in the men's skeet competition, taking India's tally to four medals at the ISSF World Cup Final here on Thursday.

Vivaan shot 44 in the final to finish behind gold medal winner Ying Qi of China. Turkey's Tolga N Tuncer won the bronze medal with a score of 35.

Vivaan had come up with a score of 120 out of 125 in the qualification round to enter the six-man final.

Earlier, Naruka, the 26-year-old from Rajasthan, shot 43 in the six-man final, earning third place, while Italy's Tammaro Cassandro and Gabriele Rossetti took home the gold and silver with scores of 57 and 56, respectively.

Naruka made it to the finals by scoring 121 out of 125 in the qualification round.

Sonam Maskar had won a silver in the women's 10m air rifle on Tuesday and Akhil Sheoran clinched a bronze in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions on Wednesday.

Naruka and Maheshwari Chauhan had settled for a fourth-place finish in the skeet mixed team event at the Paris Olympics after losing the bronze medal match to China.



Nadal-Alcaraz and Djokovic-Sinner are the Six Kings Slam exhibition matches in Saudi Arabia

AP ■ RIYADH

Rafael Nadal starts his pre-retirement farewell tour against Carlos Alcaraz on Thursday at the Six Kings Slam, and Novak Djokovic faces Jannik Sinner at an exhibition event that awards money but no ATP ranking points and is Saudi Arabia's latest foray into tennis.

Riyadh will host the WTA Finals next month to open a three-year deal as the kingdom continues to invest in various sports, despite concerns about LGBTQ+ and women's rights

there raised by Hall of Famers Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova and others.

In Wednesday's matches at the Six Kings Slam, the top-ranked Sinner — who was cleared in a doping case shortly before winning the U.S. Open last month, although the World Anti-Doping Agency has appealed that exoneration — beat Daniil Medvedev 6-0, 6-3, and Alcaraz defeated Holger Rune 6-4, 6-2.

Nadal, an ambassador for the Saudi Tennis Federation, and Djokovic were given byes into the semifinals.



The matchup against Alcaraz will be the first contest for Nadal since his exit at the Paris Olympics in July — and his first match since he announced last week that he

would be retiring after playing for Spain in the Davis Cup next month. Nadal and Alcaraz played doubles together at the Paris Games and could team up again for Davis Cup.

Looking ahead to Thursday's exhibition, Alcaraz called Nadal a "legend" and "a really important person for my life, for my career."

Djokovic and Sinner met for real on Sunday: Sinner won in straight sets to earn the trophy at the Shanghai Masters.

After a day off on Friday, the winners of Thursday's two matches in Riyadh will meet in the event's final on Saturday.

Nadal, 38, owns 22 Grand Slam titles; Djokovic, 37, has won 24, a record for the Open era.

Ganguly named director of cricket at JSW Sports

ROLE TO COVER IPL, WPL AND SA20

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was on Thursday appointed Director of Cricket for JSW Sports, his role covering all its cricketing properties including the Delhi team in the IPL and the WPL along with the Pretoria Capitals franchise in SA20.

JSW Sports and GMR Group co-own Delhi Capitals in the IPL and WPL (Women's Premier League) while Pretoria Capitals is owned solely by JSW Sports.

"In his role, Ganguly will spearhead all cricketing properties owned by JSW Sports, including the Delhi Capitals men's IPL and women's WPL teams, and the Pretoria Capitals that plays in the SA20 League in South

Africa," said JSW Sports in a statement.

Ganguly joined Delhi Capitals in 2019 as an advisor, where he worked alongside coach Ricky Ponting, and later returned to the franchise as Director of Cricket after his stint as BCCI president.

Ganguly's appointment came soon after it was decided that the management of cricket operations for Delhi Capitals' teams in the IPL and the WPL will be handled in a two-year rotation policy between GMR Group and JSW Group.

The GMR Group will handle the operations of the Delhi Capitals in the IPL for the next two years, while JSW Sports will handle the franchise's team in the WPL.

Former India batter Hemang Badani is expected to be named head coach ahead of

IPL 2025.

Speaking on the appointment, JSW Sports founder Parth Jindal said, "Dada has always had a special place at JSW Sports. For us, he is family first and then the cricketing icon that he is."

"I've said this in the past and it stands true even today - he is one of the sharpest brains in cricket and we will always stand to benefit from his guidance and wisdom of the sport."

Ganguly added, "I've had the pleasure of knowing the JSW Group and the Jindal family personally and professionally which made this an easy decision."

"JSW Sports has been doing visionary work across the board, and I am pleased to be able to lend my experience to all its cricketing projects."

Pogba ready to give up money to play for Juventus again after doping ban

AP ■ MILAN

Paul Pogba says he's ready to give up money to play for Juventus again. The Serie A club may not want him, though, or need him.

Pogba recently had his four-year ban for doping reduced to 18 months after appealing to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, meaning the France World Cup winner will be free to resume his career in March 2025.

Juventus has not been overly enthusiastic about welcoming him back but Pogba says that is the only club he is thinking about playing for.

"I am ready to even give up money so that I can still play for Juve," he said in an

interview with Italian sports daily Gazzetta dello Sport. "I want to return."

Juventus sporting director Cristiano Giuntoli and new coach Thiago Motta are dubious about whether Pogba can return to the top level after being out for so long since testing positive for testosterone in August last year.

But the 31-year-old Pogba, who said he "felt like a caged lion" for the past year, has been training hard on his own and is ready to prove them wrong.

"I am a Juve player now. That is all I have in my mind today," he said. "I don't have to talk. What I do on the pitch will do my talking and then



Thiago Motta will judge with his own eyes, based on what he sees.

"Talk is nice, but I want to play and I want to be the best one at Juve and in the France team."

But not only has Juventus changed coach since Pogba was banned, it has also changed strategy.

It has brought in fresh new faces, including bright talents who progressed through its

youth team, and got rid of the — costly — old guard with the offseason departures of Federico Chiesa, Wojciech Szczesny, Alex Sandro and Adrien Rabiot.

Pogba, who was the most expensive soccer player in history when he joined Manchester United from Juventus for 105 million euros (\$113 million) in 2016, returned to the Bianconeri as a free agent in 2022.

Nationality matters less than it used to in international soccer

AP ■ LONDON

The question was inevitable.

At his first news conference as England's newly appointed head coach, Thomas Tuchel — a German — was asked on Wednesday what message he had for fans who would have preferred an Englishman in charge of their beloved national team.

"I'm sorry, I just have a German passport," he said, laughing, and went on to profess his love for English football and the country itself.

"I will do everything to show respect to this role and to this country."

The soccer rivalry between England and Germany runs deep and it's likely Tuchel's passport will be used against him if he doesn't deliver results for a nation that hasn't lifted a men's trophy since 1966. But his appointment as England's third foreign coach shows that, increasingly, even the top

countries in the sport are abandoning the long-held belief that the national team must be led by one of their own.

Four of the top nine teams in the FIFA world rankings now have foreign coaches. Even in Germany, a four-time World Cup winner which has never had a foreign coach, candidates such as Dutchman Louis van Gaal and Austrian Oliver Glasner were considered serious contenders for the top job before the country's soccer federation last year settled on Julian Nagelsmann, who is German.

"The coaching methods are universal and there for everyone to apply," said German soccer researcher and author Christoph Wagner, whose recent book "Crossing the Line?" historically addresses Anglo-German rivalry. "It's more the personality that counts and not the nationality. You could be a great coach, and work with a

A GERMAN IN CHARGE OF ENGLAND?



group of players who aren't perceptive enough to get your methods."

Not everyone agrees.

English soccer author and journalist Jonathan Wilson said it was "an admission of failure" for a major soccer nation to have a coach from a different country.

"Personally, I think it should be the best of one country versus the best of another country, and that would probably extend to coaches as well as

Day for England."

While foreign coaches are often found in smaller countries and those further down the world rankings, they are still a rarity among the traditional powers of the game.

Italy, another four-time world champion, has only had Italians in charge. All of Spain's coaches in its modern-day history have been Spanish nationals.

Five-time World Cup winner Brazil has had only Brazilians in charge since 1965, and two-time world champion France only Frenchmen since 1975.

And it remains the case that every World Cup-winning team, since the first tournament in 1930, has been coached by a native of that country.

The situation is similar for the women's World Cup, which has never been won by a team with a foreign coach, though Jill Ellis, who led the U.S. To two trophies, is a naturalized U.S. Citizen born in England.

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank		SME Finance Branch Ramgarh	APPENDIX-IV [Rule - 8 (1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)			
Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice on the dates mentioned against each account and stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of notice/date of receipt of the said notice.			
The Borrower/ Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement) Rules, 2002 said on the dates mentioned against each account.			
The Borrower/ Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount an interest thereon.			
*We draw attention to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the SARFESI Act and the Rules framed there under which deals with your rights of redemption over the securities"			
Sl. No.	Name of Borrowers/ Guarantor/ Mortgagor	Description of the immovable properties	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession
01	Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh & Guarantor (s) Mrs. Ram Dulari Devi and Mr Raj Kumar Singh	All that part and parcel of property consisting of Land measuring 6.00 Decimals, Vide sale deed no.16655 dated 22.11.2000, Khata no.-41, Plot no. 854, Village: Charhi, P.S- Mandu, Thana no.-21, Dist- Hazaribagh. Boundary (6.00 Decimal): North -Wazir Khan, South -Parti, East - Fodi Mian, West - Parti Kadim	23.07.2024 17.10.2024
02	Mr. Jitan Ram and Mrs. Sushila Devi (Co-Applcant) and Mr. Ram Prohesh Ram (Co-Applcant) and Guarantor(s) Mr. Naresh Kumar Singh and Mr Ram Chandra Prasad	All that part and parcel of property consisting of Land measuring 11.00 Decimals, Vide Sale deed No. 2264, dated 16.07.2002 khata no.-94, Plot no. 203, Behind Ramgarh College, P.S. Ramgarh, Dist. Ramgarh, Jharkhand. Boundary (11.00 Decimal): North - Urmila Devi, South - Kishor Prasad and others, East - 12 ft. wide path, West - Balance of the Plot.	23.07.2024 17.10.2024
03	Mrs. Nilam Pandey & Guarantor(s) Mr. Banke Bihari Pandey and Mr. Mahendra Kumar Poddar	All that part and parcel of property consisting of Land measuring 5.00 Decimals, Sale Deed No. 13556 dated 30.08.2006, Khata no.-54, Plot no. 518, Village - Kujji, P.S. Mandu, Thana No. 154, P.S.-Ramgarh, Dist. Ramgarh. Boundary (5.00 Decimal): North - Rasta, South - Rajendra Prasad and Jawahar Prasad, East - Rasta, West - Bihari Mistry	23.07.2024 17.10.2024
04	Md. Seraj Ahmad and Mrs Sogra Khatoon (Co-Applcant) and Guarantor(s) Md. Tarique Hussain and Mr. Mustaque Ahmad	All that part and parcel of property consisting of Land measuring 7.00 Decimals, Vide Sale deed no.-2022 dated 23.02.1993, Khata no.-78, Plot no. 78, Village- Ratway, P.S. Mandu, Thana No. 178, Dist.- Ramgarh. Boundary (7.00 Decimal): North - Vendee, South - Munki Mahto, East - Vendor, West - Vendee	23.07.2024 17.10.2024
Authorized Officer (Indian Bank)			
Place : Ramgarh Date : 17.10.2024			