



**OPINION 6**  
TRANSFORMING INDIA  
THROUGH 'MAKE IN INDIA'

**WORLD 8**  
CHINA URGES ALL PARTIES TO COOL  
DOWN TENSIONS IN WEST ASIA

**MONEY 10**  
INDIA'S SEVEN PER CENT GROWTH FAILS  
TO GENERATE JOBS: RAGHURAM RAJAN

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## WEST ASIA ON FIRE



People check the site of the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut's southern suburbs, Sunday AP/PTI

PTI ■ JERUSALEM/BEIRUT

The Israeli military said Sunday that it killed another high-ranking Hezbollah official in an airstrike as the Lebanese militant group was reeling from a string of devastating blows and the killing of its overall leader, Hassan Nasrallah. The military said Nabil Kaouk, the deputy head of Hezbollah's Central Council, was killed on Saturday. There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, and it was not known where the strike took place. Hezbollah has confirmed that one of its senior commanders, Ali Karaki, died in the Israeli airstrike that

killed its top leader Hassan Nasrallah on Friday. Israel has killed several top commanders in the Lebanese militant group in recent weeks in a series of strikes. The Israeli military said it carried out another targeted strike on Beirut later on Sunday. In Syria, 37 militants affiliated to the extremist Islamic State group and an al-Qaeda-linked group were killed in two strikes, the United States military said Sunday. Two of the dead were senior militants, it said. Hezbollah has also been targeted by a sophisticated attack on its pagers and walkie-talkies that was widely blamed on Israel. A wave of Israeli airstrikes across large

parts of Lebanon has killed at least 1,030 people - including 156 women and 87 children - in less than two weeks, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from their homes in Lebanon by the latest strikes. The Government estimates that around 2,50,000 are in shelters, with three to four times as many staying with friends or relatives, or camping out on the streets, Environment Minister Nasser Yassin told The Associated Press. Hezbollah has continued to fire rockets and missiles into northern Israel, but most have been intercepted or fallen in open areas. No

Israelis have been killed since the latest wave of strikes on top Hezbollah leaders began on Sept. 20. Kaouk was a veteran member of Hezbollah going back to the 1980s and served as Hezbollah's military commander in southern Lebanon during the 2006 war with Israel. He often appeared in local media, where he would comment on politics and security developments, and he gave eulogies at the funerals of senior militants. The United States had announced sanctions against him in 2020. Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel after Hamas' October 7 attack out of Gaza triggered the war there. Hezbollah and Hamas are allies that consider themselves part of an Iran-backed "Axis of Resistance" against Israel. Israel has responded with waves of airstrikes, and the conflict has steadily ratcheted up to the brink of all-out war, raising fears of a region-wide conflagration. Israel says it is determined to return some 60,000 of its citizens to communities in the north that were evacuated nearly a year ago. Hezbollah has said it will only halt its rocket fire if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which has proven elusive despite months of indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas led by the United States, Qatar and Egypt.

## Kashmir reacts, India bleeds

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The situation remained volatile in several parts of Kashmir after sporadic protests broke out over the killing of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli air strike in Lebanon. People took to the streets in Srinagar and Budgam to condemn Nasrallah's death, chanting anti-Israel and anti-US slogans. Political leaders Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference Member Parliament from Srinagar Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and Shia leader and former cabinet Minister Imran Reza Ansari also suspended election campaigns to condole the killing. The gesture, however, triggered sharp reactions.



Reacting strongly to the developments the BJP on Sunday lashed out at PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti for "shedding crocodile tears" and indulging in "vote bank politics" after the former Chief Minister cancelled her poll campaign over the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Vice President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Omar

Abdullah condemned the actions of Israel and called for world support to end the ongoing massacre of innocent people in Gaza and Lebanon. Another Shia leader and former Minister Imran Reza Ansari labelled him as a 'Lion'. Ansari posted a message on X, "A lion has fallen, his roar remains. In every heartbeat his struggle sustains. I am suspending all campaigning activities to honour the supreme sacrifice made by Shaheed Sayed Hassan Nasrallah". Meanwhile, the security forces deployed on ground zero have been asked to exercise utmost restraint to prevent any flare-up ahead of the third and final round of polling on October 1. Labelling her as "pro-militant", BJP national spokesperson RP Singh said, "By cancelling her campaigning, she has shown she is shedding tears over the death of terrorists. It is her habit to call terrorists martyrs. She had similarly wept for Burhan Wani some time back." However, she is not alone in expressing solidarity with terrorists, he said. "Sonia Gandhi too shed tears for the terrorists killed in Batla House. All leaders of the INDIA alliance do this for vote bank politics. For them, the country doesn't come first. She is doing this for the vote bank," he charged. Former deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Kavinder Gupta also condemned Mehbooba's stance, asking, "What problem does Mehbooba Mufti have with the death of terrorist Nasrallah? When Hindus are killed in Bangladesh and Pakistan, there is a grave silence from them."



A braveheart of Jammu and Kashmir police, Head Constable Bashir Ahmad, who sacrificed his life in the line of duty after neutralising a Pakistani terrorist in the Billawar tehsil of Kathua district

## Terror in Jammu, one personnel killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A braveheart of Jammu and Kashmir police, Head Constable Bashir Ahmad, who sacrificed his life in the line of duty after neutralising a Pakistani terrorist in the Billawar tehsil of Kathua district late Saturday evening, was eagerly waiting to come home to finalise the marriage arrangements of his elder daughter and son. On Sunday his mortal remains, draped in the tricolor, reached home after a formal wreath-laying ceremony at the police lines. A large number of close relatives and family friends were assembled at their residence to pay their last tributes to him. Only recently the family had finalised the marriage proposal of their elder daughter. Before returning to his duty, Bashir had promised his elder brother to firm up the marriage proposal of his son before decide the dates. "My brother wanted to throw a big party after finalising the marriage proposals of his daughter and son", Barkat Ali, elder brother of the martyred head constable, told The Pioneer at his residence in Channi Himmat. Continued on page 2



A damaged car that was involved in an accident, outside Nangloi police station, in New Delhi, Sunday Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

## Shocking road rage in Delhi NCR, two dead

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old Delhi Police constable was crushed to death in a road rage incident late Saturday night in the Nangloi area after asking a driver to move his car in the national capital. The constable was reportedly dragged for 10 metres before being hit by another vehicle. The incident occurred when the constable was monitoring the area due to a rise in burglaries, dressed in civilian clothes. In another shocking display of road rage, a dozen men engaged in a violent brawl on a busy road in Ghaziabad, after one of the vehicles they were travelling in began driving on the wrong side of traffic on Saturday. The incident, captured on video and shared widely on social media, unfolded as two groups clashed over a vehicle driving on the wrong side of the traffic. According to police, the deceased constable, identified as Sandeep, joined the force in 2018 and was posted at the Nangloi police station. He is survived by his mother, wife, and a five-year-old son. The incident occurred around 2.15 am near Veena Enclave when Sandeep was going towards Railway Road from Nangloi Police station during duty hours dressed in civilian clothes. Upon noticing a car being driven recklessly, Sandeep told the driver not to do so, the Delhi Police said in a statement. He was on his bike when a WagonR car tried to overtake him. Suddenly, the vehicle increased its speed and hit the constable's motorcycle from behind and dragged him for about 10 metres before hitting another car, it said. CCTV footage revealed that Sandeep had

taken a left turn into a narrow lane and indicated the Wagon R to slow down when the vehicle suddenly sped up and hit his bike. The impact caused Sandeep to be dragged along with his bike for about 10 meters before the car hit a parked car. The cop is seen gesturing to the car driver to slow down. But the car picks up speed and hits him. Sandeep sustained severe head injuries and was rushed to Sonia Hospital, then transferred to Balaji Hospital in Paschim Vihar, where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Jimmy Chiram stated, "Constable Sandeep was going towards the railway road from Nangloi Police Station during duty hours, dressed in civilian clothes due to the increased incidents of burglary in the area." According to the DCP, Sandeep observed a WagonR being driven recklessly and attempted to alert the driver. "He saw that a WagonR was being driven recklessly and subsequently pointed out to the driver not to drive harshly," the DCP explained. "Prima Facie it looks like road rage but once the accused is apprehended we will know further," he added further. The car has been seized, but the driver is currently absconding, according to officials. According to police, the car had two occupants. The driver of the car fled the scene, abandoning the vehicle. Authorities have recovered the car and registered a case under Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the accused. The investigation is ongoing. Some sources have claimed that one of the car's occupants was involved in the illegal liquor trade, but police have not confirmed this.

## Intense rain claims 125 lives in Nepal, jeopardise Bihar

PTI/PNS ■ KATHMANDU/PATNA

The death toll from rain-triggered flooding and landslides across Nepal climbed to 125 on Sunday, police said. Large swathes of eastern and central Nepal have been inundated since Friday, with flash floods reported in parts of the country. Due to the prevailing situation the border districts of neighbouring Bihar remained vulnerable as the State Government sounded an alert for floods in northern, southern and central parts of the State following heavy discharge of water from Birpur and Valmikinagar barrages on Sunday. The embankment of the Bagmati River in Madhkaul village in Sitamarhi district broke on Sunday, which is being repaired, they said.

Due to heavy discharge of water from Birpur barrage, seepage was also reported from the Kosi Eastern embankment near Gopalpur on Saturday night, which was repaired by the engineers of the Water Resources Department (WRD). A low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal and the more northerly than usual position of the monsoon trough is the reason behind exceptionally intense rain. Scientists say that while climate change is changing the amount and timing of rainfall across Asia, a key reason for the rise in the impact of floods is the built environment, including unplanned construction, especially on floodplains, which leaves insufficient areas for water retention and drainage. A total of 6.61 lakh cusecs of water was released from Birpur barrage on



Kosi river till 5 am, the highest in 56 years. According to the latest bulletin by the State Water Resources department, the last time the maximum water discharged from this barrage was 7.88 lakh cusecs of water in 1968.

Around 13 districts situated along the Ganga, including Buxar, Bhojpur, Saran, Patna, Samastipur, Begusarai, Munger and Bhagalpur, are already experiencing a flood-like situation, and nearly 13.5 lakh people living in low-lying areas have

been affected by rising water levels of rivers, following torrential rainfall, officials said. In Nepal, Kathmandu Valley reported the highest number of deaths. At least 322 houses and 16 bridges were damaged. The security personnel have rescued nearly 3,626 people, the Armed Police Force sources said. The sources added that rescue operations were still underway. The death toll has reached 125, the Armed Police Force said in a statement. Six football players were also killed in a landslide at a training centre operated by the All Nepal Football Association in Makwanpur. Others have been swept up in the floodwaters. Despite the forecast for rain to continue until Tuesday, there were signs of some easing on Sunday.

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Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



# Violation of land law to elicit action, stresses minister

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Clarifying the government's position regarding the land laws in the State, Forest minister Subodh Uniyal said that the State government under chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami is serious on this issue and will act against those who have violated the rules. He said that action will be taken against those who have purchased land or utilised it for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was purchased. Such land will be taken over by the State government. Further, in case of violation of the limit of 250 square metres per family, the excess land will also be taken over by the State government, he said.

Stating that the government will make amendments

in the land laws in accordance with public sentiments, Uniyal said that attempts will be made for all those reforms needed in the land law in the interests of the State. However, the citizens of Uttarakhand will also have to become aware and cooperate with the government for this purpose. The Forest minister also appealed to the people of the State to protect their ancestral lands and not sell these. "The government will not hesitate to consider public sentiments and amend any amendments made in the land law which have not brought the expected results. All possible steps are being taken to protect the rights of the people of the State. The coming land law is being prepared with this idea in

mind," the Forest minister added.

It will be recalled that CM Dhami has decided to take action at various levels and initiate action in the next budget session of the Assembly for implementing a strict land law in the State. The State government had earlier formed the Subhash Kumar committee on this subject. Another committee chaired by the chief secretary Radha Raturi is studying the recommendations of the Subhash Kumar committee in order to prepare the draft of the land law. The committee has been holding meetings to discuss the recommendations and giving final touches to facilitate implementation of the land law, officials said.

# Ayushman scheme exploited for SIM card fraud, two women arrested

## Mastermind based in Philippines, used thousands of SIM cards for cyber fraud

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand Special Task Force (STF) arrested two women from Nagpur, who were allegedly involved in a scam that exploited people's biometrics under the guise of creating Ayushman health cards. These biometrics were used to activate SIM cards, which were then sold at high prices to cybercriminals for online fraud, the deputy superintendent of police of STF Ankush Mishra said. He stated that the arrested women, Pushpa Barapatre and Yadamma Sultan, are the alleged mastermind behind the scam and is based in the Philippines. He allegedly coordinated with the two women, who sent the activated SIM cards to him. The

Dehradun reported losing Rs 23 lakh through these fraudulent schemes. This investigation was initiated after this victim filed the case in Dehradun. According to Mishra, these criminals, posing as agents helping people get Ayushman health cards, collected the biometrics of people in rural areas. These biometrics were then reportedly used to activate new SIM cards, which were sold to cybercrime networks. He said that Raju Sultan, the son of Yadamma Sultan, is the alleged mastermind behind the scam and is based in the Philippines. He allegedly coordinated with the two women, who sent the activated SIM cards to him. The

cards were linked to internet banking accounts, which were used to conduct online fraud. The accused Barapatre allegedly admitted to sending around 4,000 to 5,000 SIM cards to her son in the Philippines. The investigation also revealed that the women were in constant contact with foreign cybercriminals. The DSP further said that the STF teams conducted raids at their apartment in Nagpur on Saturday. During the raid, they seized a mobile phone, debit cards, Aadhaar card, PAN card, voter ID and various bank documents. They also uncovered significant financial transactions linked to the fraud in the accused women's bank accounts. The STF has charged the women under relevant sections and further investigation is underway to identify other members of the syndicate, the DSP said. He said that the investigation has exposed the international dimensions of the scam, as the SIM cards activated in India were being used by cybercriminals overseas. The STF will work closely with other state police departments to trace the wider network involved in this massive cyber fraud. He also warned the public to be cautious of fraudulent online schemes, including those that promise high returns in short periods. He advised people not to share personal information, such as biometrics or banking details, with unknown individuals or engage in suspicious online investment opportunities.



schemes by advertising high-profit online trading opportunities on social media platforms. Once linked to WhatsApp groups, victims were shown fake screenshots of profits to encourage more investment. One victim from

women received substantial payments for their role in the operation, Mishra said. During the investigation, the STF tracked down both accused to Nagpur in Maharashtra. He said that the team found that the SIM

# Modi appreciates village youth of U'kashi for cleaning initiative

## Jhala residents clean village daily under 'Dhanyavad Prakriti' initiative

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Even as the authorities are struggling to maintain basic civic sanitation in Dehradun and other urban areas of the State due to factors including public apathy, young residents of a distant village in Uttarkashi district have undertaken a novel initiative. Their initiative impressed Prime Minister Narendra Modi enough for him to cite their efforts as an example for others. Modi talked about this village while addressing the nation in the 114th edition of Mann Ki Baat programme on Sunday.

After listening to the PM's address at a gathering in the Anarwala area of Dehradun, chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami pointed out that PM Modi had talked about the border village of Jhala in Uttarkashi district. The youth of this village have undertaken a special initiative to keep their surroundings clean. They are conducting a 'Dhanyavad Prakriti' campaign in the village. As part of this campaign, cleaning is undertaken every day for two hours in the village. The trash strewn in the paths of the village is collected and dumped at a designated location outside the village. This is making the village clean while also raising public awareness. The CM appealed to the people of Uttarakhand to undertake similar initiatives in all areas of the State



CM Pushkar Singh Dhami listens to PM Modi's Mann Ki Baat programme on Sunday  
Pioneer photo

in order to ensure the desired level of cleanliness. He said that the State government is also laying special focus on sanitation in order to further boost tourism.

Dhami said, "PM Modi's Mann Ki Baat programme always inspires all to do better work on socially relevant issues. This programme will

complete 10 years on the occasion of Navratri on October 3. By talking about social organisations and individuals doing commendable work in various parts of the country, the PM has motivated the citizens to do good works. Many are also doing commendable work after being motivated by the PM's Mann Ki Baat," he said.

The CM said that all the people must make collective effort and contribute towards achieving PM Modi's resolve to make India a developed nation by 2047. Special focus must be laid on the 'vocal for local' concept to encourage local products. "We should buy local products on festive occasions and thus contribute to enhancing the

livelihood of the people at the local level. Along with development, we will also have to nurture our heritage. We must strive constantly to preserve our local languages, dialects and culture," Dhami added.

Cabinet minister Ganesh Joshi also expressed his views on the occasion.

# Dehradun among 30 cities for Swachhata Hi Seva campaign coverage

## Central team reviews cleanliness in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

As part of the nationwide cleanliness fortnight being observed till October 2, a team from the Central government

cleanliness efforts in the city and prepared a report based on their observations. The Dehradun assistant municipi-

among 30 cities across the country which have been selected for coverage under the Swachhata Hi Seva campaign by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. A team from Delhi covered the cleanliness-related activities of the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) as part of this initiative, Joshi said. He informed that the MCD has been focusing on achieving the goals set during the first phase of the Swachhata Hi Seva campaign. For the second phase, the corporation has identified black spots across the city based on intensity. These are divided into three categories-low intensity, medium intensity and high intensity with nine spots, 12 spots and 13 spots in these categories respectively. Joshi shared that the second phase aims to remove five locations from the high-intensity black spots category. He also expressed his satisfaction with Dehradun being included in the 30-city list by the Central government and added that the programme's planning has been executed well, with the team following the set guidelines each day.



has arrived in Dehradun to review the city's sanitation system. The team assessed the

pal commissioner and the programme's nodal officer S Joshi said that Dehradun is

# Police impose Rs 3.5 lakh fine on Dehradun landlords for unverified tenants

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The police conducted a verification drive in the Selaqui and Sahaspur areas on Sunday, leading to action against over 35 house owners for keeping unverified tenants. The police imposed fines amounting to Rs 3.5 lakh under the Police Act for non-compliance with tenant verification norms. Following directives from the Dehradun senior superintendent of police Ajai Singh, a special verification campaign was carried out to ensure that individuals coming from other States or living as tenants in these regions are properly registered with the local authorities. The officials said that the drive aimed to bolster security and identify any suspicious activity in areas with a high influx of outsiders.

During the operation, 35 house owners were found guilty of not verifying their tenants, leading to their challans and subsequent fines. The



The drive covered several key locations including Jamnipur, Pragati Vihar and Bhauwala in the Selaqui area as well as Chai Basti, Rampur, Shankarpur and Mehmudnagar in Sahaspur

authorities emphasised that such drives will continue to ensure the safety and security of the community, urging residents to comply with verification procedures in the future.

# Special focus on organic farming, various schemes strengthening agriculture in State

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State government is undertaking various efforts to boost organic farming in the State. According to official sources, organic farming is being encouraged in 3,900 clusters across the State. The Agriculture department is undertaking various welfare schemes for farmers in addition to ensuring that the benefit of various Central government schemes also reaches the farmers in the State. Along with facilitating certified seed distribution, availability of farming equipment, irrigation facility, fertiliser, pest control and crop insur-

ance and government is also ensuring the farmers receive the benefit of Central government schemes like the Pradhanmantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. The government is also operating the soil health card scheme to enable farmers to test nutrient content of their soil and boost production. The Government of India has made a provision of Rs 508.89 lakh under this scheme in this financial year.

Similarly, organic farming is being encouraged on a cluster basis in selected vil-



lages under the traditional farming development scheme. This scheme is currently being operated in 3,900 clusters with the Central government allocating Rs 13,127 crore for this scheme under the current financial year. Officials informed that 8.88 lakh registered farmers are receiving Rs 6,000 annually directly in their accounts through DBT under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. A sum of Rs 178.04 crore has been made available in the financial year 2024.25 for this purpose. A total of Rs 2,757 crore has been distributed in the State

so far under this scheme. In another development, paddy and mandua will be covered under the Pradhanmantri Fasal Bima Yojana from April 1 in all the districts.

The State government is also laying special focus on villages dominated by SC-ST populations. A special agriculture development programme is being run for farmers of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes with small tillage. An allocation of Rs 700 lakh has been made for the selected villages under this scheme in the current finan-

cial year, officials informed.

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said that the government is taking concrete steps to further strengthen the agriculture sector. "Our priority is to ensure that modern technology and innovations reach the farmers so that farming can become more profitable and sustainable. Considering the geographical characteristics of Uttarakhand, we are laying special focus on encouraging organic farming, fruit cultivation and the cultivation of medicinal herbs," Dhami said.

# Destination Uttarakhand

WORLD TOURISM DAY SPECIAL

## Kedarnath Dham gets a major facelift, enhances facilities for pilgrims

Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami is pushing ahead Uttarakhand government's efforts to transform Kedarnath into a premier spiritual destination



>> PM Narendra Modi along with CM Pushkar Singh Dhami during his visit to Kedarnath Dham

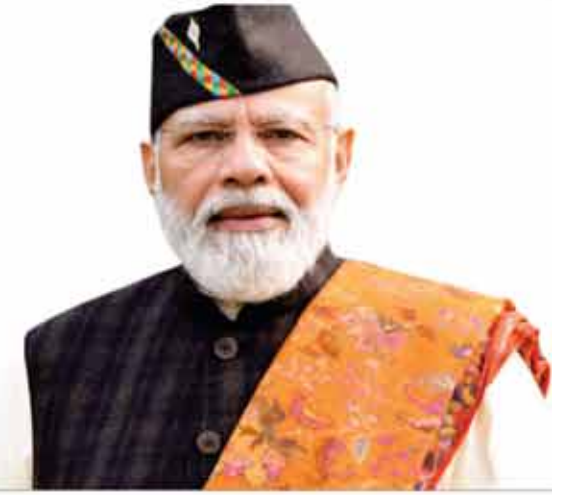
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's deep faith in Baba Kedarnath and his special attachment to Uttarakhand, have received support from the Centre. With assistance from the Centre, reconstruction work is going on at Kedarnath Dham. Uttarakhand Government led by Pushkar Singh Dhami, endeavoured to restore the shrine and the surrounding area to its pristine glory, while providing devotees with all modern amenities and services. The state administration has provided all kinds of facilities to the pilgrims, which is among the reasons behind the record number of people visiting every year.

The redevelopment and reconstruction work in the first phase of Kedarnath Dham was completed in 2022. In the second phase, 21 works worth Rs 188 crore are underway. The master plan proposes the redevelopment of the Kedarnath temple area that was washed away in the Uttarakhand floods of 2013. The plan proposes a wide and clear path that leads to the shrine, with structures in small clusters on either side accommodating the residential needs.

**MANDAKINI PATH READY FOR PILGRIMS COMING TO KEDARNATH**  
The master plan proposes a new layout to ensure

a safer and more organised settlement around the shrine, including the construction of Mandakini path, leading to the temple and the arrangement of residential spaces in small, dispersed clusters for better management and safety. Officials confirmed that the first phase of the Kedarnath Dham's redevelopment was completed in 2022, and the second phase is currently underway.

Under the supervision of CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, the Mandakini path is ready for pilgrims' ease, and additional amenities such as food kiosks and pilgrim care will be available there. All the work would be completed before the yatra commences



I congratulate the Uttarakhand government on the remarkable progress achieved in the last few years. This has been made possible by sustained policy push and focus on key sectors such as tourism and renewable energy. Alongside, the state has made significant strides in infrastructure development, setting new benchmarks for sustainable growth. Uttarakhand's commitment to harnessing its natural resources and promoting tourism has not only bolstered its economy but also showcased its potential on the global stage. I applaud the state's dedication to inclusive development and look forward to its continued success in the years ahead."

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister



Under PM Narendra Modi's leadership, U'khand is experiencing growth with new ropeway projects and advancements in rail, road, and air connectivity. These initiatives promise eco-friendly travel, boost regional economy, and create opportunities for locals. With its rich spiritual, adventure, and cultural experiences, the state continues to attract global visitors while preserving its natural and cultural heritage.

**Pushkar Singh Dhami**  
Chief Minister



>> CM on his visit to Corbett National Park

## Tehri takes flight: Rising paragliding destination

According to some internationally renowned paragliding experts, Tehri has the potential to become a world-class paragliding center. With



a clear dropping height of more than 1500 mt, conducive climate with lesser wind disturbances and easy access from Dehradun airport, the Tehri-lake is being touted as an upcoming paragliding hub.

The Tourism Department organised an International Paragliding Acrobatic Festival in November 2023 which saw participation from more than 150 paragliding acrobats from more than 30 countries. The event catapulted Tehri to an exalted status in the international paragliding circuit and international paragliding instructors are being up at Tehri for their training groups.

In order to promote paragliding activity in the state, the tourism department has started various levels of paragliding training courses like P1, P2 and SIV at Tehri to equip the local youth with the necessary skills and safety certifications to meet international requirements. This step would ensure availability of local skilled manpower as Tehri sees a rise in paragliding sporting activity.

## U'khand Tourism Policy 2023-30: Spiritual bliss with modern tourism

Following PM Modi's vision, and under the leadership of CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, Uttarakhand has embarked on creating better experiences for tourists



>> CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, CM, Uttarakhand, interacting with Goa government officials. MoU was signed recently with with an aim to enhance the overall tourism in both states

Uttarakhand, also known as Devbhoomi, has been a spiritual center since time immemorial. With holy cities like Haridwar and Rishikesh on the banks of the River Ganga, the annual Char Dham Yatra, the Kumbh Mela and several Shiva and Shakti temples, each telling its own mystical story, dotted across the state, the state is a haven for spiritual seekers.

Under the able leadership of Uttarakhand Chief Minister, Pushkar Singh Dhami, the state has embarked on creating better and newer experiences for tourists visiting the state. From infrastructure development to opening up

newer segments of tourism, the state is offering multitude of tourism products to target various strata of tourists. At the same time, it is imperative for the state to take note of the fragile ecology and plan activities without causing any harm to the natural environment.

The Tourism Policy envisaged by Government of Uttarakhand lays the roadmap for developing new tourism related activities in the state. The state is offering several incentives including capital subsidy, interest subvention, marketing & promotion, training etc for industry players who wish to invest in the future tourism growth of the

state. The activities for which these incentives are offered range from hospitality services and other tourism services such as adventure parks, electric taxi services etc.

Due to the unique ecological positioning of the state, with the Himalayas being one of the youngest mountain ranges of the world, subject to various geographical changes, the Tourism Policy 2023-2030 lays down guidelines for development of environmental-friendly sustainable tourism infrastructure.

Several initiatives have been taken by the govt to boost tourism in the state ranging from promoting Adventure Sports, yoga and wellness, Border Village Tourism and boosting tourism to hidden gems of the state through Manaskhand Express train

Recently, the government has laid down policy guidelines for inviting investment from within the state for state players with intended investment of Rs 1-5 crore. With this policy, the state aims to develop entrepreneurial enterprise within the state for land owners of the state. Another unique feature of the policy is that the investors will have to provide employment to at least 70% local youth in their enterprise.

The policy includes several incentives including Capital Subsidy and Interest Subsidy depending upon the geographical location of the project.

## Homestays: Future of accommodation in the state

Empowering homestay owners, strengthening economy

Due to various geographical and ecological factors, setting up of large hotels in the state is not feasible. Hence, the state has launched various facilities and incentives to homestay owners to develop a resilient homestay infrastructure across the state.

The state has adopted a three-pronged strategy to promote the homestay economy – providing capital support to build infrastructure, providing training to hone skills and the third is the launch of a dedicated homestay booking portal [www.uttarastays.com](http://www.uttarastays.com), which offers homestay owners to list their homestays without any integration charges and commission.

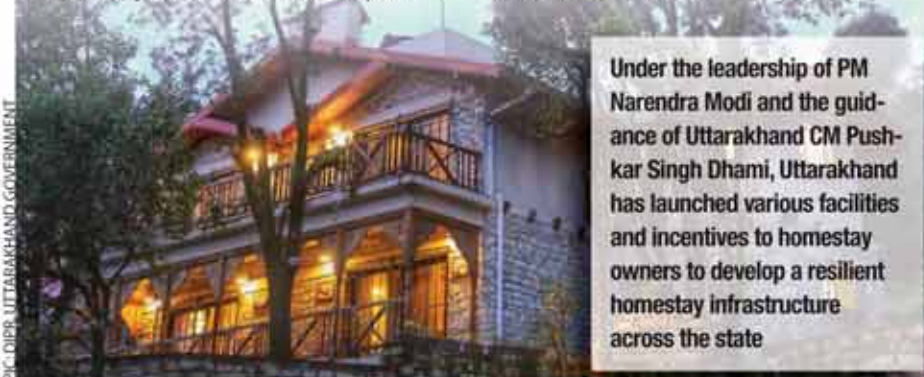
This strategy is set to impact migration from the state with more locals setting up homestays and the tourism department providing online booking facility through a state-owned portal.

The Himalayan hinterland is dotted with pictur-



>> CM Pushkar Singh Dhami at a homestay esque and quaint locations, where finding quality accommodation is still a challenge. For locals, who have set up accommodation units at these locations, it is difficult to reach out to their potential guests through online medium. The [uttarastays.com](http://uttarastays.com) portal is set to bridge this gap and provide exposure to all homestays of the state.

Under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and the guidance of Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, Uttarakhand has launched various facilities and incentives to homestay owners to develop a resilient homestay infrastructure across the state



## Uttarakhand embraces new-age tourism for sustainable and ecological growth

With new-age tourism products, Uttarakhand is poised for an era of tourism growth, which is both sustainable and inclusive

Uttarakhand has been known as a hub for Yoga and wellness activities for a long time with Rishikesh being branded as the Yoga Capital of the World. With various developmental initiatives of the Department of Ayush and Department of Tourism, Wellness Centers are being developed across the state providing

holistic Ayurvedic remedies. These Wellness Centers are being promoted by the Tourism department by linking them to the nearby homestays. The Tourism Department and Ayush Department have also developed an Ayurveda based welcome kit for the tourists residing at the homestays.

The wellness centers linked to

the homestays are being actively promoted on the [www.uttarastays.com](http://www.uttarastays.com) portal to provide information about the facilities available at these Wellness Centers.

With these new-age tourism products, Uttarakhand tourism is poised for an era of tourism growth which is both sustainable and inclusive.

## Nakshatra Sabha: Exploring the Cosmos

With focus of 'Leave No Trace', the event aimed to promote responsible tourism with the participants actively involved in the managing the surroundings



With an aim to promote 'Leave No Trace' tourism activity and expose remote locations of the state, the tourism department has come up with a six-part astro-tourism event series titled Nakshatra Sabha. The locations chosen for these events are unique with astro enthusiasts camping at the sites in tents. The astro enthusiasts witness various celestial events and objects through state-of-the-art equipment, participate in sessions about astronomy, learn about astro-photography,

unravel the mysteries of the night sky, go on local hikes, indulge in musical evenings and admire the beauty of their surroundings pledging to 'Leave No Trace' when they vacate the site.

The first event in the series was held at the iconic George Everest House near Mussoorie in June 2024 which saw overwhelming response from more than 100 participants from all across the country and even international participation.

The next event is scheduled to be held at Jageshwar in Almora in the first week of October 2024 with more events lined up at Benital in Chamoli, Jadung in Uttarkashi and Gunji in Pithoragarh. The events aim to create awareness about Dark Sky Observations, develop a Dark Sky Policy for the state, promote training & development around the events to create opportunities for the local youth.

With focus of 'Leave No Trace', these events also aim to promote responsible tourism with the participants actively involved in the managing the surroundings.

## Adventure Tourism gains momentum



With a full-fledged adventure tourism wing functioning under the Tourism Department, adventure tourism activities in the state have evolved over the years. In the year 2023, the department took a decision to waive off the river rafting fee from rafting operators for all rivers except the Ganga. This fee waiver has generated interest of the rafting operators to start rafting operations in rivers other than the Ganga including Tons, Ramganga and Sharda, thus paving way for rafting activities at many more destinations in addition to Rishikesh.

The National Rafting Championship was held in the Sharda River at Champawat, which saw participation from several teams including a team from Nepal.

The state has organised several paragliding competitions at various locations including Tehri and Pithoragarh

to boost the paragliding activities in the state.

Water Sports activities have been added at Baur Jalashay in Udham Singh Nagar District and more activities are being planned at Tehri-lake. Uttarakhand became the first state to test fly a Gyrocopter from Haridwar. Gyrocopters are light weight helicopters which can fly at low altitudes and can usher a new era in adventure tourism.

The state was awarded the Best Adventure Tourism State in 2023 by Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI).

#ExploreUttarakhand



@DIPR\_UK



## GUEST COLUMN

# Paper mills and gift authors fuelling academic fraud



Onkar Singh

mercial entities called paper mills.

Ideally, the egregious act of getting one's academic and research work done by someone on payment or other consideration/obligation and submitting it in one's own name is forbidden and academics never approve it. However, the emboldening of paper mills and consultants for fearlessly canvassing as part of their business to create manuscripts, theses, dissertations, and research papers

peratness of individuals to succeed in earning higher qualifications or have research papers/reports/patents/copy rights in their name irrespective of having the abilities and knowledge drives them towards immoral and untruthful practices. Incompetencies ridden with a desire to decorate testimonials are at the core of ghostwriting. The recognitions secured through enriched profiles though deceptive, motivate many to procure ghost writings. En-

individuals lead to a congenial environment for paper mills, ghostwriters and gift authorship.

To sum up, the freelancer's desire to make money from their intellectual capabilities/experience/understanding and the aspirations of the unfit to earn higher qualifications and strengthen academic/research credentials for any purpose propels the fast-growing menace of paper mills and gift authorships.

stringent peer review to figure out the content created by paper mills or ghostwriters and detecting plagiarism through suitably developed AI-based tools/software may be of help. Educational and research institutions must hold sensitisation training and workshops for emphasising the importance and honesty in authorship and implications of unfair practices in authorships. Counselling services for assisted writing will inculcate learning tendencies and foster a culture of authenticity and originality for quick success. Also, ethical academics and researchers must mentor the young generation, collaborate with them, and only recognise collaborations with due contributions will discourage resorting to shortcuts. De-emphasising the quantity over quality of publications and academic submissions will be self-corrective and dispirit those tempted by paper mills. The post-publication review mechanism may also be thought of for identifying suspicious authorships and blacklisting the evil operators along with its wide publicity in open media will act as a deterrent. Social dejection is likely to play a key role in the self-correction of perilous intellectual dishonesty and nasty means of progression.



stipulates a deeper look into the genesis and flourishing of these practices.

### Why are paper mills and gift authors thriving?

Indisputably, the paper mills and gift authors are being nurtured by its beneficiaries who could be either of the students, teachers, scientists, and professionals interested in strengthening their biodata for getting certain qualifications or due to race of publish or perish. These individuals aspire to get credentials devoid of their intellectual contributions in earning them. Introspection shows that since time immemorial, the academic systems have considered the presentations in examination answer books, project reports, thesis, dissertations, research papers, etc as the culmination of the learnings acquired by the respective students and assess them based on the documentary evidence. Accordingly, the design of the curriculum is done to allow learners to spend the requisite time and gain the desired knowledge before moving on to respective assessment tools. But the des-

couragement of collaborations though intended to share knowledge and use collective wisdom for worthy outcomes of multiple authors is also an enabler for ghostwriting.

The presence of digital platforms, ease of access to content, mutual benefit, free marketplace, etc are also encouraging paid writing business. The availability of knowledgeable and competent persons from academics and other domains with the potential to be ghostwriters on payment or seek favour is powering the paper mills. Further, the assessment attributes of the ranking and accreditation frameworks having significant consideration of research and development outcomes, patents, copyrights, PhD supervision, etc also prompt the institutions to score best on these metrics. It in turn sets compelling circumstances for teachers to look at all possible ways to score well either through genuine or ingenuine routes. Also, the degeneration in moral values and impatience for accomplishments in the

### How to curb paper mills and gift authorships?

The nefarious manipulations to get degrees/diplomas/certificates/research papers/reports/patents or other things to get decorated with either qualifications or research outcomes by ghostwriting vociferate urgent interventions to curb them. Although it is very difficult to stop it completely because of the mutual benefit of the testimonials to gift authors and monetary gain to ghostwriters and paper mills, nevertheless, multifaceted attempts must be made to stop unlawful claimants. Strategies must include a focus on ethical reforms, institutional policies, social perception, and individual character. Authorship guidelines must be embedded with the meticulous criteria for authorship with signed declarations about specific contributions of authors. The provisions for imposing stringent sanctions and penalties on being caught as part of a paper mill or ghostwriter ought to be put in the crime category through laws. Besides the

Looking upon the organised and systemic expansion of paper mills, guest authorship and ghostwriters, the concerted efforts of countries across the world to establish an ethics code and strategize creating awareness about the risks associated with these practices, shutting down companies and punishing individuals selling the papers for academic and professional credit is inevitable. A universally acceptable legal framework with severe consequences for both seller and buyer is essentially required to prevent the proliferation of paper mills, guest authors and ghostwriters.

Given the above, the regulatory bodies, institutions, organisations, academics, the scientific community, and government must deliberate and evolve strategies to get rid of paper mills and guest authorship.

*(The author is the vice chancellor of Veer Madho Singh Bhandari Uttarakhand Technical University. Views expressed are personal)*

## No civil constructions, only natural methods to be used to conserve and rejuvenate natural water sources: DM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In a bid to conserve and rejuvenate natural water sources, Dehradun district magistrate Savin Bansal has announced that no civil constructions will be undertaken for the conservation of streams, springs, rivers and lakes. Instead, natural methods using local soil and stones will be employed to ensure the preservation of their historical and ecological sig-

nal water sources like streams and rivers in Dehradun district.

He urged local residents, social organisations and self-help groups to actively participate in this campaign. The DM also drank water from the historic bawdi during the inspection to symbolise his commitment to the cause. He said that the campaign

nificance of these water sources.

He informed that a survey of 70 water sources, including dharas, naulas and bawdis, was conducted within and around Dehradun city as part of this ongoing campaign. The district administration will continue to conserve these water sources with the help of local communi-



DM Savin Bansal drinks water from the Rajpur Bawdi in Dehradun on Sunday  
Pioneer photo

nificance. He stated this on the occasion of water conservation and revitalisation campaign that started at Rajpur's Bawdi located on Old Mussoorie Road on Sunday.

Bansal, along with social organisations and public service institutions, inspected the site. He also talked about the significance of the initiative, inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for nationwide water conservation efforts and supported by the leadership of chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. He said that effective work plans are in progress to preserve natu-

aims not only to ensure water conservation but also to reconnect local communities with their cultural heritage. He highlighted that by adopting traditional methods, the campaign can provide clean drinking water to both people and animals in their natural habitats.

As part of this initiative, many organisations are working tirelessly to conserve these water bodies through natural and scientific methods. Bansal reiterated that the goal is to use only local materials like soil and stones for conservation efforts to maintain the historical sig-

ties and social organisations. He further stated that environmentalist and Padma Shri awardee Kalyan Singh Rawat of Maiti movement has also been included as a member of the district's water conservation committee to strengthen the campaign. His expertise in water conservation will play a crucial role in ensuring the success of the campaign through natural and scientific means. The ongoing efforts to conserve water sources in Dehradun will be supported and all related expenses are being reportedly borne by the DM from his own resources.

## Many U'khand schools among top 10 in EWISR Respondents queried in 34 cities to rate schools on 14 parameters

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A number of schools in Uttarakhand have made it among the top 10 in the 18th annual EducationWorld India School Rankings (EWISR) released by EducationWorld in association with AZ Research Partners Private Limited. In the vintage legacy co-ed day schools category, Saint Thomas College, Dehradun was ranked fourth in India, rising from the eighth rank last year. Among vintage legacy boys schools, Saint George's College, Mussoorie was ranked third while Saint Joseph's College, Nainital was ranked fifth.

In the vintage legacy girls boarding schools category, All Saints' College, Nainital was ranked first in the nation while Hopetown Girls School, Dehradun was ranked sixth. Vantage Hall Girls Residential School, Dehradun was ranked seventh, The Doon Girls School was ranked ninth and the Guru Nanak Fifth Centenary School, Mussoorie was ranked tenth.

In the co-ed boarding schools category, Selaqui International School, Dehradun was jointly

ranked second along with Chinmaya International School, Coimbatore while Kasiga School, Dehradun was ranked third. In the international residential schools category, Mussoorie International School was ranked second jointly with Good Shepherd Resident School, Ooty.

In the vintage legacy international residential schools category, the Woodstock School was ranked first in the nation. Among the government board schools, the Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun was ranked second while Oak Grove School, Dehradun was ranked fourth. In the philanthropy schools category, Him Jyoti School, Dehradun was ranked number one in the nation. A sample database of 8,700 respondents including 5,150 parents and 3,550 education professionals across 34 cities in India were surveyed to rate the top 4,000 schools on 14 parameters of excellence for this survey.

## Warm day likely in Doon today, light rains forecast in four districts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A day after comparatively lower temperatures, the maximum and minimum temperatures rose two and three degrees Celsius above normal respectively in Dehradun on Sunday. No significant rainfall was reported in the State on Sunday. Meanwhile, the State meteorological centre has forecast the possibility of very light to light rain/thunderstorms likely to occur at isolated places in Pithoragarh, Bageshwar, Nainital and Dehradun districts on Monday. Dry weather is likely to prevail in the remaining districts of the State today. The provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to witness a mainly clear to partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 33 degrees Celsius and 23 de-

grees Celsius respectively in Dehradun today. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in various parts of the State on Sunday were 32.3 degrees Celsius and 23.2 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 32 degrees Celsius and 23.3 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 22.6 degrees Celsius and 13.2 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 25.3 degrees Celsius and 16.1 degrees Celsius in New Tehri. The maximum temperature dropped by a degree Celsius while the minimum rose by two degrees in Pantnagar while in Mukteshwar the maximum and minimum temperatures rose by a degree each. The maximum temperature dropped by a degree and the minimum temperature rose by a degree Celsius in New Tehri.

## Vendors in Doon gear up for festival & wedding season

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

With only a few days remaining in the Pitra Paksha (Shraddh) period, the vendors in the prominent markets of Dehradun have prepared themselves for the imminent wedding and festive season. Many vendors are aiming to attract a higher number of customers during these celebratory occasions. They have also expressed their confidence in recouping the sales lost during the Shraddh period when people traditionally avoid new purchases.

A cloth shop owner in Paltan Bazaar, Roni Narang, noted a decrease of 30 to 40 per cent in business since the beginning of Pitra Paksh. Nevertheless, he has observed a continued interest from customers in purchasing

new clothing for the upcoming wedding and festive season, despite not making immediate purchases. In anticipation of this demand, he has made advance bookings for new stock scheduled to arrive during Navratri set to start on October 3. In order to enhance customer traffic and stimulate business growth, he has made necessary preparations for the upcoming season, Narang added.

The owner of a footwear shop, Sanjay Verma said that he has purchased new stock for the coming wedding and festive season. However, he has chosen not to open the stock yet due to the Shraddh period, as customers may not buy during this time and the stock may later

appear outdated. Verma plans to unveil the new stock as soon as the festive season begins to attract customers. Additionally, he has also arranged for more stock for the upcoming weddings, he added.

Many other shopkeepers of clothing, footwear and cosmetics have also expressed their anticipation for increased sales in the coming days. Similarly, there is excitement also at shops selling Pooja items. At one such shop on Raja Road, the owner Pankaj Pal added that the sale of pooja materials typically increases during festive seasons like Navratri and Deepawali. The festive season is approaching, and they are ready to provide new pooja materials, decorative Thalīs for Arti and more.





### Saving Sunita Williams

Relying on her mental fortitude, Sunita has not only survived the ordeal but plays a crucial role in her rescue

It is heartening to hear that Sunita Williams will be back home soon. Elon Musk's SpaceX has launched a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida to rescue two astronauts stranded in the International Space Station (ISS). The mission aims to retrieve American astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams, who have been stranded on the International Space Station for months due to issues with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft.



Sunita Williams, a veteran of two spaceflights and a woman who has spent over 300 days in space, embarked on her latest mission with the confidence and expertise that comes from years of training and commitment.

Her resilience, mental fortitude, and the ability to maintain calm in even the most extreme conditions became the defining elements in her survival. Williams is no stranger to adversity. The daughter of Indian and Slovenian immigrants, she broke barriers early in her career by rising to prominence in a male-dominated field.

### PICTALK



Artistes perform 'Mahishasur Mardini' act ahead of Durga Puja festival, in Nadia district

# Transforming India through 'Make in India'



PIYUSH GOYAL

The 'Make in India' initiative has completed 10 years of transformative impact. PM Modi's vision has ignited a revival in manufacturing and spurred job creation

On September 25, the country observed 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's game-changing 'Make in India' initiative that is transforming India's industrial landscape by encouraging job-creating investments and giving many ordinary citizens the confidence to become wealth creators.



The economy was down, confidence was shattered, headlines were dominated by a regular dose of corruption scandals, inflation was soaring, interest rates were high and the rupee had an uncertain outlook.

That is when the PM launched the 'Make in India' initiative. Ten years has been a remarkable journey, but it would not have been possible for the multidimensional and transformative changes done by the Modi government.

India sharply improved its rank in the World Bank's Doing Business Report from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd in 2019. The government's Startup India initiative

has encouraged many job seekers to become job creators with the help of Startup India initiative. This has helped the number of recognised startups increase to 1,40,803 in June this year, bringing in investments, and creating more than 15 lakh jobs.

These startups are driving the innovation ecosystem in the country, working on solutions to pressing issues in areas such as sanitation, space navigation, reducing food wastage, improving access to healthcare, and empowering women.



MANY COUNTRIES ARE KEEN TO SIGN TRADE DEALS WITH INDIA. THE WORLD IS NOW LOOKING AT INDIA AS A MANUFACTURING DESTINATION. AND THE KEY REASON FOR THIS INTEREST IS INDIA'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND ROBUST ECONOMIC FUNDAMENTALS

and ensure their global competitiveness. PLI schemes have resulted in Rs 1.32 lakh crore in investment and a significant boost in manufacturing output of around 11 lakh crore.

The Prime Minister's initiatives on infrastructure have been another shot in the arm of Indian manufacturing, apart from generating demand for goods and services, infrastructure development is a major facilitator of industrial activity.

opportunity to grow their business. There is a flurry of activity in the investor community. A series of delegations is visiting India, hungry for opportunities to invest and participate in the Indian growth story.

The world is now looking at India as a manufacturing destination. And the key reason for this interest is India's competitive advantage and robust economic fundamentals. Today, inflation is under control, economic growth is strong and the Modi government is following strict fiscal discipline.

(The writer is Minister of Commerce and Industry; views expressed are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Breaking life into small steps for lasting fulfillment

Happiness is actually the most important project of life. True contentment comes from savouring each step, no matter how small

Happiness is the most important project of life. It should be broken up into smaller activities to attain the eventual goal. The only time that we probably understand this is in our childhood. As a child, I had intuitively learned the art of allocating the hours of the day for various activities, like waking up, getting ready and spending time in school.



improvement over the 60 per cent in the previous one. Each resolution would fly out of the window within the first few months. I had forgotten to take small steps to reach the end destination. Things did not improve even after I started working.

no one any wiser to my shenanigans. I was fooling only myself. I quit my railway job to join a government company working in the execution of construction projects. I was exposed to software-based project management tools for the first time.



SANJAY CHANDRA

called it quits after we had reached 1000 odd activities. It was a revelation to me. I now appreciated the time that my wife spent planning the daily household chores. The exercise in project management also brought into stark focus all the wrong I was doing while making my New Year resolutions and the To-Do Lists, and more importantly, living my life.

I now understand why we remain unhappy most of the time. We forget to derive joy out of each step that we take, however small it may be. The young of today are far more mature. Hina Khan, a young actor, recently diagnosed with cancer, is a courageous woman fighting all that life has to throw at her.

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

### QUAD STRENGTHENS INDIA'S ROLE

Madam — China's aggressive posture has consistently threatened peace in the Indo-Pacific region. India, has faced quite a few challenges from the latter. It is a matter of pride that New Delhi is looked upon by other countries to be their firm partner on global platforms to tackle Beijing's economic and military prowess.

### TOP COURT REJECTS GUJARAT PLEA

Madam — The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea filed by the Gujarat government seeking a review of the court's verdict, which contained certain observations against the State while quashing the remission granted to 11 men convicted of raping Bilkis Bano and murdering seven of her family during the 2002 riots.

## Durga Puja has transformed



This is in response to the article titled 'A symphony of tradition and transformation' (September 29). In the mid-1980s, Durga Puja used to get celebrated with utmost devotion according to rituals with dominance of Bhakti encompassing both the organisers and public.

that there is no error apparent on the face of the record or any merit in the review petitions, warranting reconsideration of the order impugned. The review petitions are, accordingly, dismissed and it is a landmark decision.

### TOURISM EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT

Madam — Tourism plays a pivotal role in the global economy acting as a bridge between cultures and fostering economic growth in various regions. It contributes approximately 10 per cent to the world's GDP and generates millions of employment opportunities, especially in rural and less developed areas.

commence with rendition of Sanskrit mantras and people used to start flocking to the pandals. But in last 4 decades all things associated with Durga Puja have undergone a sea change! Far from commencing the Puja on Saptami morning, many pandals and idols now open up for public 'consumption' right from the Mahalaya itself thereby 'promoting' 4-day Puja to a 'modern' 10-day extravaganza!

By integrating tourism studies into academic curricula, institutions can equip students with essential skills in areas such as sustainable tourism practices, travel management and hospitality management.

### Tanisha Gupta | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



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### FIRST COLUMN

## HARNESSING INNER POTENTIAL

The human mind is still an enigma. It has enormous potential and is a reservoir of energy



RAVI VALLURI

His alcoholism became a quotidian habit. Dharmendra was making a last-ditch effort as he boarded a flight from Jaipur to the Art of Living Ashram in Bangalore. Fortuitously, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar had given him an appointment at 4 PM that evening. Stinking of liquor, and reeking of stale cigarettes, with an unsteady gait he landed at Bangalore airport. He needed a physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional, parachute. Only a 'Master' through grace could provide such a life support system. For some time, my friend was trying to seek redemption from the lethal disease of alcoholism. My inventory list was prepared: join a rehab, attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and undertake the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living.

Gurudev advanced the appointment to 11 AM., and after one glance asked my friend to get admitted to the Ayurveda Hospital in the Ashram for a complete detoxification of body, mind, and soul, and after a 15-day rehab to undergo the Happiness Programme. The Guru had scripted a change in the life of Dharmendra, it was for his mind to grab the opportunity. But the monkey mind invented an excuse and Dharmendra left the Ayurveda Hospital and once again indulged in brinkmanship.

He could not draw the redlines or flag the issues confronting his mind and succumbed to temptation. While the brain is an organ that serves as the centre of the nervous system, the mind is the faculty of consciousness and thoughts. It is an individual's intellect, memory or attention span and will, whose potential needs to be enhanced or live in the past. Such individuals are unable to break the patterns and barriers of their comfort zone. Their prana levels



are exceedingly low and the pendulum of their mind's swings to the past. The moot question is how we use this enormous energy. If we look at the brighter aspects of life, such mental imagery works miraculously. Over some time the mind feels blessed, gains in abundance and becomes grateful. This is what Masters refers to as the

#### Law of Attraction

The Law of Attraction remains an illusion if it is not in conjunction with the Law of Gratitude. Both these laws operate in tandem and will fuel inner potential to harness growth leading to robust minds. Low and the pendulum of their minds swings to the past. They carry the burden of the past and attempt a course correction without any professional help (Guru) displaying false bravado in their imaginary worlds. They invariably try to also change the behavioural patterns of those close to them, essentially to market their point of view. Such minds invariably resort to shortcuts in life, trying to please everyone without any success. Ignoring the larger picture, this is a cunning and selfish mind, which does not trust anyone: basically, short of confidence and haunted by fear. The human mind is an enigma. It has enormous potential and is a reservoir of energy. The moot question is how we use this enormous energy. If we look at the brighter aspects of life, such mental imagery works miraculously. Over some time the mind feels blessed, gains in abundance and becomes grateful. Positive thoughts beget positivity and have a spiralling effect. The jigsaw puzzle of life gets sorted out. This is what Masters refer to as the Law of Attraction. The Law of Attraction remains an illusion if it is not in conjunction with the Law of Gratitude. Both these laws operate in tandem.

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

# Can India become a manufacturing hub?

Growth is driven by strong domestic demand, export potential, government infrastructure efforts, private sector investment, and initiatives like 'Make in India'



UTTAM GUPTA



According to a Study Report by IDBI Capital, India is set to add US\$ 1 trillion to its gross domestic product (GDP) every 18 months over the next six years. It goes on to say that "with this momentum, the country is on track to become a US\$ 10 trillion economy positioning itself as the world's third-largest economy by 2030". Currently, India has a GDP of US\$ 4 trillion. The report has also highlighted that "India's accelerated growth will be driven primarily by the manufacturing sector, which is projected to contribute 32 per cent to the incremental Gross Value Added (GVA)". It adds "India will overtake the top five economies in manufacturing IIP (Index of Industrial Production) viz. US, China, Germany, South Korea and Japan...". Manufacturing essentially involves the production of a wide spectrum of consumer products, industrial machinery and so on.

It is the most important component of Industrial activity at a broader level which also includes Construction (primarily building infrastructure); Logistics (transportation and storage of goods); Aerospace (aircraft and spacecraft etc) and maintenance and services required to support industrial activities. The contribution of the Industrial sector to India's GDP is around 30 per cent of which manufacturing alone is 17 per cent. The share of Agriculture and allied activities in GDP is around 18 per cent. The remaining 52 per cent comes from the Services sector (SS).

The SS encompasses 'intangible' services such as education, health, entertainment, hospitality and tourism, banking, insurance and so on.

While, all three sectors play a crucial role in growth, creating jobs and increasing incomes, manufacturing can provide a more sustainable basis for providing jobs and surety of income. This is in sharp contrast to agriculture which is fundamentally a seasonal activity and economic fortunes are largely tied to how monsoon pans out. Manufacturing can also provide a good buffer for absorbing the excess workforce from agriculture with positive spin-offs even for the latter in terms of higher productivity and income. Within the manufacturing sector, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) occupy a pivotal position. The



**WHILE, ALL THREE SECTORS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN GROWTH, CREATING JOBS AND INCREASING INCOMES, MANUFACTURING CAN PROVIDE A MORE SUSTAINABLE BASIS FOR PROVIDING JOBS AND SURETY OF INCOME**

MSMEs are ancillary units engaged in the production, manufacturing and processing of goods and commodities (mostly intermediate goods) which are supplied to large enterprises or master units. These units operate on a small scale and are further categorized into micro, small and medium enterprises depending on the 'investment' and 'turnover' threshold. According to the Ministry of Statistics & Program Implementation, the share of MSME manufacturing output in all India Manufacturing output is around 36 per cent. The share of export of MSME-specified products in all India exports has oscillated between 44 - 50 per cent during the last couple of years. As for employment, according to a report released by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), MSMEs in India contribute 62 per cent to the total. Yet, in the past, manufacturing hasn't been given the desired push. Its low contribution of 17 per cent in GDP and even lower share of total employment at about 10 per cent says it all.

Now, India aiming at the generation of 32 per cent of the incremental GVA from manufacturing shows its determination to put in the effort during the next six years or so, which is nearly double what it has done cumulatively to date. At this pace, by 2030, the share of manufacturing in GDP will have reached 26 per cent (4x0.17+6x0.32)/10.

**Is it doable?** The factors that can make it happen are robust domestic demand; strong export potential; heavy lifting by the Central Government (plus support to States) by building infrastructure; increasing investment by the private sector; key initiatives such as 'Make in India' playing a pivotal role in bolstering the country's manufacturing capabilities underpinned by the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes; India taking up a lead role in recalibrating global supply chains to position the country

as a global manufacturing hub; giving a boost to the micro small and medium enterprises (MSME) and so on. Nearly 70 per cent of India's GDP is driven by domestic consumption; Stimulating demand holds the key to putting manufacturing on an 'accelerated' and 'sustained' growth trajectory. For this, not only people's income should grow, but it should also be evenly and widely distributed. What do the facts speak? According to an Oxfam report, 'Inequality Kills', the collective wealth of India's 100 richest people in 2021 hit a record high of US\$ 775 billion or over 25 per cent of India's GDP. This shows the extreme inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth. There are other pointers to confirm that this is indeed so. According to an analysis of the financials of India's largest companies - those comprising the BSE 500 index - over five years, the profits of corporations included in this index more than doubled from Rs 480,000 crore during 2017-18 to Rs 1000,000 crore during 2021-22, whereas their revenue growth was only 47 per cent.

This means that payments to factors of production other than the owners of capital such as to employees/workers, etc., have been kept under a tight leash, resulting in a disproportionate boost to profits. The aggregate dividend paid by these firms increased from Rs 176,000 crore during 2017-18 to Rs 302,000 crore during 2021-22, which is an increase of 72 per cent. In those five years, cumulatively, they paid 34 per cent of aggregate net profit as dividends. This is an unusually high payout ratio - even higher than 30 per cent paid by the world's largest companies in America's S&P 500.

The products made in India need to be priced low if they are to be competitive. But, there are three major reasons as to why prices are downward inflexible. First, several big businesses operating in metals

such as copper, zinc, aluminium or hydrocarbons like oil and gas, enjoy a natural monopoly enabling them to set high prices. Firms in the chemical, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical and agrochemicals sectors also charge more courtesy, high tariffs on imports and licensing and registration requirements. Second, you have the impact of high taxation particularly when it comes to petroleum products. These are taxed under the pre-GST regime leading to the high incidence of 80 per cent of the ex-refinery price of petrol (Delhi). Ditto in the case of diesel. Increasing the cost of the movement of goods raises the cost of almost every manufactured item. Third, how can one be oblivious of the exorbitant power tariff set in double digits in many states? The power distribution companies or discoms (mostly owned and controlled by the States) are forced to charge high rates on supplies to industries as they have to make up for the under-recoveries incurred on supplies to farmers and households, either free or at a heavily subsidized price.

Finally, industries are operating in highly interesting environments. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has kept the policy rate (the interest rate at which it lends money to banks) unchanged at a high of 6.5 per cent along with a 'withdrawal of accommodation' stance (a jargon for tight liquidity) for nearly 20 months. This leads to high cost loans to all industries across the board. The MSMEs are more vulnerable to all the above cost-push factors. To add salt to the injury, they get delayed payment for their dues from large firms. Unless the above fault lines are addressed, Initiatives under 'Make in India' won't yield the desired result and India becoming a manufacturing hub of the world will remain a distant dream.

*(The writer is a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)*

# India's education system must prioritise learning over infrastructure

Despite schools being filled with students, foundational skills like basic literacy and numeracy continue to lag

Since gaining independence, India has made significant strides in the field of education, especially in terms of infrastructure and expanding access to schools. Classrooms now accommodate children from all walks of life, and government initiatives have succeeded in bringing millions of students into the education system.

However, despite these achievements, a critical component remains neglected—the quality of learning. Infrastructure may be flourishing, but the foundational skills that students require for future success often lag behind. To understand this, imagine a farmer who diligently sows seeds in well-tilled soil, only to find the harvest insufficient because the seeds weren't suit



ASHU KAPOOR

ed to the soil. In the same way, India's educational progress in infrastructure is commendable, but the students' foundational skills—the seeds of education—are still not producing the robust results we hope for. Year after year, surveys like the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and the National Achievement Survey (NAS) reveal a startling reality: a large proportion of students struggle with essential

skills like basic literacy and numeracy.

These are the building blocks of education, without which the entire edifice remains shaky. Students are spending years in school, but many are not learning at the expected level. The alarming gap between schooling and actual learning points to a crucial flaw in the system. If foundational skills are not nurtured early on, the benefits of educational progress will remain elusive, much like the farmer's poor harvest.

The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings a renewed sense of hope. It promises transformative change and a shift towards a system that values not just access to education but the quality of learning.

Together with the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational and School Education, NEP 2020 emphasizes the need to measure educational progress through well-designed assessments and to tailor interventions accordingly.

The goal is clear: to raise a generation of learners who are not only equipped with knowledge but also the critical thinking skills required to thrive in the modern world. Research consistently shows that assessments play a transformative role in improving education. Their primary goal is not to rank students or schools but to provide insights into where learners stand on their educational journey. By identifying what students know and can do at individual, school, and

system levels, assessments offer a roadmap for educators to develop targeted interventions that can address specific learning gaps.

In the quest to transform learning, large-scale assessments like ASER and NAS will be pivotal. ASER, a household-based survey, provides insights into basic literacy and numeracy skills, while NAS offers a broader view of students' achievement of curricular outcomes. Recently, the State Educational Achievement Survey (SEAS) was conducted by NCERT to provide state-level insights into educational progress.

Simply generating report cards on students' performance is not enough. The data must be used to inform policy decisions and to implement specific

interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes. If not, students will continue to face the same challenges year after year, with little improvement. Large-scale assessments should be seen as the first step in a larger strategy to address educational inequities.

While NAS offers a broad overview of the education system, state-level assessment surveys (SAS) have the potential to zoom in on specific issues at the school level. NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of these surveys and recommends that each state conduct its own census-based assessment to drive continuous improvement. By focusing on local contexts, SAS can provide valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by

individual states, enabling more targeted interventions. However, the effectiveness of SAS depends on how well states define their objectives. To make SAS truly impactful, states need to align their assessment frameworks with clear objectives. A well-designed assessment should consider the needs of the educational system at the state level, and the data collected should be used to support and improve schools, rather than ranking them. India's states would do well to ensure that all stakeholders in the education system—teachers, school administrators, and district-level educators—are trained in data use and analysis.

The road ahead is challenging, but the promise of census-based state assessments is

transformative. By monitoring student progress and providing data-driven insights, SAS can reshape India's educational landscape. When combined with national-level assessments like NAS, SAS has the power to create a more responsive, equitable education system. With a strategic approach and strong governance, India can ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

*The writer is a Research Fellow at Australian Council for Educational Research (India) and a former Senior Academic Consultant at NCERT and Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Views are personal. Inputs by Dr Priyanka Sharma, Director ACER (India)*











# BREAKING THE CYCLE THE URGENT NEED TO COMBAT ANAEMIA

## ANEMIA SYMPTOMS AND CAUSES

### SYMPTOMS

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Cold hands, feet
- Irregular heartbeat

### CAUSES

- Nutrient deficiencies
- Blood loss
- Health conditions
- Menstrual periods
- Women pregnancy

In a world where health often takes a backseat to the demands of modern life, anaemia has emerged as a silent epidemic writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

In today's fast-paced world, many individuals struggle to prioritize their health and wellness, particularly those aged 21 to 50. This neglect can lead to significant health issues, including a common yet often overlooked condition: anaemia. Anaemia, characterized by a reduced number of red blood cells or malfunctioning red blood cells, can have serious implications for one's health. The latest statistics from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), conducted from 2019 to 2021, reveal a staggering prevalence of anaemia in India: 57% of women aged 15 to 49 and 25% of men in the same age group are affected. The figures are even more alarming for specific demographics, with 67% of children aged 6 to 59 months, 59% of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years, and 52% of pregnant women aged 15 to 49 years being anaemic. Given these statistics, it is imperative to raise awareness and break the cycle of anaemia, particularly among pregnant women who are set to bring new life into the world. The symptoms of anaemia can

significantly impact daily life, including fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, pale skin, cold extremities, dizziness, rapid heartbeat, and difficulty in concentrating. These symptoms create a vicious cycle: anaemia leads to weakness, which in turn results in laziness and decreased productivity, ultimately affecting one's overall well-being and work output. To address this critical issue, a roundtable discussion titled "India's Silent Epidemic: Raising Awareness & Fostering Urgent Action Against Anaemia" was convened. The panel of experts included Dr Manju Puri, Director Professor of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi; Dr Tulika Seth, Professor of Haematology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences; Dr Sarath Gopalan, Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist at Madhukar Rainbow Children's Hospital, New Delhi; and Dr William Joe, Assistant Professor at the Population Research Centre, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi. The experts identified iron deficiency as the primary cause of anaemia. They

emphasized that one can have normal haemoglobin levels yet still be iron deficient. This situation is like to an iceberg, where anaemia is merely the visible tip. For instance, a person with a haemoglobin level of 12 could still suffer from iron deficiency. By administering iron supplements, their iron stores may improve, alleviating many symptoms, even if the haemoglobin level changes only slightly. Dr Tulika Seth highlighted the need for greater awareness regarding iron-rich foods. She noted that even educated individuals often struggle to name two iron-rich foods. "Unless you know about red meat and similar options, you're unlikely to consume sufficient amounts," she remarked. The discussion also underscored the significance of dietary counselling to enhance iron intake through improved dietary choices, which is essential for health management. Experts stressed that knowledge and awareness are crucial initial steps toward addressing anaemia. Furthermore, the quantity of nutrient intake was discussed as a pivotal factor. The experts addressed the role of iron supplements, particularly in light of the younger generation's reluctance to

consume leafy vegetables, which are vital for nutrient intake. While supplements can serve as a backup, they cannot replace the benefits derived from natural food sources. In response to inquiries about nutritional solutions and reliance on supplements, Dr Manju Puri noted, "Nutrition alone is insufficient. The government has implemented a supplementary program for vulnerable groups, providing low-cost supplements that are widely available. Even when purchased, they are affordable. It's important to view supplements as a necessary backup." Awareness remains the first step in combating anaemia. By understanding the symptoms, causes, and prevention strategies, individuals can take proactive measures to safeguard their health. Incorporating iron-rich foods—such as leafy vegetables, red meat, and fortified cereals—into one's diet is essential, and supplements can provide additional support when needed. Ultimately, health is one's greatest asset. Individuals are encouraged to prioritize their health by staying informed about anaemia and taking steps to prevent or manage this condition.



## "Nourishing Your Body: The Role of Nutrition in Daily Wellness"

BY **Dr Wajih Mehtab**

In a world filled with fast food, busy schedules, and growing health concerns, the importance of nutrition in our daily lives cannot be overstated. Proper nutrition is the foundation of a healthy body and mind, influencing everything from energy levels to disease prevention. Eating a well-balanced diet is more than just fuelling the body—it's about enhancing overall well-being and leading a vibrant, fulfilling life.

### The Building Blocks of Health

At its core, nutrition provides the essential building blocks our bodies need to function. Carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals all play crucial roles. Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy, while proteins help build and repair tissues. Healthy fats, such as those found in nuts, seeds, and fish, support brain health and protect vital organs. Vitamins and minerals, found in abundance in fruits and vegetables, help regulate processes such as metabolism, immune function, and cell repair. Without these key nutrients, the body struggles to perform its everyday tasks efficiently. Poor nutrition weakens the immune system, slows down healing, and can lead to fatigue, poor concentration, and overall poor health. On the other hand, a diet rich in whole, nutrient-dense foods can optimise energy, mood, and productivity.

### Preventing Chronic Disease

One of the most important reasons to prioritize nutrition is its role in preventing chronic diseases. Conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity are increasingly common, yet many are preventable through better dietary choices. Diets high in processed foods, refined sugars, and unhealthy fats contribute to the development of these diseases, while diets rich in whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables offer protection. The World Health Organization (WHO) stresses that a diet full of fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of heart

diseases and certain types of cancer. Foods high in fiber, like whole grains and legumes, promote healthy digestion and reduce the risk of gastrointestinal disorders. Meanwhile, cutting down on salt, sugar, and saturated fats helps control blood pressure and maintain a healthy weight.

### Mental Health and Nutrition

The link between nutrition and physical health is well-documented, but its impact on mental health is equally significant. Nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish and flaxseeds, and

gives the body a steady supply of energy, while junk food leads to quick energy crashes. Eating a variety of nutrient-rich foods ensures that the body has everything it needs to keep going strong. Complex carbohydrates, such as brown rice and sweet potatoes, provide long-lasting energy. Proteins and healthy fats offer sustained energy release, keeping us feeling full and energised for longer periods. Vitamins and minerals also play a role, helping the body efficiently convert food into energy.

### Practical Tips for a Healthier Diet

Maintaining a nutritious diet doesn't have to be complicated. Simple, mindful choices can make a big difference. Here are a few tips:

**Focus on whole foods:** Prioritise fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Limit processed and packaged foods.

**Eat the rainbow:** Aim to include a variety of colours on your plate. Different coloured fruits and vegetables provide a wide range of vitamins and minerals.

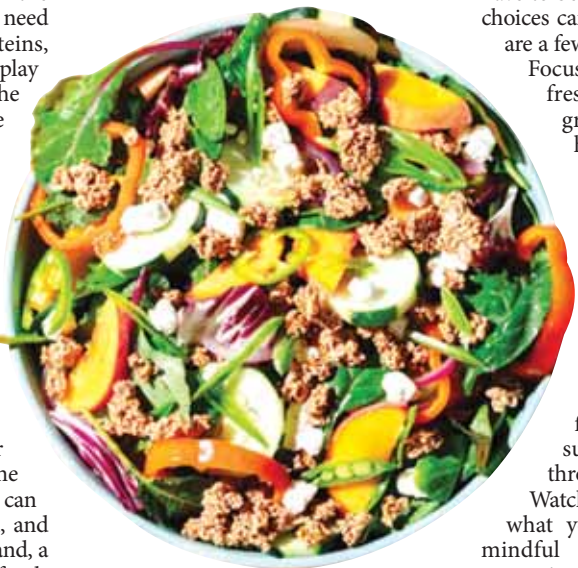
**Stay hydrated:** Water is essential for nearly every function in the body. Make sure to drink enough water throughout the day.

**Watch portion sizes:** It's not just what you eat, but how much. Be mindful of portion sizes to avoid overeating, even with healthy foods.

**Plan ahead:** Planning meals and snacks in advance can help you make healthier choices and avoid unhealthy last-minute options.

Nutrition is a cornerstone of health and wellness. By choosing nutrient-dense, whole foods and avoiding processed alternatives, individuals can significantly improve both their physical and mental health. Good nutrition doesn't just fuel the body—it fuels life, empowering us to live more energetic, fulfilling, and disease-free lives. Prioritising what goes on your plate is one of the most impactful decisions you can make for your long-term well-being.

The author is MSc, PhD, Consultant Nutritionist and Founder & Director, Artisan Academy of Advanced Clinical Nutrition.



## Keeping Fit and Well during the Monsoon Season

BY **Dr Dinesh Kumar Tyagi**

Monsoon is the season that brings a necessary cool to the weather after the scorching summers. Although the weather becomes extremely pleasant, monsoons also open the gate to a plethora of waterborne and viral diseases and infections. The stagnant pools of water the puddles are breeding grounds for germs and bacteria and the humidity becomes another ally of viral infections. Let's discover some tips and habits that can help you avoid monsoon diseases.

A healthy gut ensures a good immune system. It is important to maintain a nutritious diet in all your meals ensuring that you are getting the fats, minerals, and vitamins you need. Eat seasonal fruits and vegetables and avoid oily spicy food that could meddle with your digestion.

Food made at restaurants, streets, or cafe's are usually made in unhygienic conditions. Food made in unhygienic conditions can lead to typhoid, infections as it carries various germs and bacteria. Try to eat home-cooked meals as much as possible and even if you eat out, eat freshly prepared food that is served hygienically to you. Waterborne diseases are very common during the monsoons. Drinking unsafe or impure water from public water coolers can lead you to catch them. Drink safe water from RO or try to get bottled water when you are out and about.

Damp clothes can cause skin infections and even lead to allergies. Wearing dry, clean clothing during rainy seasons is very important. Go for Synthetic, quick-



drying materials as they won't stay damp for long and don't retain moisture like cotton or linen. They help you stay dry and comfortable. Many of us love to enjoy the rain and get drenched in rain like kids. This may seem refreshing but it can lead you to catching cold, fever, and other waterborne diseases, especially during the peak monsoon season downpours. Keeping your umbrella and raincoat handy while going out during monsoons is a power move. It is an easy and effective way of keeping you from getting drenched in the rain and will protect you from exposure of the rain and the atmosphere that weakens your immunity. Viral infections are rampant during monsoon season due to the weather and humidity. Close contact in crowded places during this season should be avoided as that is where you will catch an

infection like swine flu or hepatitis. While monsoons will come and go, life goes on and you will have to go out and interact with people at offices or public spaces or even crowds. All you can do is maintain a good amount of space between you and others to avoid the risk of catching any infections. Make sure you are up to date about getting all your vaccines and booster doses. Outbreak diseases like hepatitis are very common during monsoons. Consult your doctor and make sure that you are not behind on getting any vaccines. Infections through insects like malaria and dengue are rampant during the monsoons. It is important to protect yourself from such diseases. Get a mosquito repellent that you can use in areas where there are a lot of stagnant bodies and

mosquitoes. You can also use nets at night to prevent mosquito bites.

Germs, bacteria, and insects including mosquitoes all have one hotspot during winter that is stagnant water. You should avoid going to water-logged areas during monsoons to avoid all such bacteria and germs and make sure to disinfect yourself properly after you have been through those areas.

It becomes important to cover your full body during monsoons to prevent mosquito bites or fungal infections of any kind. Stick to wearing full-length skirts, t-shirts, and pants to avoid any such issues.

Sunlight, although is very important for us for Vitamin D, during the rainy season the sunlight can weaken your immunity. The combination of sun and humidity after a rain shower can lead to dehydration. Wear shades, apply sunscreen, and try to stay in shaded areas during monsoons as much as possible.

Good sleep is very important for your immune system. Good sleep regenerates your body cells and keeps you body healthy. To avoid catching any viral fevers or infections you should maintain a good sleep cycle. Staying healthy, and maintaining good habits is the crux to staying away from all kinds of fevers, infections, and flu during monsoons. Some habits should be well inculcated like wearing dry clothes and maintaining a safe distance from crowds during the monsoons to stay healthy and safe.

The author is the Additional Director of Internal Medicine at Fortis Hospital, Greater Noida.

# Sri Lanka crushes New Zealand to clinch historic series win

AP ■ GALLE (SRI LANKA)

Sri Lanka stormed to a series victory over New Zealand, securing the two-match test series with a resounding innings and 154-run triumph on the fourth day in Galle on Sunday. This victory, Sri Lanka's most dominant over the Kiwis, also marks their first win against New Zealand in 15 years. The hero of the games, left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya, was named Player of the Series after a masterful performance, claiming 18 wickets across the two matches. Meanwhile, Kamindu Mendis took home Man of the Match honours for his unbeaten 182, anchoring Sri Lanka's colossal total of 602-5 declared. With this knock, Mendis etched his name in history, joining the great Sir Don Bradman as the third joint-fastest player to reach 1,000 test runs. Jayasuriya, who took nine wickets in the first test, was at his best again, snaring



another nine wickets in the second test as New Zealand's batters struggled to cope with Sri Lanka's spin-heavy attack. Debutant Nishan Peiris was the perfect foil, chipping in with nine wickets of his own, including a five-wicket haul in the second innings. "We discussed the need to score big in the first innings. That has been something that has been worrying us for a while. Glad we rectified that this innings," said Sri Lanka captain Dananjaya de Silva. "The spinners were superb. They kept creating pressure and didn't allow New Zealand to get away with things. It was

dominance. Resuming at 199-5, New Zealand lost three wickets before lunch on the fourth day. Despite Sri Lanka's fielding lapses, which saw three catches dropped, they eventually cleaned up after lunch. Jayasuriya removed Ajaz Patel and Peiris took the final scalp of Santner, stumped by Kusal Mendis, sealing the series win for Sri Lanka. "We had our moments in the series, but disappointed with the end result," said New Zealand captain Tim Southee. "That morning session on day three when we lost nine wickets was very disappointing. "There were dropped catches and missed stumpings as well in the Sri Lankan innings and in these conditions when you don't hold onto those chances it is very difficult." With this victory, Sri Lanka has now won three consecutive test matches and bolstered their hopes of qualifying for the ICC World Test Championship final at Lord's next June.

# Indian shooters win two gold medals in Peru

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian shooters began their ISSF Junior World Championship (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun) campaign in Peru on a good note, winning team gold in men's and women's 10m air pistol events, though a potential top-podium finish was lost in the individual category after a marksman was docked two points for reporting late for the final. The junior men's trio of Umesh Choudhary, Pradyumn Singh and Mukesh Nelavalli topped the men's team competition in 10m air pistol with a tally of 1726 points. They finished 10 points ahead of second-placed Romania, while Italy took bronze with a score of 1707. Choudhary though missed a potential individual gold after being penalised two points for reporting late for the final. Choudhary and Singh had earlier made it to the individual finals placed third and fourth respectively in the qualification round. Choudhary shot 580 and



Singh 578 but missed out on individual medals, ending up sixth and eighth respectively. Luca Joldea of Romania won the gold medal, while Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Hsiang-Chen clinched the silver. Nelavalli was ninth in qualification with a score of 574. The combination of Kanishka Dagar, Lakshita and Anjali Chaudhary tallied 1708 to clinch the junior women's 10m air pistol team gold. They

# Wet outfield wipes out play for second day

PTI ■ KANPUR

No play was possible for the second consecutive day in the second Test between India and Bangladesh due to a wet outfield at the Green Park Stadium here. Overnight rain had caused a delay to the start of action but even as the sun was shining bright around 2:00pm and there were no soggy patches on the ground, the officials decided to call off the play. Almost eight sessions have been lost in the game due to persistent rain that has played havoc with the final match of the two-game series. Questions on the drainage system used at the venue have been duly raised. Bangladesh had ended the rain-shortened opening day at 107 for 3. The entire second day was washed out without a ball being bowled, and only 35 overs were bowled on the opening day. India pacer Akash Deep (2/34) and Ravichandran Ashwin (1/22) were among the wickets.

# Champions League returns missing Mbappé, Rodri, Barella as injury wave hits European soccer

AP ■ PARIS

Key players will be sidelined when the Champions League resumes on Tuesday after a wave of injuries within a week of the new-look competition starting. Kylian Mbappé's sore hamstring is likely to sideline him beyond Wednesday when he was due to return to France with defending champion Real Madrid to face Lille. Serious knee injuries mean Manchester City midfielder Rodri is out for the season and Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen will miss at least most of it. The injuries to four players who were involved at the European Championship into the knockout phase have sharpened the debate about player workload in a calendar made more congested by the bigger Champions League. The extended program is what influential clubs all-but forced UEFA to create and the 18 games this week, split between Tuesday and Wednesday, still

leaves each of them with six more to play through January. Another final rematch There were two repeats of past finals in the first week of games that relaunched the Champions League in a single-standings format. Man City and Inter drew 0-0 and Liverpool won 3-1 at AC Milan. The next rematch comes Wednesday when Aston Villa hosts Bayern Munich, a giant of the European Cup era that was shocked 1-0 in the 1982 final. Villa Park will host a first game in the competition since March 1983 when the English side's title defense was ended by Juventus. Both eased to winning starts two weeks ago. Villa won 3-0 at Young Boys and Bayern's nine goals against Dinamo Zagreb was a record for any team in the 33-season Champions League era. Harry Kane scored four in Bayern's 9-2 win and has a good record visiting Villa, with five goals there in five Premier League games for Tottenham. He faces a late check on an ankle injury. Kane edges Haaland Kane's fast start to the season with 10 goals in seven games for Bayern has outpaced even Erling Haaland's 10 in eight games for Man City. Haaland was kept quiet by Inter for the



second time in 16 months, a fact he was reminded of in a post-game talk with the Italian champion's center back Francesco Acerbi, who smiled and held up two fingers. Haaland should find it easier on

for a rare European win by the Scottish champion stood out in an opening week where anticipation was not universal. Pundits including former Man City goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel noted a quietness about the stadium for the Inter game. The attendance was nearly 2,000 higher five days later when Man City met Arsenal in a tempestuous Premier League clash where title ambitions were already in play. Milan-Liverpool was a heavyweight European fixture yet far from sold out, with fewer than 60,000 at San Siro. The crowd topped 70,000 at each of Milan's first two Serie A home games this season, and 66,000 on the equivalent Champions League opening night last season to see another English club, Newcastle. Paris Saint-Germain drew at least 46,000 fans for each home game in Ligue 1 this season — and all three Champions League group-stage games last season — yet fewer than 40,000 were at Parc des Princes to see European debutant Girona two weeks ago. Sporting Lisbon also had 40,000 fans for a Champions League opener against Lille that was 6,000 down on the crowd for a domestic league game against Porto. The attendance and atmosphere trends

will be watched as fans respond to the longer and more expensive program of four Champions League home games. The 36-team standings is set to be more dynamic for the final two rounds in January. Tuesday's games The raucous atmosphere should follow Celtic to Borussia Dortmund whose fans in the Yellow Wall tribune are among the noisiest in Europe. Bundesliga champion Bayer Leverkusen hosts Milan after making a fast star in a 4-0 rout at Feyenoord. San Siro now reverts to Inter to host Red Star Belgrade. Arsenal hosts PSG in a meeting of two teams chasing a trophy they never won. Each was a beaten finalist once. Also, Barcelona hosts Young Boys. Wednesday's games Even without Mbappé, Madrid should have too much for Lille playing in the stadium that hosted basketball group-stage games at the Paris Olympics. Premier League leader Liverpool hosts Bologna, and Girona's first European visitor to the Montilivi stadium is Feyenoord. Dinamo Zagreb fired its coach, Sergej Jakirovic, after the drubbing at Bayern and brought back Nenad Bjelica for a second spell.

# Osasuna stuns Barcelona 4-2 record for best start



AP ■ BARCELONA

Bryan Zaragoza scored one goal and set up another to spark Osasuna's stunning 4-2 win over Barcelona, dealing the Spanish league leader its first loss.

The lightning-fast forward on loan from Bayern Munich crossed for Ante Budimir to open the scoring in the 17th minute. Zaragoza then showed some fancy high-speed dribbling to round goalkeeper Iñaki Peña on the break for 2-0 in the 28th on Saturday. Barcelona youth player Pau Víctor pulled one back for the visitors in the 53rd, but Budimir earned and converted a penalty to put the result beyond doubt in the 72nd. Abel Bretones made it 4-1 in the 85th and substitute Lamine Yamal scored Barcelona's second goal. Barcelona recorded wins in the first seven rounds of the league. An eighth victory would have equaled a club record established in 2013. Barcelona remained atop the league standings at four points ahead of Real Madrid before the defending champion visits Atletico Madrid in a derby on Sunday. Osasuna moved into sixth place and stayed unbeaten in Pamplona in this campaign with four wins and a draw.

# India U17 look to maintain dominance against Bangladesh in final

PTI ■ THIMPHU

India will fancy their chances of maintaining their stranglehold on Bangladesh when the two sides meet in the final of the SAFF U17 Championship here on Monday. India began their tournament nine days ago with a last-gasp 1-0 victory over Bangladesh in the group stage. The same script unfolded last year as well, when the India U16 boys beat their eastern neighbours 1-0 in the first game and then 2-0 in the final. Head coach Ishfaq Ahmed and his boys will hope for a repeat of that on Monday for a successful title defence. For the record, the two teams have met four times in the finals of SAFF men's age-group tournaments, with India winning thrice (U18 in



2019, U20 in 2022 and U16 in 2023) and Bangladesh emerging victorious once (U16 in 2015). "We know Bangladesh are a good side. They did well to come from behind in the semi-final. They had some hiccups but they've been more stable as compared to the other teams. Our win against them is in the past. A final is a different game," said Ahmed in the pre-match

brace put India in control but Nepal didn't go down easily as they kept reducing the Blue Colts' lead. In the end, goals from substitutes Singshokhangjam Rishi Singh and Hemneichung Lunlum sealed the Indian win. Set-pieces are something India have been excellent with so far. They've scored four goals from dead ball situations so far and Ahmed has been delighted with that. In the second semi-final, Bangladesh showed indomitable spirit as they came from two goals down to level it at 2-2 against Pakistan thanks to Md Manik's 74th and 94th minute goals. They then converted all eight of their penalties to cap off a memorable comeback and enter the final.

# Messi scores, Inter Miami moves closer to No. 1 seed with 1-1 draw

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (US)

Lionel Messi moved Inter Miami another step closer to the No. 1 seed for the MLS Cup playoffs. And the MLS single-season points record remains in the club's reach as well. Messi scored in the 67th minute and Inter Miami pushed its unbeaten streak to eight straight Major League Soccer matches with a 1-1 tie against Charlotte FC on Saturday night. It was Messi's 15th goal in 16 league matches this season. Messi became the sixth player in MLS history with at least 15 goals and 15 assists in a single season — and he's done that while missing 15 of Inter Miami's league contests. The tie, combined with

Columbus' 2-2 draw with D.C. United on Saturday, left Inter Miami eight points clear of the Crew for the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference. Inter Miami is also seven points up on the LA Galaxy for the No. 1 overall seed in the MLS playoffs. Inter Miami plays at Columbus on Wednesday, and a win would wrap up the No. 1 overall seed — not just the East, but the Supporters Shield as the regular-season winners as well. Inter Miami (19-4-8) has 65 points with three matches left; Columbus (16-5-9) has 57 points with four matches remaining. "We are playing a great team that is chasing us in the Supporters' Shield," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata"



Martino said. "It is a very important game but so are the games against Toronto and New England. We will be ready for these remaining dates."

But first, the Columbus match looms and Inter Miami knows exactly what's at stake. "It's very important," defender Jordi Alba said. The Supporters' Shield would give Inter Miami home-field edge throughout the playoffs, including for a potential MLS Cup final December 7. And if Inter Miami wins out, it will finish with 74 points — one more than the MLS record of 73 set by New England in 2021. DC United helped Inter Miami a bit on Saturday. Columbus led 2-1 late in the second half but surrendered the tying goal in the 81st minute; otherwise, the Crew could have been two points closer to Inter Miami in the standings and made

Wednesday's match far more interesting. Messi's goal was his typical brilliance. He took a pass near the top of the penalty box, dribbling once and threading his natural left-footed shot between four defenders and into the net to tie the match. It came 10 minutes after Charlotte (11-11-9, 42 points, seventh in the East) struck first, with Karol Swiderski deflecting a shot into the net. But Messi answered, and Inter Miami settled for its third consecutive draw. The team is 5-0-3 in its last eight league matches and 9-1-3 in MLS play since June 1. "Obviously, we are frustrated with the three consecutive ties," Martino said. "But the story continues." There were

two great chances for Inter Miami in the final moments. Messi lobbied for a shot at the gamewinner in the 10th minute of stoppage time, after getting taken down near the top of the penalty area. No foul was called — one almost certainly would have led to a penalty shot opportunity — and about two minutes later, Luis Suarez somehow missed from point-blank range on the final play of the match. The match was the next-to-last of the home regular season slate for Inter Miami. After the showdown at Columbus on Wednesday, the club goes to Toronto on October 5 and then wraps up the 34-match schedule at home against New England on October 19.