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Supreme Court raps Air Quality Commission over stubble burning

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday rapped the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) over its failure to curb air pollution in National Capital Region due to crop residue burning in the neighbouring States and said it needs to be more active in its approach. Expressing dissatisfaction over steps taken by the panel to control pollution, a bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih said CAQM needs to exercise its power under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021.

"There has been total non-compliance of the Act. Please show us a single direction issued to any stakeholder under the Act. We are of the view that though the commission has taken steps, it needs to be more active. The commission must ensure that its efforts and directions issued actually translate into reducing the problem of pollution," the bench said.

The Court added that the CAQM may not be holding sufficient meetings and was hardly issuing enough directions to tackle violations of environmental norms. "The Chairperson present today through VC says that three sub committees are holding only one meeting every three months. They have been assigned important tasks.



FILE PHOTO: PTI

We wonder how they are performing those tasks by meeting only once in three months!" the Court said. SC said efforts are needed to ensure that stubble-burning alternative equipments are used at the grassroots level. The panel must immediately step into action to ensure the equipment provided by the Central Government for avoiding stubble burning are actually used by the farmers, it added. The bench directed the panel to file a better compliance report and posted the matter for hearing on October 3.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, informed the court about the steps taken, such as issuing advisories and guidelines, to control

stubble burning. However, the top court remarked, "It is all in the air, nothing has been shown regarding what has been done in the National Capital Region (NCR) states." Chairman of the Commission for Air Quality Management for NCT of Delhi Rajesh Verma, who was present during the hearing virtually, told the bench that he has held meetings with the deputy commissioners of Punjab and Haryana where incidents of stubble-burning have been reported. The Supreme Court on September 24 asked the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and adjoining areas to explain the steps being taken to curb air pollution caused by crop residue burning.

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Flash flood risk in Bihar, red alert in Mumbai

PNS ■ MUMBAI/ PATNA/ SHIMLA

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday forecast heavy rainfall in parts of Bihar, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh and warned of low to moderate "flash flood risk" in 13 districts of Bihar over the next 24 hours. IMD issued warnings for heavy to very heavy rainfall across Mumbai and Maharashtra, with significant impacts expected over the coming days. Following the recent trend of erratic monsoons, Mumbai is bracing for widespread rain, particularly in the Konkan region, which is anticipated to experience intense downpours today. According to the latest bulletin by the Met Department, a cyclonic circulation lies over north-central Maharashtra, and, under its effect, Maharashtra is expected to witness more downpour in coming days.

Continued on page 2

BJP, Cong crossfire in Haryana poll

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ REWARI/ NEW DELHI

With elections round the corner, BJP on Friday latched on to alleged corruption involving Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's brother-in-law Robert Vadra when the Congress was in power in Haryana by firing a fresh salvo against the Opposition party. Modi during his campaign in Haryana recently had also revived the corruption charges involving him to slam the Congress and its leadership. Vadra has constantly denied allegations of any wrongdoing and accused the BJP of targeting him due to political vendetta.

Echoing Modi's words, Union Home Minister Amit Shah too trained his guns on the grand old party, alleging that "dealers, dalaals and damaad" used to rule the State before the BJP came into power. He also asked Rahul Gandhi if he knew the full form of MSP as he underlined that the BJP government in Haryana was procuring 24 crops at the minimum support price. With the Congress seen to be putting up a strong challenge after registering an impressive performance in the Lok Sabha polls, BJP sought to know who will stop Vadra if the party comes to power again. Haryana had become a hotbed of corruption when it was in power between 2004 and 2014, he said.

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia claimed the election in the State is a fight between "Haryana ka laal" (son of Haryana) and "dalaal" (fixer) of the Gandhi family, as it questioned the Congress leadership's silence on the corruption charges against Vadra and the party's then Government



headed by Bhupinder Singh Hooda. He said people of the State have made up their mind to elect the BJP to power for a third straight term, asserting that the central Government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the State Government headed by Nayab Singh Saini have worked for farmers' welfare. In one case, he noted, Vadra's company allegedly acquired 3.5 acres of land of farmers and the then Hooda Government changed the land use, allowing him to pocket a huge profit by selling the parcel at four times the purchase price.

In another case, farmers resorted to distress selling of their land after the Congress Government in the State issued a notification to acquire their land and then denotified after a builder linked to Vadra bought their land, he alleged.

Rahul on his part stressed the need for simplifying the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and opening up the banking system to small businesses to promote job creation and alleged that Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's "monopoly model" has taken away jobs in the country.

Sharing a video of the "Dogri Dham with RG" event hosted by the All India Professionals' Congress (AIPC) in Jammu on Wednesday, Rahul said that the frustration in the eyes of a young start-up owner from Jammu and Kashmir reflects the struggles of most entrepreneurs and small-business owners in India.

"The systematic attack on small and medium industries through incompetent policies like a bad GST and demonetisation has turned India from a producing economy to a consuming one. At this rate we can neither compete with China nor ensure prosperity for all Indians," he said, adding that India deserves better.

In his rally Shah also attacked the Congress on the issue of corruption, reservation and over Article 370, which he said, the Congress wants to bring it back. Shah claimed the BJP will return to power in Haryana for third time after the October 5 polls.

Continued on page 2

Bangladesh fan heckled in Kanpur test match

PNS ■ KANPUR

A Bangladeshi fan attending the India-Bangladesh Cricket Test match on Friday was rushed to hospital after he was apparently heckled and assaulted inside the stadium. The fan, popular as 'Tiger Robi', was dressed in a tiger's get-up (tiger being the emblem of Bangladesh cricket team) and standing in the C Block balcony of the Green Park stadium where the incident took place.



Israel strikes on central headquarters of Hezbollah

AP ■ BEIRUT

The Israeli military said Friday it carried out an airstrike on the central headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, where a massive explosion levelled buildings in a southern district, sending clouds of orange and black smoke billowing in the skies. The strike in the Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh came shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the UN, vowing that Israel's campaign against Hezbollah would continue. Not long before the explosion, thousands were massed in the suburb for the funeral of three Hezbollah members, including a senior commander, killed in earlier strikes.

There was no immediate word on casualties in the strike. The Israeli army spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, said it targeted the main Hezbollah headquarters, located beneath residential buildings. Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV said four buildings were reduced to rubble in the blast, so powerful that it rattled windows and shook houses some 30 kilometers north of Beirut. Ambulances were seen headed to the scene of the explosions, sirens wailing. Earlier in the day, an Israeli airstrike killed a family of nine in a Lebanese border village, authorities said, as Lebanon struggled to deal with a rising death toll, a wave of tens of thousands fleeing their homes and the possibility of an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah.

Karnataka CM, wife booked in MUDA scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Lokayukta police on Friday registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case, following the court order. A Special Court in Bengaluru on Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Siddaramaiah in the case, setting the stage for filing an FIR against him. The order of the Special Court Judge, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, came a day after the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife BM Parvathi by MUDA. The Special Court, formed to deal exclusively with criminal cases related to former and current MPs/MLAs issued the order directing the Lokayukta police in Mysuru to initiate an investigation on the complaint filed by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna.



The Court issued directions to take up the probe under section 156 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) (that gives a magistrate the power to order an investigation into a cognisable offense and file the investigation report by December 24. "Acting under Sec156(3) of Code of Criminal Procedure, the jurisdictional police i.e. Superintendent of Police, Karnataka Lokayukta, Mysuru is hereby directed to register the case, investigate and to file a report as contemplated under Sec.173 of CrPC, within a period of

three months from today," the court had said. It had listed offences punishable under Sec 120B (Punishment of criminal conspiracy), 166 (Public servant disobeying law, with intent to cause injury to any person), 403 (Dishonest misappropriation of property), 406 (Punishment for criminal breach of trust), 420 (Cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), 426 (Punishment for mischief), 465 (Punishment for forgery), 468 (Forgery for purpose of cheating), 340 (Wrongful confinement), 351 (Assault) and other relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code. The court had also listed offences punishable under sections 9 and 13 the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and under Sec 3, 53 and 54 of the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988 and 3, 4 of Karnataka Land Grabbing Prohibition Act, 2011. Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy, Devaraju (from whom Mallikarjuna Swamy purchased land and gifted it to Parvathi) and others are named in the FIR, official sources said.



BJP councillors Sunder Singh Tanwar(C) along with other BJP councillors flash victory sign after winning the last Standing Committee seat at the Civic Centre in New Delhi on Friday. Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

AAP fumes as BJP bags crucial MCD seat

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After a high-drama voting process, Bharatiya Janata Party's Sunder Singh won the last vacant seat of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) standing committee.- the civic body's highest decision-making body. With this poll result, the BJP now has 10 of its 18 members in the panel while the ruling AAP has only eight. Singh secured 115 votes while in the absence of party councillors, AAP's candidate Nirmala Kumari did not receive any vote. Singh has been elected as the sixth member in the Standing Committee from the House.

The elections for the last seat of the MCD standing committee were held when the post fell vacant after BJP councillor Kamaljeet Sehrawat was elected as the Lok Sabha MP from West Delhi in the general elections earlier this year. The Congress which has eight councillors, boycotted the election.

This was the first time that the election was held without the participation of AAP and Congress councillors. Singh's win — which will be most likely to be challenged in court means the BJP now has control over the Standing Committee, which is widely seen as the real power behind the municipal body.

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Indo-Bangla ties to relish Hilsa on plates

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The much awaited "silver crop" as they call it in Bengal has finally arrived. The much awaited Padma Hilsa or the Hilsa fish of mighty River Padma, perhaps the world's tastiest fish has finally arrived to grace the dishes of Kolkatans. Much to the ecstasy of the Bengali Bhadrakol (gentleman) about 50 tonnes of Padma Hilsa on Friday arrived at the wholesale market juxtaposing the iconic Howrah Station. This is the first consignment of an expected 2,420 tonnes of Hilsa each weighing between 800 gram to about little more than 2 kg that is likely to be sent to India by mid October.

The Bangladesh Hilsa 'swims' to India through a cross current of debates and controversies in that country with a sizeable number of people in the new Bangla regime objecting to the export fearing that the transaction might jack up prices there. However, a top woman politician in the new regime in that country convinced the protesters saying "only Indian can give the best price" for their national fish. True, the mouth-watering flavour of Hilsa remains the same but diplomacy over it has kept on changing over the years. Like during the previous Sheikh Hasina regime consignments of this exquisite fish came to India as a gesture of friendship. But this time round it comes with



Representative Image

a "dose of economics" too says a senior retired diplomat in this side of the border. The export of Hilsa from Bangladesh has seen fluctuations over the years, with a ban in place between 2012 and 2018. However, Bangladesh has made special

exceptions in recent years for Durga Puja, as a gesture of goodwill and cultural diplomacy, said a professor in Dhaka University. Unlike in other parts of India fish is an item of offer to Mother Goddess in Bengal and so "Hilsa will be offered

to Durga who is worshiped besides as a Mother also as the Daughter who is coming home," said an organiser of the South Kolkata Durga Puja committee. Cut to its taste. They say the Padma Hilsa is Noor Jehan (Empress) of all fishes. Not for its stupefying odour. So much so that while being cooked, the aroma of Padma Hilsa can drive the neighbour living several houses apart mad. No wonder why erstwhile Zamindars of eastern Bengal would employ country robbers to rob each others' Hilsa consignments. Legend has it that Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq of Delhi, succumbed to the lure of Hilsa. If stories are to be

believed, then Tughlaq was already suffering from various ailments when he tasted this fish. Mesmerised by its unique taste and flavour, he went on and on for days until he fell to his gluttony. Cut back to the wholesale market the fish is presently selling for anywhere between 1,400 and 1,600 per kg -- with its size varying between 800 gms and 1.2 kgs. "When bigger size will come the price will breach Rs 2,500 ceiling," said Netai Pramanik an importer. "Though we have been eating Hilsa for the past several months, the catches mostly coming from Ganges, Kolaghat and Digha there is nothing Padma Hilsa," said a Jadavpur University professor

whose ancestors hailed from the other side of the border. "The funda is the more the fish -- which comes from the sea -- swims upwards through the river ... the more tasty it is likely to be," he says reminiscing "when there was no Farakka dam the fish would swim as far as Varanasi or even Allahabad, but not today. "You can steam it, you can cook it with poppy seeds, with white mustard paste, with onion and ginger, make a simple curry or even wrap it in banana or Haldi leaves and simply steam it ... it tastes like heaven any day," he says wishing prices to come down below Rs 1,000 "so that the poor man can also have a taste of Hilsa during the Durga Pujas."

HC asks Government to pay ex-gratia to parents of infant killed by dog

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the city government to pay Rs 2.5 lakh ex-gratia to the parents of a five-month-old infant who was mauled to death by a dog, observing that the stray dog menace in the national capital is a serious issue affecting human life and dignity.

The court, which took a sympathetic view and awarded the ex-gratia, said the record does not clarify whether the dog bit the baby was a stray or a leashed canine that was abandoned by its owner.

It further said that the absence of clear evidence establishing the responsibility of State instrumentalities prevents this court from applying the "res ipsa loquitur" (mere occurrence of some types of accident is sufficient to imply negligence) maxim and holding the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) negligent in the case. "Notwithstanding the factual scenario of the present case, before parting, it is pertinent to observe here that the stray dog menace in Delhi is a serious issue affecting human life and dignity. Undeniably, the relationship between humans and dogs is at times a relationship of compassion and unconditional love."

"The responsible authorities should endeavour to manage the menace with the same compassion to ensure equilibrium in the living conditions of both humans and dogs. It cannot be gainsaid that the issue requires a multi-faceted response, fostering an environment of empathy and balanced co-existence," Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav said. The court noted that the stray dog menace and the responsibility of maintaining stray dogs in a safe condition is the subject



matter of various petitions across high courts and the Supreme Court.

It passed the judgement on a plea by the child's mother seeking a compensation of Rs 50 lakh for the tragic death of her five-month-old son who was fatally bitten by the dog in 2007.

The incident took place in the morning when the petitioner's three children, including the infant, were sleeping in their house and the dog entered the room and attacked the baby. When the woman's daughter raised an alarm, the woman and her husband rushed to save the child and the dog ran away.

The infant was taken to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital but later succumbed to injuries. The court did not exercise its discretionary powers to determine negligence on the part of the MCD as it was unclear whether the dog that injured the infant was a stray or a leashed, mad dog abandoned by its owner.

It also pointed out that there was contradiction in the statements

of the infant's parents published in newspapers and in the legal notice and the petition.

The court said the fact that the infant died due to a dog bite is an undisputed fact but the allegation that it was the result of lapse and negligence on the part of the MCD is denied by the agency and the same must be established by pressing in accurate and descriptive facts or documents on record.

The mere fact that the infant died due to the dog bite in his house does not suggest any dereliction of duty or negligence by the official respondents, it said.

"The petitioner is also at liberty to pursue appropriate legal remedies in the civil court. If the petitioner does so, let the competent civil court adjudicate the matter within one year from the date of institution of any such suit."

"It is further clarified that the ex-gratia amount awarded by this court is independent of, and in addition to, any compensation that may be awarded by the civil court," Justice Kaurav said.

Vijender Gupta demands immediate formation of MCD standing committee

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Vijender Gupta, has demanded the immediate formation of the standing committee of the Delhi Municipal Corporation. He stated that due to the absence of this committee, all developmental works carried out by the corporation are at a standstill. Gupta accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of not allowing the formation of ward committees or the standing committee within the municipal corporation. He emphasized that the powers of the municipal corporation are vested in the commissioner, ward committee, and the standing committee, which are responsible for



overseeing all developmental projects. The standing committee alone has the authority to approve development projects worth over Rs five crore. However, since it has not been formed, all such projects have been stalled for nearly 20 months,

causing significant inconvenience to the 20 million residents of Delhi. He highlighted that due to the absence of a standing committee, tenders for garbage collection, maintaining landfills, building roads, and purchasing new equipment are all

stuck. The responsibility for approving tenders and completing the necessary procedures lies with the standing committee. But since the committee hasn't been formed, 97% of developmental work in Delhi has come to a halt.

Gupta also criticized the Aam Aadmi Party, stating that 17 members of the standing committee have already been elected, but the election of the final member is being deliberately obstructed by the AAP. As a result, the previously elected members cannot function, as the standing committee cannot hold meetings or make decisions until all members are in place.

Through the Assembly, he urged the government to expedite the formation of the municipal corporation's standing committee.

'India and Central Asia' book launched

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The "India and Central Asia" book launch event was held at the India International Centre on September 21, 2024. The event was organized by the Literary Club of the Management Education and Research Institute and Unity International.

The event was coordinated by Dr Shikha Gupta (Head of Literary Club) along with Dr Stuti N Markan, Sarita Yadav and Dr Simranjeet Kaur. Dr Rajesh Mehta, Secretary General of Unity International Foundation, welcomed the audience and dignitaries. In his address, he discussed the longstanding friendship and strategic relationship between India and Central Asia, touching on key areas like infrastructure development, educational collaboration, and cultural diplomacy.

The book was officially released by IP Agarwal, Chairman, Management Education and Research Institute. Moreover, Professor Lalit Agarwal, Vice President of the institute, expressed his gratitude to the distinguished guests, including Sadridin L. Suyarov, First Secretary of Uzbekistan, Habib Miezozoda, Charge of Affairs, Tajikistan, and Ashok Kumar, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Finland and Suroram.

Government plans to include AYUSH into Ayushman Bharat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to enhance access to traditional medicine within India's healthcare framework, plans are afoot to include AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) into the central flagship Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY), said Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH, Prataprao Jadhav on Saturday.

Recently, a review meeting was convened to finalize the integration, with 170 AYUSH packages identified for inclusion. A Strategic Purchasing Committee has been established to develop cost structures, ensuring affordability. This initiative aims to enhance access to traditional medicine within India's healthcare framework, he said.

Talking to the reporters here at an event held to showcase the initiative taken by the ministry in the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 Government, the Minister said that 170 packages have already been finalized, with the potential to increase this number based on demand. "To ensure affordability and finalize cost structures for



AYUSH treatments, a Strategic Purchasing Committee has been established," Jadhav said. AB PM-JAY aims to provide health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to approximately 55 crore beneficiaries corresponding to 12.34 crore families constituting the bottom 40% of the population.

The Minister emphasised that health of each and every citizen of the country is important and keeping this in view a special drive has also been initiated to have Prakriti Parikshan, a concept from Ayurveda that involves assessing an individual's unique constitution or "Prakriti". Secretary Ayush Vd. Rajesh Kotecha informed that reflecting the importance and wider acceptance of Ayush

globally, India has signed MoUs with various countries like Vietnam and Malaysia on medicinal plants and Ayurveda respectively.

India is also promoting the "One Herb, One Standard" Initiative wherein the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) and the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) signed a pact with an aim to improve quality of medicines in the sector.

The Ministry also intends to open special medical stores at every tehsil level. "Access to a variety of herbal and traditional medicines will be made possible by these stores, improving public healthcare in both urban and rural areas," he added.

Also, according to the report received from the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH), the evaluation of 1489 Ayushman Arogya Mandir (Ayush) has been completed, and 1005 of these AAM (Ayush) have been certified for Ayush Entry Level Certification (AELC), he said.

This initiative is an important step in ensuring quality healthcare services under the National Ayush Mission.

Tamil Nadu CM meets Prime Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Friday and sought early release of pending funds for Chennai metro and integrated education initiatives, besides an intervention to protect Tamil fishermen.

The DMK president, who described the meeting as "purposeful", presented a detailed report on three main issues. "The Prime Minister listened patiently," Stalin told reporters after the meeting. The chief minister sought the speedy release of funds for the Chennai metro project as Rs 18,544 crore has already been spent so far.

The state government wants to start work on the second phase of the Chennai metro and the non-disbursement of the pending dues has "caused a delay in the works, he emphasised.

About the integrated education initiative, Stalin highlighted the hold-up in the first installment of the 60:40 Centre-State funded programme.

He clarified that while Tamil Nadu has incorporated positive elements of the National Education Policy, it has not accepted the trilingual policy.

"We have asked for a correction in the MoU to explicitly state that there will be no language imposition," the chief minister added.

While discussing the plight of Tamil fishermen facing arrest by the Sri Lankan Navy, Stalin requested Modi's personal intervention while stating that 191 fishing boats and 145 fishermen have been captured. He sought a resolution of the matter at the upcoming India-Sri Lanka joint committee meeting in Colombo next month. After his meeting with Modi, Stalin said the prime minister has assured him of considering all three demands.

The Tamil Nadu chief minister later met Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, ahead of an opposition rally in Kancheepuram on September 28. He also met the family of CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury who died recently.

Flash flood risk...

From page 1

Heavy rain is likely in West Champaran, East Champaran, Sitamarhi, Sheohar, Muzaffarpur, Gopalganj, Siwan, Saran, Vaishali, Patna, Jehanabad, Madhubani and Bhojpur districts, it said in a bulletin. These districts are at the risk of "low to moderate flash floods in the next 24 hours", the Met Department said. A large number of people from the affected districts have been evacuated and

brought to relief camps. The Shimla meteorological department issued a 'yellow' alert for heavy rains at isolated areas of Himachal Pradesh. A total of 47 roads including National Highway 707 were closed for vehicular traffic in Himachal Pradesh following rains, officials said on Friday.

The highest number of 25 roads were closed in Sirmour, including NH 707 connecting Hatkoti in Shimla district and Paonta

Sahib in Sirmour district, ten in Kangra, eight in Mandi, two in Kullu and one each in Kinnaur and Shimla districts, according to the State emergency operation centre (SEOC). Officials said that 185 people died in rain-related incidents since the onset of monsoon in Himachal Pradesh on June 27 till Thursday evening, while 28 were missing. The State has suffered losses to the tune of Rs 1,332 crore, they said.

BJP, Cong crossfire...

From page 1

"Congress Governments used to run on the basis of cut, commission and corruption while dealers, dalals (middlemen) and 'damads' used to rule. Under BJP Government, there are no dealers, 'dalals' while there is no question of 'damad'" the senior BJP leader said.

Referring to Rahul Gandhi's recent US visit, Shah said whenever he wants to say anything "rubbish" 'ool jaloof', he says in America. Shah accused Rahul of saying that he would end reservation of SC, ST and OBC.

The Shah also raised the issue of some rebels contesting as independents by breaking the party discipline and appealed to the people of Rewari to

vote only for candidates who have the BJP symbol. He appealed to people to make BJP candidates Laxman Yadav (Rewari), Krishan Kumar (Bawal) and Anil Yadav (Kosli) victorious in the polls.

Predicting a "massive mandate" for the Congress in the Haryana Assembly polls, former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the final decision on the chief ministerial pick would be taken by the party high command and it would be acceptable to him.

Asked about the Prime Minister's attack on the Congress over infighting, the former Haryana Chief Minister said there was no internal rift and the Congress was united.

Supreme Court raps Air Quality...

From page 1

The Supreme Court had earlier noted that stubble burning was one of the causes for a spike in air pollution in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh due to vacancies. It directed the five NCR states to fill the vacant posts urgently, preferably before April 30, 2025.

The top court had directed the CAQM chairperson to file an affidavit explaining the steps the commission proposes to take to check the air pollution menace, often attributed to the burning of paddy straw in States adjoining the national Capital.

and enforcement to be constituted by the CAQM would function due to lack of representation from the pollution control boards of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh due to vacancies. It directed the five NCR states to fill the vacant posts urgently, preferably before April 30, 2025.

The top court had directed the CAQM chairperson to file an affidavit explaining the steps the commission proposes to take to check the air pollution menace, often attributed to the burning of paddy straw in States adjoining the national Capital.

BrahMos to reserve seats for former Agniveers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indo-Russian joint venture BrahMos Aerospace, which manufactures BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, has decided to reserve vacancies for former Agniveers, including in the technical, administrative and security wings of the company.

The BrahMos Aerospace became the first leading company in the defence sector to announce reserving vacancies for Agniveers in a range of verticals. An office order by the company said at least 15 per cent of vacancies in technical and general administration will be reserved for the

Agniveers. It further said 50 per cent of the vacancies in administrative and security roles, including in outsourced functions, will be reserved for them.

BrahMos is encouraging its more than 200 industry partners to reserve 15 per cent of their workforce for Agniveers in roles tied to BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited (BAPL) requirements, the office order said.

"In consonance with the Government of India's Agnipath Scheme, BrahMos Aerospace announces its new policy guidelines to provide reservation to the Agniveers who, after serving in the Indian armed forces for a tenure of four years, can



become a valuable asset for our cutting-edge defence organisation working towards nation-building," the company said in a social media post. "Agniveers, with their rigorous, time-bound training in military tactics,

technical proficiency, discipline and quick adaptability, will be the backbone of India's growing defence and industrial sectors."

"As India continues its journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, the contribution of #Agniveers in industries like ours will be pivotal in shaping the country's future," it said.

BrahMos Aerospace said it strongly believes that Agniveers will not only fill the skill gap at the grassroots level for the Indian defence industries but also provide a dedicated workforce that places the nation and the organisation at the forefront.

From page 1

The AAP has 125 councillors and, had the party voted today (and providing none of its votes were poached by the BJP), it would most likely have won the election, and control of the Standing Committee, which takes most of the municipal body's financial decisions.

The polling was held in the presence of Additional Commissioner Jitendra Yadav, who was made the Presiding Officer in the absence of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The election to the last vacant seat began earlier on Friday as per MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar's order issued upon Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's directions late Thursday.

Following the election, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said the party has a majority in the Standing Committee and wants to complete all essential tasks immediately. Sachdeva slammed the AAP for

AAP fumes as BJP bags...

boycotting the election and said, "If the AAP had participated, Delhi would have realised today that the party had lost the majority in the corporation. If they had the majority, Kejriwal would not have avoided the election." As soon as the results were announced, celebrations broke out in the House and BJP councillors started raising slogans like "Bharat Mata ki Jai".

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hit out at the BJP (BJP) after its candidate won the last vacant seat of the MCD standing committee. "According to rules only the mayor can convene a meeting of the MCD House but the lieutenant governor changed it and directed an additional commissioner of the civic body to do it," Kejriwal said in the Delhi assembly.

Kejriwal alleged that the BJP has wrongly overpowered the MCD and stole the mandate, and said the saffron party won the last vacant seat of the civic body's standing committee. "Is this election?" he posed and accused the BJP of resorting to "hooliganism". The former Chief Minister claimed that as per the rule, a notice has to be sent to every councillor 72 hours before the meeting, but it was not followed.

The AAP supreme said it was clearly written in the MCD law that only the Mayor has the right to call for the House sitting and when it meets, the Mayor will lead it. Neither the Lieutenant Governor nor the MCD Commissioner can call a sitting of the civic body's House, he said, adding that whenever a sitting of the MCD House convened, 72 hours would be given for it. "There

seems to be a flaw in their intentions. There seems to be a conspiracy to do some wrong in the elections. That is why they are engaged in conducting the elections by any means," the AAP chief said.

Ahead of the polls, former deputy CM Manish Sisodia and Mayor Shelly Oberoi called LG's orders "unconstitutional" and said the AAP councillors will only participate in the polls on October 5, as officially stated in Thursday's MCD session.

Following disruption over frisking of the councillors on Thursday, the election to the MCD Standing Committee was postponed till October 5 by Mayor Shelly Oberoi. Later Lt Governor VK Saxena, however, overturned the postponement of the elections and directed MCD Commissioner Ashwani

Kumar to hold the election on Friday at 1 pm.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia and MCD Mayor Shelly Oberoi accused the BJP and the municipal commissioner of making a mockery of democracy and the constitution. Sisodia alleged that the commissioner issued an order late Thursday, directing the election to be conducted with an additional commissioner as the presiding officer.

"The BJP is attempting to repeat what it did in the Chandigarh mayoral poll, where it was caught red handed," he said. As per rules, only the Mayor, deputy Mayor or a senior councillor can preside over the meeting of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) House. The Mayor has already announced

the House meeting and election of the standing committee member for October 5, he said.

Just an hour ahead of the poll to elect the last vacant standing committee seat, Mayor Shelly Oberoi directed MCD Commissioner Ashwini Kumar to stall the election on Friday so that it could be held on October 5, as per her earlier instructions.

In a letter, Oberoi asked the commissioner to ensure due legal compliance in holding the standing committee election on October 5. She also asked him to declare the poll scheduled for Friday to be "illegal and unlawful".

Oberoi, in her response to the commissioner, termed the LG's directive unconstitutional. "This order is illegal, unconstitutional as it is a gross violation of the statutory

scheme of the DMC Act and the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Procedure & Conduct of Business) Regulations, 1958, apart from being contrary to the touchstone of a fair democratic process," she wrote.

She further stressed that many councillors had informed her they were out of town after the adjournment of the House. "When your order was issued at 11 pm on 26.9.2024, there was inadequate time for them to reach for the said meeting. "In fact, most councillors have not even received the meeting notice by 10 am on 27.09.2024. Therefore, to expect them to attend the meeting at such short notice is not only a violation of their electoral rights as public representatives but also violates the fair democratic process and Principles of Natural Justice," she added.

Declaring the commissioner's order "ab initio null and void", Oberoi reiterated her authority as Mayor to adjourn meetings.

Bangladesh fan heckled...

From page 1

Activists from several right-wing groups held a protest on Friday at the Sadhbhavana Chauraha, about 1,500 metres from the Green Park stadium where India is taking on Bangladesh in a test match. They also recited the Hanuman Chalisa and demanded that the match, which began on Friday, be cancelled, police said.

Upon receiving information about the protest led by right-wing groups, including the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal, police officials quickly mobilised, they said. A heavy police presence, led by Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Ankit Sharma, was dispatched to the site to prevent the demonstrators from advancing towards the stadium.

Over 1.45 lakh students vote in DUSU elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid heavy security, more than 1.45 lakh students cast their votes in the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections at the varsity's North and South campuses on Friday. The Delhi University which underwent elections was a scene of raucous activity, with candidates' supporters still hard at distributing pamphlets and throwing flyers while students queued up at colleges to cast their votes.

The counting for the DUSU polls will be held only after October 21, when the Delhi High Court, which halted the process over defacement of public property by candidates, will hear the matter next, an election officer said on Friday. Rajesh Singh, Returning Officer for DUSU elections, said the counting of votes will take place after the next court hearing.

"The court will now hear the matter on October 21. Only after that will we be able to decide when the counting will take place," he said. "It is likely the counting will be done after the court's hearing," he said.



Students cast their votes during the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) polls 2024, at Miranda House college, in New Delhi, Friday. Photos by: RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIONEER

Students stood in long lines at their colleges with the hope of seeing improvement in campus infrastructure, also women's safety, a major issue. The voting was held in two phases, remained peaceful and except one or two incidents. The race for the post of president is expected to be a close one between ABVP's Rishabh Chaudhary, NSUI's Rounak Khatri and AISAs Saavy Gupta. The ABVP, the NSUI, the left-wing student body All India Students' Association (AISA) and the Students' Federation of India (SFI) have exuded confidence that their respective can-

didates would win. After the voting, the student's organizations- thanked students who cast their votes. According to the office of chief election officer, DUSU, a total of 1,45,893 students from 52 colleges had cast their votes till 5.45 pm to elect a new president, vice president, secretary and joint secretary. The data for the remaining colleges is yet to be released. Heavy police deployment was made at both North and South campuses for smooth conduct of the elections. Police personnel were seen patrolling the campus on motorcycles. Polling was held in

two phases. Students of morning colleges cast their votes till 1 pm and the second phase of polling for students of evening colleges started at 3 pm and continued till 7.30 pm. Meanwhile, campus tea and food stalls, busy enough on usual days, made brisk business as students gathered there to discuss their political opinion. Several students have complained that they couldn't cast their vote as they did not receive their identity cards. A total of 21 candidates, eight are in the fray for the post of president, five for vice president, and four each for the posts

of secretary and joint secretary. The RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the Congress-backed National Students' Union of India (NSUI), the left-wing student body All India Students' Association (AISA) and the Students' Federation of India (SFI) are the key players this year. Currently, the ABVP has the maximum number of seats in the student body and holds the posts of president, vice president and joint secretary. The NSUI holds the secretary's post. "The ABVP has been extensively campaigning for the elections for the past few days. We were able to reach out to around one lakh students during this period. The ABVP has had a strong presence in the DUSU for many years. We have consistently stood by the students and raised their concerns. As a result, we are seeing a positive response and getting support from the students. We are confident that the students are with us and the ABVP will win the polls 4-0," said ABVP national general secretary Yagywalkya Shukla. NSUI president Varun

Chaudhary said, "This year's elections are not ordinary. They are crucial for saving the university. Over the years, a culture of violence has emerged in the university because of the ABVP. We have promised a violence-free campus." "In addition, we have also pledged to address issues like paper leaks and fee control," he said. Rishabh Chaudhary, who hails from Ganaur, Sonapat, graduated from Shyam Lal College and is currently a student of the Department of Buddhist Studies. Saavy Gupta is a third-year law student at Law Centre-2. In the fray for the post of vice president are ABVP's Bhanu Pratap Singh, NSUI's Yash Nandal and AISAs Ayush Mondal. The ABVP has fielded Mitravinda Karanwal, a third-year student of History (Hons) at Laxmibai College, as its candidate for the post of secretary. She is up against NSUI's Namrata Jeph Meena and SFI's Anamika K. Aman Kapasia, a Hindi (Hons) graduate from PGDAV Evening College, is the ABVP's pick for the post of joint secretary and will take on NSUI's Lokesh Choudhary and SFI's Sneha Aggarwal.



DU launches cleanup after HC orders removal of campaign materials

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An exercise was launched on Friday to remove all posters and banners put up by student organisations across Delhi University for the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) poll campaign. The action comes a day after the Delhi High Court halted the counting of votes of Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections till all the defacement material, including posters, hoarding and graffiti, is removed and public property is restored. Rajesh Singh, the returning officer for the elections, said, "The majority of the hoardings, posters, and banners violating the rules have been removed. The process to remove any other such posters is underway. We called a meeting of all the candidates contesting the elections and directed them to take down these materials," Singh said. Students who were on the campus to cast their votes said the campus is much cleaner now than in previous days. "Large banners and posters were almost entirely removed overnight," a female student said, adding that the once-cluttered roads, crowded with oversized campaign posters, now appear clean. On Thursday, a bench of Chief Justice-designate Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said the election process may proceed but the counting of votes will not take place till the court is satisfied that defacement of property has been

removed. Namrata Jeph Meena, an NSUI nominee for the secretary post, said, "After the court order, we started cleaning the campus. It took double the effort to remove the posters and banners." "While putting up the posters and banners, we pasted them wherever we found empty space. But when it came to removing them, we had to search for our own posters and banners, which took almost half the night," she added. With the polls underway, the atmosphere on campus is charged, with students displaying a mix of excitement and nervous anticipation about the results. The Delhi High Court has said officials of Delhi University and its colleges have failed to appreciate the true import of the Lyngdoh Committee guidelines which prohibit defacement of public property and use of printed posters during the students union elections. The court said the officials of Delhi University and colleges have neglected the enforcement of the Lyngdoh Committee guidelines. A bench of Chief Justice-designate Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela made the observations in its September 26 order, uploaded on Friday, in which the court halted the counting of votes of the Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) elections till all the defacement material, including posters, hoarding and graffiti are removed and public property is restored.

BJP claims Mayor violated SC order

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday claimed Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi disregarded the Supreme Court's order dated August five by postponing the election meeting for a member of the Standing Committee of the Delhi Municipal Corporation (MCD) without any constitutionally valid reason. Leader of opposition in MCD Sardar Raja Iqbal Singh has filed a contempt petition in the Supreme Court. The BJP also said the Court had instructed the immediate election of a member to fill the vacant position after Kamaljeet Sehrawal was elected as a Member of Parliament. After significant delays, the Mayor finally scheduled the election meeting for September 26. However, the meeting was adjourned by Mayor in protest of the Municipal Commissioner order not allowing phones in the meeting. Subsequently, Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena directed the immediate conduct of the meeting, which was first scheduled for Thursday night and then for Friday. However, the Mayor, along with all AAP councilors, boycotted the election meetings. Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Municipal Corporation, Sardar Raja Iqbal Singh has condemned the obstinacy of the Mayor and AAP and filed a contempt petition in the Hon'ble Supreme Court today for violating the Court's directives. The petition may come up before the Court on Monday. Sardar Raja Iqbal Singh stated that the Standing Committee is the lifeline of the Delhi Municipal Corporation, and they will not allow the anarchic Aam Aadmi Party to paralyze the functioning of the Corporation under any circumstances.

Kejriwal inspects broken roads, vows to repair them on war footing

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, on the second consecutive day, took to city streets and inspected broken roads on Friday, and said that all his party MLAs and ministers will be soon out on ground to conduct an assessment regarding the issue. He alleged that BJP halted key projects across the city to disrupt it, and added that he will request Chief Minister Atishi to get all the PWD roads assessed in the next 3-4 days. Later, AAP supremo raised the issue in the Delhi Assembly and handed over a letter urging her to start the repair work of Delhi roads on a war footing. After reading it out in the Assembly, he handed it over to Atishi. He said that all the roads which

are broken will be repaired on a war footing in the coming few months so that Delhiites do not face any problem. "I had gone to jail, so they had stopped a lot of work. But, I assure the public that now I am back. All the works that were stalled in Delhi, I will get them started again," he asserted. While inspecting the Roshanara Road in North Delhi along with the Chief Minister Atishi, Timarpur MLA Dilip Pandey and Model Town legislator Akhilesh Pati Tripathi, Kejriwal assured swift repair and comprehensive review of all the roads under the Public Works Department (PWD) of the state government. Sharing footage and a few snippets from his visit, the former CM stated on his 'X' handle that, "Today, I inspected another road in Delhi on Roshanara Road. Chief Minister Atishi was also with



me. This road was also in a bad condition. The BJP people have conspired to stop the work in Delhi and have troubled the people." Kejriwal said, "We inspected Roshanara Road Extension. The Chandrawal pipeline is also laid in this road. People said that this road has been broken for 7-8 months due to the pipeline. On Thursday also I went to Delhi University with CM Atishi. The road there was also broken."

"Just a few days ago, I met one of their big leaders. I asked him what did they get by arresting me, he smiled and said that 'we derailed the Delhi government, brought Delhi to a standstill. I was surprised to hear his answer. So, was their motive behind arresting me to bring Delhi to a standstill, was their motive to trouble the people of Delhi? How can any person or any party be happy if the public is troubled? It is obvious that their motive was to stop the

work of Delhi and defame the Aam Aadmi Party government, so that these people win the Delhi elections. How can any party stoop so low for the sake of getting votes and winning elections that it makes the lives of two crore people miserable," Kejriwal said in the letter. "According to the locals, the road has been in a damaged condition for the past seven to eight months. On Thursday, I went to Delhi University along with CM Atishi where also the road was broken. I want to request Atishi to assess the condition of all PWD roads in Delhi. On Thursday, Kejriwal along with Manish Sisodia, Atishi and Timarpur MLA Dilip Pandey inspected the road passing in front of the North Campus of Delhi University. They found traffic congestion on the road during the peak hours.

Kejriwal alleges BJP is deleting AAP votes ahead of Delhi Assembly polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday alleged that the BJP has been trying to delete the votes of his party supporters on a massive scale after realizing that it was going to lose the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls due in February. The former Delhi chief minister speaking in the assembly session also alleged that the BJP has stationed "paid employees" in the city localities to identify the AAP voters and get their names deleted from the voters' lists. "They know they are going to lose the Delhi Assembly polls very badly. What I have learnt from the BJP leaders is that work has been started by them on a massive scale for deleting the AAP votes and ensuring bogus voting in the elections,"



said Kejriwal. "In each colony they have stationed some 'paid employees' who are going door to door asking the people whom do they vote. If someone says that they vote for the Aam Aadmi Party then their votes are deleted," he claimed. Kejriwal said the people of Delhi should be wary of those who visit their houses asking for the party they vote. "I want to say to Delhi people that if anybody visits and asks you which party do you vote,

say I vote for the BJP. Then you are safe and your vote will not be deleted," he said. The AAP national convener also said the people in the city should check the Election Commission website every day to ensure their votes were not deleted. The AAP MLAs also need to warn the booth level workers of the party to keep tab on votes added and deleted in their areas and the whole thing will be monitored by the party, he added.

NCRTC wins Best Transit Award for Sustainable Connectivity in 2024

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), which operates rapid regional trains, on Friday announced it has won the 'Best Transit Award' for seamless connectivity and the 'Overall Winner Award' at the UIC Sustainability Impact Awards 2024. These awards, presented by the International Union of Railways in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Foundation, recognise NCRTC's commitment to sustainability and innovative public transit solutions, the corporation said. NCRTC managing director Shalabh Goel said the awards are a testament to NCRTC's innovative approach to extensive multimodal integration,



connecting RRTS stations with existing public transport modes such as MRTS, buses, and railway stations, along with various first- and last-mile connectivity options, according to an official statement. "It also highlights our sustained focus on commuter-centricity through the adoption of advanced technological solutions, including the world's first-ever deployment of the

European Train Control System (ETCS) Level 2 Hybrid and Level 3 signalling over LTE, which enables seamless interoperability across upcoming RRTS corridors," the release quoted Goel as saying. "The recognition further serves as a tribute to the valuable contributions of various stakeholders, particularly the Government of India, which has developed transformative

ecosystems that have facilitated the rapid implementation of such mobility solutions," he added. By encouraging a shift from personal vehicles to public transport, the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor is expected to reduce 250,000 tonnes of vehicular emissions annually, the statement said. The NCRTC's use of renewable energy in the RRTS project supports affordable and clean energy by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and aligns with climate action through significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, it said. The corporation also said as part of the National Solar Mission, it plans to generate 11 MW of solar power on station rooftops and depots over the next five years, enhancing system sustainability.

Delhi Police rescue 8-year-old girl kidnapped by drug addict in Bihar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An eight-year-old girl kidnapped from south Delhi allegedly by a drug addict was rescued by the Delhi Police from a moving train in Bihar's Buxar district, an officer on Friday said. According to the police, Rohit Kumar, 21, kidnapped the girl to extort money from her father to buy drugs. Kumar came to Delhi to work as a labourer two or three days ago, kidnapped the girl, and made several ransom calls to her labourer father. "On September 23, a man told police that he worked as a labourer in Jonapur in Bihar and reported that his eight-year-old daughter was missing. He told police that he lived with his daughter only as his wife passed away," Deputy Commissioner of Police (south) Ankit Chauhan said.

An FIR was registered at Fatehpur Beri Police Station following the complaint and an investigation was taken up. "All formalities, like uploading the details of the girl on ZIP-NET, using social media messengers, were done swiftly and a search operation was conducted in the parks, abandoned areas and godowns," said the DCP. During the course of investigation, a team visited the house of the complainant and collected CCTV footage of the surrounding areas, he said. The footage revealed a person taking the girl with him. The man was later identified as Rohit Kumar, who had been living in the same locality for the last two-three days at the house of an acquaintance, DCP Chauhan said. "Rohit Kumar called the complainant on his mobile and demanded Rs 20,000 to be transferred to his mobile, say-

ing his daughter was in his custody. Several calls on his mobile phone were made later, which was a breakthrough for the team. We traced the location of the mobile number near Buxar," said the officer. Police zeroed in on at least three trains heading towards Patna and the mobile was found active in one of the trains. "We immediately alerted the Government Railway Police (GRP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Buxar and Arrah. They nabbed the accused in a moving train and the missing girl was rescued. The girl was taken into safe custody. A team of the Delhi police was also sent to Patna," the DCP said. During interrogation, Kumar revealed he was addicted to drugs and had no money to support his addiction so he abducted the girl.

Poet, former IPS passes away at 87

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Celebrated English poet and former IPS officer Keki N Daruwalla died at a Delhi hospital after prolonged illness and a spell of pneumonia, his daughter Anahaite Kapadia said on Friday. He was 87. Daruwalla, one of India's best known writers in English, died on Thursday night. Daruwalla, also known for his short stories, is survived by two daughters, Anahaite and Rookvain, sons-in-law and four grandchildren. The last rites were performed on Friday at Parsi Aramgah near Khan Market. Born in Lahore in 1937, Daruwalla studied at Government College in Ludhiana. He joined the Indian Police Service (Uttar Pradesh cadre) in 1958 and rose to become Special Assistant on international affairs to then



Prime Minister Charan Singh. He later joined the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) where he was promoted to the rank of Secretary, R&AW. Even though he led a successful career in police and later at R&AW, it was his literary acumen that gained him national and international repute. Daruwalla's first book of poetry, "Under Orion", was published in 1970.

Delhi Police arrests woman for railway tender fraud, husband still at large

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a woman for allegedly duping people on the pretext of getting them railway tenders and other contracts. Meenakshi Aggarwal and her husband Abhishek Aggarwal were declared proclaimed offenders in two cases of fraud and a bounty of Rs 25,000 was announced for information leading to the woman's arrest, they said. Meenakshi was arrested from Jaipur on Thursday while her husband is still absconding, the police said. "Meenakshi and Abhishek had cheated multiple people by luring them to invest in their schemes," Deputy Commissioner of Police (crime) Satish Kumar said. The couple used to lead a lavish lifestyle using the duped money and pretended that they



were earning well, the DCP said. They assured huge profits to lure more people. After taking the advance from their victims, they used to flee and turned off their mobile phones to evade arrest, he added. According to the police, one of their victims Vijay Raj from Delhi's Dabri had lodged a complaint against the couple regarding cheating and criminal breach of trust in 2021. Raj, in his complaint, alleged that he

had invested over Rs 50 lakh in their schemes. Similarly, another person Rahul Gupta who was lured to invest Rs 3.18 crore for a contract in railways had lodged a complaint against the duo, the police said. The accused were arrested in both the cases but later got bail from the court. However, they did not attend court proceedings and were subsequently declared proclaimed offenders, said the DCP. Meenakshi, who was meanwhile hiding in Rajasthan's Jaipur, was arrested after the police received a tip-off. A police team went to Jaipur and brought the woman to Delhi, the officer said, adding that Abhishek is yet to be held. The couple got married in 2011. Meenakshi was living in a posh society in Jaipur and was running a business of ready-made garments, police said.

BJP slams Karnataka Government for CBI consent withdrawal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday criticised the Congress over the Karnataka government's decision to withdraw the general consent to the CBI to probe cases in the state amid the MUDA land allotment row, describing it as a response of a "professional thief and a corrupt party".

Termining the Congress government's move a bid to evade a CBI probe into the MUDA "scam" allegedly involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said the decision depicted a "guilty mind" in itself.

"Thousands of crores have been usurped in the MUDA

scam. After this, the Congress has done what is expected from any certified 'chor and looter' (thief and robber). To evade the long hand of law, it has withdrawn the general consent given to the CBI to investigate in the state," he said.

"The Congress is behaving like a professional thief and a professional corrupt party. First to err and then go brazen about it, this is the attitude and approach of the Congress in Karnataka and other states where it is in power," Poonawalla added.

Opposition parties in Karnataka have alleged that the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) has fraudulently allotted sites to people who lost land to other development projects,



including Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi. Poonawalla alleged that Siddaramaiah was following the "same approach" of the Congress since his alleged involvement in the MUDA scam worth Rs 5,000 crore surfaced, and demanded his resignation as chief minister.

"When Narendra Modi ji was chief minister of Gujarat, several cases were (registered) against him and the central probe agency was unleashed on him... Yet, being the chief minister, Narendra Modi ji cooperated fully with every investigation," he said.

"This is the difference between a morally upright individual and one with a guilty conscience," Poonawalla said.

Amid the MUDA land allotment row, the Karnataka government on Thursday withdrew general consent given to CBI to investigate cases in the state as it alleged that the federal agency was "biased".

Announcing the decision after a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister

Siddaramaiah, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H K Patil said, "It is clear that the CBI or the Central government are not using their instrumentalities judiciously."

The move came amid demands by the opposition BJP to hand over the MUDA site allotment case to the CBI. The BJP spokesperson dismissed the Karnataka government's accusation against the CBI and said the Congress has no problem with the central probe agency when it "suits" the party's interest.

"They approached the CBI and ED with a complaint in the Delhi liquor scam and put up posters across Delhi calling Arvind Kejriwal a thief after the CBI took action," he added.



Dhankhar calls for multilateral action on global threats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday asserted that multilateral engagements are no longer optional but essential for addressing modern-day threats, ranging from cyber crimes and terrorism. He also said that peace is best secured from a position of strength and underscored the importance of national security.

"Global peace is assurance for sustainable development, the only way to existence. But geopolitical configurations and conflagrations have affected a sea change in security outlook," he noted.

Addressing the participants of the inaugural International Strategic Engagement Programme (IN-STEP), a collaborative effort between the National Security Council Secretariat, the Ministry of External Affairs, and the Ministry of Defence here, Dhankhar emphasised the fundamental connection between global peace and sustainable development, underlining that the current state of world affairs demands a redefined approach to security.

Highlighting the dynamic geopolitical shifts that have altered global security perspectives, the vice president noted that multilateral engagements are no longer optional but essential for addressing modern-day threats, ranging from cyber crimes and terrorism to climate change and disruptive technologies.

Dhankhar also drew attention to the evolving global threats, many of which were unimaginable just a few years ago.

"We are in a world that has suddenly appeared on our radar with unprecedented challenges such as climate change, pandemics, cyber threats, and disruptions in global order," he told the gathering.

He pointed out that these challenges are not accidental but stem from policies and actions driven by power ambitions and a disregard for sustainable growth.

Addressing the significance of technological advancements, he emphasised the critical role that emerging technologies such as machine learning can play in shaping global narratives and mitigating misinformation.

Disruptive technologies must be harnessed to neutralise harmful narratives that may lack factual basis but have the potential to create dangerous global environments, Dhankhar underscored.

Reflecting on India's philosophy of "Atithi Devo Bhavah," the Vice-President reinforced the nation's belief in welcoming all with warmth and respect, as embodied in the G20 motto: "One Earth, One Family, and One Future."

He stressed that these values are essential in fostering unity and cooperation in a world that increasingly faces challenges that transcend borders.



India, Greece strengthen Naval ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Greece have held discussions to further strengthen navy to navy partnership by augmenting operational interactions, maritime security co-operation and streamlining goals for a stable and secure maritime environment, navy said here on Friday.

These issues were taken up during Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi's talks with Vice Admiral Dimitrios E Kateras, Chief of the Hellenic Navy General Staff in Athens on Thursday.

During this maiden visit by an Indian Navy chief to Greece, both the Chiefs also explored avenues of furthering training cooperation along with laying emphasis towards enhancing interoperability and capacity-building.

Admiral Tripathi also met Ioannis Kefalogiannis, Deputy Minister of Defence, Greece and Vice Admiral Christos Sasiakos, Deputy Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, marking a significant step in deepening defence ties and fostering a robust strategic partnership towards enhancing maritime security in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Discussions focussed on the criticality of open sea trade routes, laying the groundwork for advancing Indo-Greek defence collaboration with focus on strategic naval opportunities, capacity building, shared training initiatives, and enhancing interoperability. Collaboration in niche technologies and defence industry opportunities were also deliberated.

SC Judge addresses smuggling, counterfeiting at MASCRAGE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Justice Sanjay Karol, Judge, Supreme Court of India, on Thursday highlighted the debilitating impact smuggling and counterfeiting have on the nation's economic and social aspects.

Delivering the valedictory address on Day-2 of 10th edition of 'MASCRAGE', organised by FICCI-CASCADE, Justice Karol said, "Smuggling and counterfeiting continue to jeopardise economic stability, social security and integrity of the nation.

Smuggling and counterfeiting often lurk undetected amidst a host of other economic and social problems but continue to erode substantial portions of legitimate businesses, resulting in substantial economic and social damages."

Justice Karol emphasized that the use of technology is essential to combat the menace and highlighted the importance of robust interstate collaborations.

"Utilizing QR codes will help safeguard consumers and address the issues of smuggling and counterfeiting. Social media intermediaries also play a crucial role in this fight."



We must strengthen our inter-state collaborations, and I am pleased to note that over the past ten years, these collaborations have been solidified at the international level," he stated.

Justice Navin Chawla, Judge, Delhi High Court, said, "Smuggling and counterfeiting affect the day-to-day lives of citizens in various ways. These activities constitute a \$2 trillion shadow economy, resulting in significant economic losses for the nation.

This menace needs to be addressed uniformly by the legislature, judiciary, and executive. I assure you that all three branches are doing everything possible to combat this issue."

Justice Chawla added that consumers need to be aware that buying illicit products may result in short-term gain

EC seeks explanation from Maharashtra officials over non-compliance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Sending out a stern Smessage, the Election Commission on Friday sought an explanation from the Maharashtra chief secretary and the state's police chief for failing to fully implement its orders on the transfer of officials ahead of the upcoming assembly polls.

In a strongly-worded letter, the poll body said despite a directive issued on July 31 to relocate officials who had served in their home districts or current posting for over three years, the state administration had not completed the process.

According to the Election Commission's (EC) mandate, the compliance report was due by August 31.

While the additional director general of police submitted a partial report, the chief secretary is yet to provide a full response.

Sources noted that more than 100 inspector-level officers in Mumbai and revenue officials, many holding key positions in the state, had not been transferred as required.



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar expressed his displeasure over the state administration's non-compliance, stating that the delay undermined efforts to ensure a free and fair electoral process.

Lokpal issues accreditation norms for journalists

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal has sought applications for accreditation from journalists to cover its working and has issued a list of eligibility norms that includes a dress code for media persons while visiting its premises.

Desirous journalists need to have a law degree recognised by the Bar Council of India under the Advocates Act, reads the norms for accreditation of legal correspondents in the Lokpal of India.

However, the Lokpal chairperson can waive or relax this condition in appropriate

cases if the journalist or correspondent holds a Bachelor degree of a recognised university; and possesses at least five years' experience of reporting events and proceedings of any constitutional court, the norms said.

Interested journalists should have at least five years' experience of reporting in a daily newspaper or a national or international news agency or electronic media organisation, of which at least three and a half years must be of reporting events and proceedings of any constitutional court, reads the norms issued on September 25.

"Applications are invited from

interested and eligible journalists/ correspondents in proforma in annexure for accreditation as the Legal Correspondents in Lokpal of India," the circular said.

The last date of receiving application is 30 days from the issue of the circular.

Mentioning conditions to be observed by a working journalist/correspondent after his accreditation, the norms said "an accredited correspondent, temporary/regular, shall visit the Lokpal premises in a formal dress, in a manner befitting the decor of the office and displaying prominently his accreditation card."

At all times, an accredited correspondent, temporary or

regular, shall maintain decorum in the Lokpal premises and refrain from doing such things as may interfere with the proceedings before the Lokpal and shall restrict his movement within the prescribed area for the media, interact only with the spokesperson of the Lokpal and no other official including shall not attempt to access any confidential or even official records except the ones shared to him by the spokesperson of the Lokpal, the circular said.

"Accredited correspondent, temporary/regular, shall make a serious endeavour of reporting accurate account of the information shared to him by the spokesperson of the

Lokpal without any distortions and embellishments," the norms said.

In another order, the Lokpal has nominated its deputy registrar as its spokesperson.

According to the norms, the applications for temporary/regular accreditation shall be placed before the chairperson or accreditation committee nominated by him for that purpose, for consideration.

The chairperson, for reasons to be recorded in writing, may accord accreditation to any deserving candidate in relaxation of the rules and these norms, the circular said.

On being granted temporary/regular

accreditation, a legal correspondent will be issued an identity card.

"In case, an accredited legal correspondent, temporary/regular, is transferred or otherwise ceases to represent the concerned newspaper, news agency or electronic media organisation for which she/he was granted accreditation, shall, within two weeks of such transfer or cessation, return the identity card," one of the conditions mentioned in the norms said.

Such legal correspondent will not be extended the privileges of an accredited legal correspondent of the Lokpal unless she/he seeks a fresh accreditation by making an

application in accordance with the norms for representing the press/agency/organisation concerned, to the chairperson, it said.

The Lokpal has also cited certain conditions for journalists while seeking temporary accreditation. It said that the application for accreditation "must be accompanied by an attested copy of the Law degree" and interested candidates "must possess at least three and a half years' of experience of reporting events and proceedings of any court in a daily newspaper and/or a national or international news agency and/or electronic media organisation having standing."

Maldives President Muizzu set to visit India amid improving ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu is likely to visit India in the second week of October. It comes in the backdrop of recent strained ties between the two countries. He had last come to New Delhi on June nine for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing in ceremony.

Incidentally, it will be his bilateral visit to India since Muizzu became president in November last year on the back of an 'India Out' campaign. He is perceived to be pro-China.

The Maldivian president will come to New Delhi for a three-day visit commencing October seven, sources said here on Friday. He will hold talks with Prime Minister Modi on October eight, they said.

Muizzu government's efforts to reduce the Maldives'



dependence on India and a demand for the removal of some 85 Indian military personnel deployed there to operate three aircraft took bilateral ties to a fresh low.

Last December, his government terminated a 2019 agreement with India for joint hydrographic surveys. This was followed by several steps to bolster defence cooperation with China and Turkey.

However, there are signs of improvement in the overall relationship in recent months. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Maldives in August and the two sides

inked an agreement on introducing India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system in there and inaugurated several projects built with Indian grants and loans.

Signs of a thaw came from Muizzu himself, when he described India as "one of the closest allies and invaluable partners" of the Maldives at a meeting with Jaishankar.

Earlier this month, Muizzu's spokesperson announced he would visit India "very soon" on the same day that two junior ministers, who were suspended in January for derogatory comments against Modi, resigned from the government.

The Indian side has also helped the Maldives avoid the risk of defaulting on its Islamic bond payments by extending the State Bank of India's (SBI) subscription to government treasury bills worth \$50 million for another year.

Health Ministry issues revised guidelines for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) fast becoming a major public health crisis, closely linked to the increasing rates of obesity, diabetes, and CVDs, the Union Health Ministry on Friday issued revised operational guidelines and a training module aimed at improving patient care to combat the silent but serious condition.

"Out of 10, one to three people can have NAFLD which highlights the impact of the disease," said Apurva Chandra, Union Health Secretary at an event here on the need for the revised guidelines.

He further said that 66 per cent of the liver deaths in the country are due to NCDs and the major risk factors are tobacco use (smoking and smokeless), alcohol use, poor dietary habits, insufficient physical activity, and air pollution.

As rapid urbanisation, along with sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy dietary habits become more common, more individuals are developing fatty liver, even without alcohol



consumption. The growing prevalence of type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance further exacerbates this condition.

Punya Salila Srivastava, Officer on Special Duty with the Ministry said, "these guidelines need to reach the grassroot level workers so that the disease is detected early and the burden of NAFLD is reduced." Dr S K Sarin, Director, Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) noted that many NCDs such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer are linked to liver

health, underscoring the importance of maintaining a healthy liver.

"India contributes high numbers for NCDs globally and one of the core causes of metabolic diseases is in the liver. Realising the growing burden and urgent need to address it, India became the first country to integrate the NAFLD in the National Programme for Prevention and Control of NCDs in 2021," said a statement from the Ministry.

Welcoming the Ministry's move, Dr. Arun Gupta, a pediatrician and

convenor of Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest (NAPI) said later that while the revised guidelines for managing NAFLD are a positive step, they alone are insufficient to address the root causes of this growing health issue.

"There is a pressing need to regulate the marketing of unhealthy foods, particularly ultra-processed foods (UPFs), which contribute significantly to poor dietary habits," he said, adding that banning advertisements for these unhealthy products and implementing higher taxes on them.

"It's crucial to educate children about the potential harm of such products, fostering a healthier understanding of food choices from an early age," he said.

The guidelines focus on health promotion and early detection which are important for ensuring that patients with NAFLD receive timely and appropriate care. It also advocates for a multidisciplinary approach, integrating the efforts of healthcare providers from various disciplines to offer holistic care to individuals affected by NAFLD.

No murmurs on illegal Rohingya settlement in Jammu polls

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Rohingya settlements in Jammu have always been a bone of contention. But this election season it's business as usual. No one is dragging them and running any hate campaign targeting them for posing a security threat to several strategic military installations in and around Jammu. When this correspondent visited the Kiryani Talab and Bhatindi area in Jammu on Thursday the Rohingya shopkeepers were going about their usual activities to earn their livelihood. The entire market is run by Rohingyas to sustain a large number of families living in different vacant plots.

The houses in the neighborhood adorned flags of different political parties and a street corner meeting was also going on when this correspondent arrived there. The leader who was making a speech to woo the voters talked about implementing various schemes for the welfare of the masses including improving the condition of the roads. Adequate water and electricity supply and sanitation facilities. When I asked a group of Rohingyas whether anyone was disturbing them in the name of security or otherwise, they unanimously responded negatively. At the same time, they were curious to know the outcome of the elections in

the region and which party was most likely to win the elections. The Bharatiya Janta Party in its election manifesto has made a one-line mention claiming "We will undertake a concerted drive to address illegal Rohingya and Bangladeshi settlements in Jammu and Kashmir". In contrast, the Congress party has not touched upon this issue. The regional political parties in the fray, the National Conference and the PDP have also not commented on the 'contentious' issue in their election manifestos. According to a Home Department report tabled in the state assembly on February 2, 2018, "a total



number of 6523 Rohingyas were found camping across 39 different locations spread across five districts of Jammu and Kashmir". According to this report, "6461 Rohingyas were staying in the Jammu division and 62

in the Kashmir division". The majority of Rohingyas (illegal immigrants) camping in Jammu are spread across the Bahu Assembly segment in the Jammu district. The local activists and politicians, spearheading a

campaign in support of their deportation for a long time, often contest these figures claiming a large number of these illegal immigrants are scattered and even their biometrics have not been collected by the security personnel. In December 2023, the Jammu and Kashmir police teams launched a massive crackdown on over three dozen locations across five districts of Jammu province to expose the 'unholy' nexus between a large number of facilitators and Rohingyas (illegal immigrants from Myanmar). During the day more than 10 fresh FIRs were registered by the police, seven in Jammu district alone and one each in Doda, Kishtwar Rajouri, and

Poonch districts. Around 40 people were detained for further questioning by the police during these raids. The Police in the Jammu region have taken action against the facilitators providing shelter to Rohingyas in the Jammu, Kishtwar, Doda, Poonch, and Rajouri districts. Earlier, the UT administration launched a special verification drive in the first week of March 2021 in the sports stadium in Jammu. At the end of the drive, a total number of 155 Rohingyas were found to be staying illegally in Jammu and all of them were lodged in the holding centre. According to official sources, more than 250 Rohingyas

have been camping in the holding centre out of which 50-60 are children. Protests also staged violent demonstrations inside the detention centre in July 2023 demanding their release at the earliest. The majority of Rohingyas in Jammu earn their livelihood by doing daily wage jobs and some of them have become scrap dealers. Children support their families by collecting and selling recyclable material, and a few women work as daily wagers in the dry fruit industry, domestic help, daily wage labourers with the contractors of Jammu Municipal Corporation, and in local factories/sweepers in the hotels/guest houses etc.

Didi planned flood to divert attention from rape case: BJP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The BJP has slammed Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for using natural calamities to play "political games." All by shifting its own responsibilities on the Centre for the recent floods that has inundated several districts of the State. Days after the Chief Minister shot off two back-to-back letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging that the Damodar Valley Corporation had released lakhs of cusecs of water without alerting her State administration sinking several districts and damaging properties and crops worth several thousand crores, Bengal BJP president Sukanto Majumdar said that Banerjee's allegations were a ploy to release pressure from her Government by diverting public attention from the Kolkata lady doctor rape and murder issue. "It is not only the DVC but also the dams run and controlled by her own Government that have released water contributing to the flood situation," Majumdar said adding "the Chief Minister is falsely blaming the DVC which had already informed her Government several hours



before releasing the water. "DVC only released water from Panchet and Maithon dams in Jharkhand but here the Bengal Government released water from its own dams on rivers Subarnarekha, Kangshabati, Ajoy and Mayurakhi... this was done to create a situation so as to divert the public attention from the rape and murder case" of a lady doctor in RG Kar Medical College and Hospital which had put the State Government in a tight spot. The BJP's statements came at a time when the flood situation in south Bengal districts continued to be grim with the Damodar Valley Corporation releasing additional 25 thousand cusecs of water on Friday taking the total amount of water released over the past two days to about 35,000 cusecs, sources said.

Earlier the DVC had released about 5 lakh cusecs of water inundating about districts of Hooghly, Howrah, two Mdnapores, Bankura, Birbhum and parts of Burdwan leading the Chief Minister to write two consecutive letters to the Prime Minister seeking relief funds. Fresh bouts of rains over the past few days have led to the situation, sources in the administration said. "The water had just started to recede in Ghatol and Panshura sub divisions of West Midnapore and Hooghly districts which had remained most affected areas but fresh rains in the past two days have only compounded the problem," said an Irrigation Department official. Quoting the DVC sources the BJP leadership said how the authorities had released water from Maithon Dam when it was almost 489.50 feet full. "The total capacity of the dam is 490 feet... the dam was brimming over... it is a hilly zone and if the dam would have burst then not only the other districts but also Kolkata would have been washed away," said sources adding how the Bengal Government had been kept posted about the developments through the State's representatives.

Bombay High Court directs police to find burial spot for Akshay Shinde

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Two days after it questioned the version put out by the Thane police over the circumstances leading to the killing of Badlapur sexual assault accused Akshay Shinde, the Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Maharashtra police to find a secluded spot to bury Shinde's body. A HC division bench comprising Justice Revati Mohite Dere and Justice M M Sathaye issued a directive to this effect after the parents of their deceased-accused son Akshay Shinde told the court that they had been refused cremation or burial spots for the past five days since Shinde was gunned down in a police van. The HC bench directed the police to inform Shinde's family once the burial spot was identified so that the death rituals could be performed. Currently, Shinde's body is in the morgue of the state-run Sir JJ Hospital in Mumbai. The HC directive to the police came during the hearing of a petition filed by Akshay Shinde's father Anna Shinde seeking space for burial of his son. During the hearing, Chief



Public Prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar informed the HC bench that burial grounds in Badlapur and nearby areas had refused permission for the burial of Akshay Shinde. "Once the burial ground is finalised, Shinde's family will be informed about it but the family need not make an event out of the burial. Let them do his death rituals quietly. The family members will be taken to the burial spot escorted with police team," Venegaonkar told the court. Shinde's family's lawyer Amit Katarnavare said that the father of the deceased wanted a "decent burial" for his son. He said that the family was opting for a burial so that there was the option of exhumation in future - to which the judges said that the

police are ready to do that. It may be recalled that Akshay Shinde -- key accused in the sensational Badlapur child sexual assault -- was shot dead at a point blank range while he was being taken from Badlapur to Thane in a van for investigation in another case on Monday evening. A HC bench of Justice Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan had on Wednesday questioned the version put out by the police Shinde was shot by the police in self defence. Justice Chavan said "it is hard to believe" that a man of slight build as Akshay Shinde could be overpowered by the four policemen when he turned violent and pulled the slide back on a 9 mm pistol for firing which "requires strength".

Australian business ladies launch 'Elevate' to empower Indian women entrepreneurs

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

As part of strengthening the role of Indian women in entrepreneurship and business, two Australian ladies who were successful in business and commerce will share their experience with the former. The two women professionals who share decades of hands on experience in management and crafting of success stories are launching their book "Elevate" for women entrepreneurs in India. It is hoped that the principles gained by these two ladies would come in handy for women managing kirana shops to super markets. This is a work that wants to propagate the message "One word Can Change Your Life". The book, being published in India by Penguin Random House, tells the unique story of how Shannah Kennedy, an executive life coach with two decades experience and Colleen Callander, founder of the iconic fashion brands Sportsgirl and Sussan, made it to the top of Australian business league. Shannah is known as the Australian Powerhouse in strategic life coaching,

according to Abigail, publicist, Penguin Random House. Quoting the author, Abigail said that the book Elevate is meant for Indian women who want to embrace the extraordinary life they aspire for. Colleen Callander stands out among businesswomen as a self-made professional. Having dumped the traditional educational path at the age of 16 to carve out her unique trajectory to success, what she has done on her own is path breaking work. Both Shannah and Colleen are sought after speakers in global business and leadership meetings and have not let their listeners down at any point of time. Abigail stated that through their unique blend of business acumen and personal insight, Shannah and Colleen provide a practical roadmap that emphasizes clarity, focus, and balance across three key pillars: Life, Leadership, and Longevity. Their experience as leaders who have thrived in highly competitive industries gives readers valuable, real-world advice on how to excel in both careers and personal lives.



India launches new tourism initiatives, Visa fee waiver for tourists

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

To promote unexplored tourist sites of "Incredible India" globally, the Government will soon release a "dedicated master list" for holistic development, exempt one lakh foreign tourists from visa fees under the "Chalo India" campaign, and launch the "Paryatan Mitra and Paryatan Didi" initiative across 50 destinations across the States. Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat outlined these plans during his address at an event here marking World Tourism Day on Friday. Through these initiatives, the Ministry of Tourism aims at elevating the overall experience for tourists at these destinations by having them meet "tourist-friendly" people who are "proud ambassadors and storytellers for their destinations." This is being done by providing tourism-related training and awareness to all individuals who interact and engage with tourists in a destination," the ministry announced. World Tourism Day is celebrated every year with a special theme. This year's theme is "Tourism and Peace". Vice President Jagdeep Thakkar who was the chief guest at the event highlighted that the entire world is traumatised by conflagrations as it disrupts supply chains and planning and people-to-

people connect brings harmony and tourism plays a crucial role in it. About the "dedicated master list" to be soon to be released for a holistic development of tourist sites," the Tourism Minister said that the list will be jointly prepared by the tourism ministry, culture ministry, civil aviation ministry, railway ministry, transport ministry and ports, shipping and waterways ministry. "... In the next three years, development of these tourist sites and new tourist sites will be taken up on priority. This will be a new effort to bring the unbelievable sites of Incredible India on a global platform," Shekhawat said. "We will make this list public so that private investment and industry stakeholders can also contribute to it.... And the Dekho Apna Desh sites will also be included in it," he said, adding that a "big jump" in domestic tourism is being witnessed after the "Dekho Apna Desh" campaign was launched. In her address, Union Tourism Secretary V Vidyavathi said, "Our efforts from the ministry and the Government are to promote the five Ps of tourism -- people, place, product, planet and promotion." She said "our strength is our people" and diversity is the hallmark of destinations in India. From museums to temples, India offers everything for everyone.

BJP fails to woo voters as Union Ministers hold meetings in narrow places

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The recent two public meetings held by the two Union ministers in narrow places indicated that the BJP failed to woo voters. BJP seems to be failing to connect with the masses. Perhaps for this reason, rallies of Union Ministers are being organized in small streets and places, so that the crowds appear to be larger. Apart from this, quitting rebelling BJP leaders against the party and announcing support for Independent candidate Naveen Goyal is a major shock to the saffron outfit amidst the ongoing Assembly election campaign. BJP Gurgaon constituency candidate Mukesh Sharma does not seem to be successful in taking others within the organization along with him. Due to this, there is chaos

inside the party. Since the distribution of tickets in Gurgaon and Badshahpur assembly constituencies, both BJP candidates are forced to fight with people associated with their party. Especially in the Gurgaon seat, Naveen Goyal, who is contesting the election after rebelling from the BJP, is causing the most trouble. He has been successful in convincing several local BJP leaders to switch sides. From party officials to people from the organization, everyone is joining Naveen. Goyal has been emerging as a big threat to the BJP candidate Mukesh Sharma with each passing day. Goyal has been targeting and penetrating the party's local ranks and voter base. In addition to anti-incumbency, Goyal's growing popularity is emerging as a major challenge for the BJP in Gurugram.

War of words breaks out over feuding Senas, Dharmaveer-2

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A political war of words broke out between the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the rival Sena (UBT) over "Dharmaveer 2", as the sequel to the Marathi biopic about the life and times of late Sena leader Anand Dighe hit the screens on Friday, ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly polls. Hours after the premiere of the "Dharmaveer 2"—at which deputy chief minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis made some remarks, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut singled out Fadnavis for criticism. "Dharmaveer 2" is a sequel to the Marathi biopic 'Dharmaveer: Mukkam Post Thane' released on May 13, 2022 that had proved to be a propaganda vehicle for senior Minister Eknath Shinde in the run-up to his rebellion within the Sena and his subsequent elevation as the chief minister of a government supported by the BJP on June 30, 2022. In "Dharmaveer: Mukkam Post Thane", the character of

Shinde, who used to be the close aide of late Dighe, has been played up by the makers to give a larger-than-life image to the Sena leader who is now known across the country as being the rebel Sena minister who brought down the Uddhav Thackeray government. Dighe, who remained a bachelor, died at the age of 50 while undergoing treatment at Thane's Singhania hospital following a road accident in Thane in 2001. After Dighe's death in 2001, the hospital was burnt down by Dighe's supporters. Speaking at the premiere of "Dharmaveer 2", Fadnavis made a tongue-cheek comment when he said: "This is based on true facts...this is about people whom we have seen, heard and read about...I am sure people would like the movie. When Dharmaveer 3 is made, I will write the script". Fadnavis was accompanied by state BJP President Chandrashekhar Bawankule at the function. Not taking kindly to Fadnavis' statement, Shiv Sena (UBT)



MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut said: "We know all about Dharmaveer...Shinde and Fadnavis do not know what we know about Dharmaveer (Dighe). Dighe was the President of the Shiv Sena's Thane unit. He was a good leader. Now with the help of BJP, the Shinde Sena is trying to make him bigger than late Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray" "Fadnavis says he is going to write the script of

Dharmaveer-3. What does he know about the Shiv Sena or Dighe... He should write a script for a film on today's Aurangzeb...the Aurangzeb and Afzal Khan from Delhi and Gujarat who are out to loot Maharashtra," Raut said. Before long, Shinde's close aide and newly elected Sena MP Naresh Mhaske said: "Dharmaveer 1 was a hit film... Dharmaveer 2 is going to be a super hit. This is why Raut is upset... Balasaheb was Balasaheb... he was the Guru and Dighe was his disciple". Taking a dig at Raut over the failure of "Thackeray" -- a 2019 Marathi-Hindi biopic on actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui played the protagonist's role -- at the box office, Mhaske said: "Raut also made a film on late Balasaheb Thackeray which turned out to be a flop. Raut wants to make a film on Sharad Pawar...He does not know anything about Balasaheb, what will he know about Dighe Saheb. Sanjay Raut and Uddhav Thackeray always hated Dighe Saheb".

BJP targets Robert Vadra over corruption

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday flagged the alleged corruption involving Rahul Gandhi's brother-in-law Robert Vadra when the Congress was in power in Haryana by firing a fresh salvo against the opposition party ahead of the assembly polls in the state. Spokesperson of BJP Gaurav Bhatia claimed the election in the state is a fight between "Haryana ka laal" (son of Haryana) and "dalaal" (fixer) of the Gandhi family, as it questioned the Congress leadership's silence on the corruption charges against Vadra and the party's then government headed by Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

He said people of the state have made up their mind to elect the BJP to power for a third straight term, asserting that the central government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the state government headed by Nayab Singh Saini have worked for farmers' welfare. While Rahul Gandhi has been speaking about farmers' issues, he has not said a word about his "land-grabbing" brother-in-law, Bhatia told a press conference. Hooda is just a mask and the real face of corruption is the Gandhi family, he alleged, citing questionable land deals involving Vadra. In one case, he noted, Vadra's company allegedly acquired 3.5 acres of land of farmers and the then

Hooda government changed the land use, allowing him to pocket a huge profit by selling the parcel at four times the purchase price. In another case, farmers resorted to distress selling of their land after the Congress government in the state issued a notification to acquire their land and then denotified after a builder linked to Vadra bought their land, he alleged. Vadra has constantly denied allegations of any wrongdoing and accused the BJP of targeting him due to political vendetta. Modi during his campaign in Haryana recently had also revived the corruption charges involving him to slam the Congress and its leadership.

With the Congress seen to be putting up a strong challenge after registering an impressive performance in the Lok Sabha polls, Bhatia asked who will stop Vadra if the party comes to power again. Haryana had become a hotbed of corruption when it was in power between 2004 and 2014, he said. The BJP spokesperson exuded confidence that his party will retain power. Rahul Gandhi should respond to the charges against his brother-in-law, he said. Bhatia claimed the Congress in Haryana is marred by infighting, adding that Kumari Selja, who comes from a Dalit community, had been treated shabbily by Hooda and party general secretary Randeep Surjewala.

Indian Army boosts artillery with new weapons systems

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army is enhancing the combat prowess of its artillery units along the frontier with China by procuring an array of weapons systems, including an additional batch of 100 K9 Vajra howitzers, swarm drones, loitering munitions and surveillance systems. Lieutenant General Adosh Kumar, the Director General of Artillery in the Army, said various futuristic platforms and equipment are being procured to bolster the capabilities of the artillery units considering national security challenges.

"Today, we are modernising at a pace like never before and as per defined timelines," he told reporters ahead of the 198th anniversary of the Artillery Regiment on September 28. The development work is also in progress by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for hypersonic missiles, he said. Hypersonic missiles can fly at a speed of five mach or more than five times the speed of sound. Lieutenant General Kumar said a number of 155 mm gun systems, including K-9 Vajra, Dhanush and Sharang, have been deployed along the Northern borders to boost the Army's fire-power.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Playing with lives

CDSCO flags over 50 drugs, including paracetamol, as substandard, raising serious health concerns

In a concerning development, the Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO) has declared over 50 commonly used drugs, including Paracetamol and Pan D, as "not of standard quality" in its latest quality check report. The drugs, which also include vital medications such as calcium and vitamin supplements, high blood pressure medications, and anti-diabetic pills, were flagged in the organisation's August 2024 report, raising serious questions about their safety and efficacy for public use. The CDSCO's monthly quality check, which involves random sampling by state drug officers, identified numerous drugs under the "Not of Standard Quality (NSQ Alert)" category. Among the affected products are popular over-the-counter medicines such as vitamin C and D3 tablets, Shelcal (a calcium and vitamin D3 supplement), paracetamol tablets (IP 500 mg), Glimperide (an anti-diabetic drug), Telmisartan (for high blood pressure), and anti-acid Pan D. These widely used drugs, manufactured by companies like Hetero Drugs, Alkem Laboratories and Karnataka Antibiotics & Pharmaceuticals Ltd, pose potential risks to consumers due to their substandard quality.

The CDSCO's report included two lists, one naming 48 drugs that failed the quality tests and another listing 5 drugs under investigation as potentially spurious. In response to the findings, some manufacturers have claimed that certain batches of the flagged products were spurious and not manufactured by them. But that is a standard defence. A thorough probe must be initiated against such companies. This isn't the first time the CDSCO has taken action against unsafe drugs. Earlier in August, the central regulator banned over 156

fixed-dose drug combinations (FDCs) across the country, citing "likely risk to humans." These recurring incidents are ringing alarm bells about the quality control standards in India's pharmaceutical industry and the potential health risks posed by compromised drugs on the market. As the investigation into the spurious drugs continues, the public's trust in the safety of medicines remains at stake. Last year cough syrup supplied to Africa had allegedly resulted in deaths of 141 individuals. This not only is inhumane act but also tarnishes the reputation of Indian pharmaceutical industry in the world. For consumers, the key takeaway is to remain cautious about the medications they purchase and consume, particularly from lesser-known sources. Additionally, it is imperative for the regulatory framework to intensify its vigil to ensure that pharmaceutical companies adhere to strict quality standards. And we are not even talking about the Counterfeit medicines that are freely sold in the market. CDSCO report has just scratched the surface of this 65 billion dollar market. Blinded by greed, many companies indulge in manufacturing substandard medicines and even counterfeits. They have scant regard for human life and are fixated on making profits. Indeed the Government has to deal with them with heavy hand and give them the taste of their own medicine.

PICTALK



Performers dressed in traditional attire rehearse for Garba, ahead of Navratri festival, in Ahmedabad

PTI

Quad summit: Prioritising security in the Indo-Pacific



SUDHIR HINDWAN

Quad summit reiterated its commitment to ensure regional stability and foster sustainable development in the face of China's growing influence

The fourth Quad Summit, held in Wilmington, Delaware, USA, marked a significant step toward reinforcing the strategic partnerships between the member countries—the United States, India, Japan, and Australia. The Quad, officially known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, has become an essential platform for collaboration on multiple fronts, particularly in addressing security issues across the Asia-Pacific, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean Region. Over time, the scope of this partnership has expanded to include critical areas such as disaster management, digital infrastructure, and climate change, making it a multifaceted initiative with both security and development dimensions.

One of the key highlights of this summit was Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal to establish a new collaboration between India and the United States in the semiconductor sector. Modi emphasised the potential of AI (American-Indian) power, in reference to both artificial intelligence and the burgeoning US-India partnership. This collaboration, centered on a semiconductor facility near Noida in Uttar Pradesh, promises to bring advanced technologies, including control chips essential to both Indian and American security. The move is seen as a direct challenge to China's and Taiwan's dominance in the global semiconductor market, signaling a shift in the geopolitical landscape of technology. Alongside the semiconductor cooperation, maritime and cyber security remained top priorities for the Quad. The recent summit, attended by US President Joe Biden, Indian Prime Minister Modi, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, underscored the strategic importance of these areas. The Quad leaders are working to counter a variety of regional conflicts, including the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, transnational terrorism, and both traditional and non-traditional threats emerging in the Indo-Pacific. The member nations are



particularly concerned about China's increasingly aggressive stance in the Indian Ocean and parts of the South and East China Seas, areas critical to global trade and security.

Through dialogue and coordinated efforts, the Quad aims to tackle the growing threat of terrorism, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. By fostering diplomatic engagement and conflict resolution mechanisms, the Quad hopes to promote stability while ensuring economic prosperity for all member nations. The group's shared strategic vision is vital in shaping a multilayered, multilateral strategy for dealing with security challenges in an increasingly interconnected world. The Quad is not only a military alliance but also a platform for fostering development in fields such as education, science, biotechnology, and strategic planning, further strengthening the bonds between its members.

India's rising global influence has been evident through its leadership in multiple international organisations such as the G20, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). These roles have allowed India to showcase its diplomatic prowess and address global issues. The Quad summit provided yet another opportunity for India

to contribute to the development of a robust, cooperative international system. The discussions during the summit included the need to evolve a new strategic approach to counter threats from nations that seek to destabilise the global order.

A key focus of the summit was the Indo-Pacific region, where the Quad aims to ensure a free, open, and secure maritime environment. This area has become a flashpoint for various conflicts, with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) posing a significant challenge to regional stability. To counter this, the Quad members have collaborated on several initiatives, including the "Quad-at-Sea" Ship Observer Mission, which will enhance maritime security by 2025. Moreover, the group is also investing in renewable energy and high-quality infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific, aiming to foster sustainable development and reduce reliance on Chinese-led initiatives.

Health cooperation was another important topic at the summit, with the Quad leaders announcing a collaborative effort to combat cervical cancer through the Quad Cancer Moonshot initiative. This humanitarian approach, combined with the group's security efforts, underscores the

Quad's commitment to a comprehensive vision for regional stability and prosperity. The focus on addressing modern terrorism, including its funding and cyber threats, also highlights the Quad's adaptive approach to emerging security challenges.

The ongoing collaboration among the Quad nations is not limited to traditional security measures. The group is working to enhance policing cooperation, cyber security, and border protection by leveraging technological innovations. These efforts are particularly crucial in addressing non-state actors who engage in smuggling, drug trafficking, and cyber-attacks. By tightening security mechanisms and boosting intelligence-sharing, the Quad hopes to build a more resilient defense network across the Indo-Pacific. The Quad's influence has also extended to humanitarian aid, as seen in its support for Papua New Guinea. The summit emphasised the need for a vigilant, modern approach to security, replacing outdated strategies that no longer fit the current geopolitical landscape.

(The writer is recipient of Bharat Gaurav and Rastriya Gaurav Award is a professor and an expert of strategic affairs, views are personal)



THE QUAD LEADERS ARE WORKING TO COUNTER A VARIETY OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS, INCLUDING THE ONGOING WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE, TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM, AND THREATS EMERGING IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SIDDARAMAIAH FACES HEAT

Madam — The Karnataka High Court's dismissal of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the Governor's sanction for inquiry against him in the MUDA (Mysore Urban Development Authority) case is a political setback for Siddaramaiah. It is untenable for him to continue in office. The court has paved the way for Lokayukta to investigate the case in which the CM's wife Parvathi has been allotted 14 sites when she should have gotten only two sites as per rules. The judge raised some questions and inferences: Would the allotments have been made, "bending the rule from time to time," if the beneficiary were not the wife of a politician wielding power in various positions? While Siddaramaiah might not have signed any of the allotment documents or issued orders for the same, can he claim that he was not aware of what government favours his wife was getting and that she was claiming and getting benefits beyond her entitlement? These questions naturally lead to the judge's finding that "it prima facie, depicts stretching of the arms of undue influence and portrays abuse of power of the seat of the Chief Minister or Minister or any other post held by Siddaramaiah." For a politician who has had a relatively clean image over a long political career, these observations are damning. These are the very questions that the common man and voter, too, would be asking, given the facts of the case.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

CONCERN OVER CUSTODIAL DEATH

Madam — Now, another custodial death happened under another "double engine" government on September 23. According to the official report, Akshay Shinde, the accused of sexually assaulting two girls at a school in Badlapur, Maharashtra, snatched the revolver of one of the policemen, and he died in retaliatory firing by police. The Bombay High Court expressed serious concerns

Ensure children's safety



Recently, a physical education teacher (PET) was booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, as reported in your newspaper. The incident highlights the vulnerability of children but also raises serious questions about the effectiveness of current protective protocols in edu-

over the custodial death of the accused. The court asked, "Why was he shot in the head and not in the legs or arms first?" Justice Prithviraj Keshavrao Chavan observed, "He wasn't a heavily built or strong man. This raises serious doubts. This cannot be termed an encounter." Any custodial death always raises a question about whether it has deliberately been orchestrated to stop the accused from exposing some powerful culprits. Therefore, the custodial death of one of the convicts of a gang-rape case in Assam's Dhing area is not above suspicion.

In May, the Supreme Court expressed concern over custodial deaths and extrajudicial killings in Assam. The court was hearing a petition that cited 80 cases of "fake encounters" since May 2021, which resulted in 28 deaths and 48 injuries. I wonder how the people would have reacted had an accused in a case like the RG Kar Hospital case died in custody in Kolkata.

Sujit De | Kolkata

cational institutions. This distressing event underscores the urgent need for stronger measures to safeguard our children from such grievous acts. It is critical that schools adopt thorough background checks for all staff members and provide regular training on child protection measures.

Furthermore, the reported stone-pelting incident, which resulted in injuries to four policemen, is an alarming indicator of rising public disorder. It's essential for law enforcement agencies to address such issues swiftly to uphold public safety and order. The authorities should take immediate action to strengthen child protection laws and ensure strict enforcement. In addition, public awareness campaigns should be launched to educate the community about the importance of safeguarding our children and maintaining public order.

Juloori B Saraswathi | Hyderabad

KANGANA'S COMMENTS BACKFIRE

Madam — Actor-turned-politician and the BJP MP Kangana Ranaut once again at the centre of controversy with her recent remark calling for the return of the now-repealed farm laws, though withdrawing it later. Her remark highlights a pattern of provocative statements that raise important questions about her intentions and the broader political implications, leaving the BJP finds itself in an embarrassing situation every time. The BJP high command must know that while her willingness to engage in controversial topics can energise a segment of the party's base due to her celebrity status, her comments always draw flaks and pose risks.

The BJP must ensure that its party members maintain balance in their comments, especially when addressing sensitive topics like agriculture and farmers' rights.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Technology as a force multiplier in education

The intertwining of education and technology has brought about a profound transformation in the way knowledge is imparted

Education gave birth to technology and technology revolutionised education in several ways giving the "Force Multiplier" effect in promoting the main objectives of education. The Covid-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst in revolutionising the educational system. With many objectives and aims wherein education and technology both became mutually inclusive and dependent. Thus many educational tools emerged, and technology catapulted the availability of much-needed time that can be highlighted in various and innumerable ways, and how technology is promoting education with such tools. It becomes our utmost responsibility to guard against its misuse considering the emerging Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR). The Information technology (IT) resources thus aid in academics as well as research. A Learning Management system (LMS) along with an Enterprise resource planning (ERP) has been introduced in educational institutions and universities to have outcome-



based education.

The future of higher education thus lies in embracing technology effectively as is taught by the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, providing innovative use of e-learning platforms for an effective learning environment.

With technological advancements, it is now necessary to enhance education so that it meets the interests of both students and teachers.

It is very essential to build awareness about the process of technology with remarkable advances in technology. The way technological advancements are incorporated into the education system for knowledge transfer is remarkable. Thus the teach-

ing learning process has undergone revolutionary changes and posed challenges to forcibly learn the effective use of technology (teaching tools). While the education system is harnessing the several advantages of technology-based tools, it is pertinent and equally important to foresee the negative aspects emerging in some quarters and ponder over the preventive steps to be thought of in the ever-changing world of the education system. Thus Information Communication Technology (ICT) in education has become important for imparting quality education that is ethical, transparent and secure.

The ICT tools have transformed how the education sector is evolving. The rapidly emerging technology and the educational field are inseparable and they are like conjoined twins to monitor and improve quality in higher education. However, one needs to address the challenges associated with digital access to transform education. Education requires continuous monitoring, brainstorming and supervision and with the invasion of technology

into the teaching-learning process, it has become very effective. Technology offers accessibility to educational resources such as online platforms and digital libraries that offer a wealth of information making learning very interesting and dynamic. The e-resources aid in a very large magnitude, especially with the integration of artificial intelligence which will increase opportunities for research and academics. The design of technology and its implementation includes the perspectives and the skills that are required for diverse users. Thus technology is an integral part of education with the development of various devices such as laptops, smartphones, and apps that have changed the learning process. Education with technology has progressed by leaps and bounds in modern times. This blend has helped to achieve perfection but with caution that it must not be misused and produce adverse consequences.

(The writer is Director Academics, Dr DY Patil Medical College, Pune; views are personal)



P VATSALA SWAMY



FIRST COLUMN

COUNTERING WORKPLACE MANIPULATION

It can quietly undermine trust and productivity, often without employees realising the damage



SAKSHI SETHI

In any workplace, collaboration and effective communication are vital for achieving organisational goals. However, these dynamics can be undermined when manipulation becomes a part of the equation. A manipulative colleague can distort the working environment, leading to decreased morale, distrust among coworkers and even stifled productivity. Manipulative individuals may use various methods, including emotional blackmail, guilt-tripping, gaslighting, or even leveraging workplace politics to gain control or ascend in their careers. This type of manipulation involves the use of deceptive tactics by individuals to influence others for personal gain, often at the expense of colleagues.

Such individuals tend to be skilled at subtly exploiting their coworker's emotions or vulnerabilities, leaving their targets unaware of the manipulation until it has already caused them damage. Manipulative behaviours can manifest in different forms. Some may employ gaslighting, making others question their perception of reality, while others may pit coworkers against each other to create divisions. Moreover, in certain cases, manipulative colleagues present themselves as victims, seeking sympathy to evade accountability.

In more extreme cases, they might distort facts, spread rumours, or even take credit for others' accomplishments. The presence of a manipulative individual in the workplace can create a toxic environment. Manipulation can lead to a breakdown in trust among team members. Coworkers may become wary of each other, questioning each other's intentions and credibility. The tension that manipulation creates can also disrupt team cohesion, leading to a lack of collaboration and efficiency. Additionally, manipulative individuals often prioritise their agenda over the success of the group, negatively affecting overall productivity.



Constant manipulation may cause stress, anxiety, and frustration among colleagues. Individuals who fall victim to manipulation may experience decreased confidence in their abilities or find themselves overloaded with tasks due to guilt or coercion. Over time, this emotional strain may even lead to burnout, poor job satisfaction and higher turnover rates. While manipulation can be difficult to address directly, some strategies can help mitigate its effects and create a healthier work environment. The first and foremost step in dealing with manipulation is being able to identify it which involves recognising patterns of behaviour, such as when a coworker tries to guilt-trip into taking on tasks, using flattery to sway decisions or playing the victim to avoid accountability.

Dealing with a manipulative colleague in the workplace is a challenging task that requires both emotional intelligence and assertiveness. One of the most effective long-term solutions for dealing with workplace manipulation is to foster a culture of transparency, open communication and collaboration. A strong and united team is harder for manipulative individuals to exploit. If the manipulation becomes severe or affects the broader workplace, it may be necessary to seek help from higher management or HR. A neutral party can help mediate conflicts, establish formal boundaries and ensure that manipulative behaviours are addressed appropriately. Involving HR ensures that the organisation is aware of any detrimental patterns, protecting not just but potentially other colleagues as well. By recognising manipulative behaviours, setting clear boundaries and maintaining composure, an individual can mitigate the impact of such individuals. It is equally important to seek support from supervisors or HR when necessary and contribute towards creating a positive work environment. Staying vigilant and proactive can help ensure that manipulation does not compromise the productivity, well-being as well as overall success of the team.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

Charting a course for global leadership



GURMEET SINGH

The Government's ambitious Sagarmala project aims to solidify India's position as a dominant maritime power in the coming decades



The existing world order is undeniably in crisis, with geopolitical dynamics undergoing significant changes over recent decades.

Historically, the division between East and West, or North and South, largely defined global politics, with rich and poor nations distinctly separated by ideology, economic strength, and resources. However, this traditional world order began to shift dramatically towards the end of the 20th century, erasing the once-clear lines that divided these global spheres. What we see now is a world not defined by competing ideologies, but rather by economic and political strategies aimed at consolidating power and influence.

The latter half of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century have seen discernible shifts in global economic and political power.

The Cold War's end led to a unipolar world dominated by the United States, but cracks in this dominance began to appear, especially in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, which severely damaged faith in market-driven economies. Financial instability across the globe exposed the fragility of once-trusted economic systems. Simultaneously, international relations have grown increasingly strained, compounded by more recent crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022), the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict, and the resurgence of violence in the Israel-Hamas war. These events have brought the global economy back to a state of stress and instability.

This ongoing instability signals that the world is transitioning from a unipolar system, first towards a bipolar or tripolar system, and now, perhaps, toward a multipolar future. As new powers rise and old alliances shift, nations are compelled to reassess their resources and strategic positions. Among the most critical of these resources are those connected to the sea, particularly the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), which provide nations with substantial control over marine resources. These zones are essential for securing economic growth, national security, and environmental sustainability.

Human activity, driven by technological advancements, has increasingly turned towards the maritime domain, not only for international trade but also for security and ensuring open, free access to international



THE COLD WAR'S END LED TO A UNIPOLAR WORLD DOMINATED BY THE UNITED STATES, BUT CRACKS IN THIS DOMINANCE BEGAN TO APPEAR, ESPECIALLY IN THE WAKE OF THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS, WHICH SEVERELY DAMAGED FAITH IN MARKET-DRIVEN ECONOMIES

waters. The importance of the seas cannot be overstated, as oceans provide an array of resources vital to sustaining global commerce, energy needs, and food supplies. In recognition of this, international conventions and agreements have been signed to create standardised norms for maritime conduct, aiming to ensure peaceful seas.

One example of this shift is the practice of ships being registered under flags different from their countries of ownership, a practice now followed by more than 60 per cent of the world's ships. This reflects the interconnected nature of modern trade and economic systems. Additionally, with 85 per cent of the world's nations having a coastline and nearly 40 per cent of the global population living within 100 nautical miles of the sea, the importance of the maritime domain for both individual nations and global commerce is clear. Moreover, most of the world's major capitals and economic centers are situated along coasts, and 36 per cent of the ocean's area falls under the EEZ of nations. Critically, 97 per cent of the world's trade is conducted by sea, underscoring the dominance of maritime trade in global affairs.

Oceans represent an enormous economic opportunity, providing vast areas for investment, development, and growth. Many countries, including India, heavily depend on the sea for economic prosperity. Given this, the need for India to build a robust national maritime consciousness is more urgent than ever.

India is uniquely positioned as a maritime power, with a coastline of over 7,500 kilometers, an EEZ covering 2.37 million square kilometers, a continental shelf of 530,000 square kilometers, and nearly 1,200 islands. Since 2011, India has been working to extend its EEZ from 200 nautical miles to 350 nautical miles, which would give the nation access to an additional 1.2 million square kilometers of marine resources.

This extension would significantly bolster India's potential for economic growth through the exploitation of its maritime resources.

Historically, India's maritime heritage has been rich and vibrant. The Satavahanas, Pallavas, Cholas, and Pandyas built strong maritime traditions, engaging in far-flung trade that brought prosperity to their kingdoms. For example, during the 5th to 11th centuries, the Malacca Straits were controlled by the Srivijaya Empire, a critical maritime chokepoint for global trade. Indian ships, reputed for their advanced design and durability, played a significant role in regional and long-distance trade. However, after the arrival of the Mughals and later the British, India's maritime tradition began to erode, as colonial policies discouraged Indian maritime development.

One major oversight in modern Indian education is the neglect of this rich maritime past. Very few students are taught about India's ancient maritime successes, such as how the Chola Empire led military expeditions across Southeast Asia or how the Travancore Navy defeated the Dutch. This lack of awareness has stifled India's maritime aspirations, but there is a growing recognition that the nation must reclaim its historical maritime identity.

India's future as a global economic and political power will hinge on its ability to harness its maritime resources. With advancements in technology, deep-sea mining has emerged as a new frontier, offering the potential for extracting hydrocarbons, natural gas, and rare earth metals from the ocean floor.

In addition, the demand for shipping services is projected to grow as seaborne trade becomes even more critical to global economies. India, where 95 per cent of trade by volume and 77 per cent by value travels by sea, is particularly reliant on maritime trade for its continued economic growth. India must focus on developing multiple sectors

within the maritime domain, including fishing, shipbuilding, ports, coastal tourism, and blue energy. The country has a significant advantage in terms of labor costs and technological know-how, yet it contributes only 1 per cent to global shipbuilding. Furthermore, more than 60 per cent of Indian cargo is carried on foreign vessels, underscoring the need for greater domestic capacity in shipping and shipbuilding.

The Indian government's Sagarmala project, which envisions the modernisation of ports and coastal infrastructure, is a crucial step in developing the country's maritime potential. With an investment of USD 1.42 trillion planned by 2035, this project aims to revolutionise India's coastline, focusing on creating special economic zones, inland waterways, and promoting coastal tourism. India's growth as a maritime power will also enhance its standing as a responsible global player, capable of providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The Indian Navy's initiative to create the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in 2008 was an important step in fostering cooperation among regional navies. India is now seen as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean, reinforcing its commitment to maintaining open, rule-based seas. As India looks to the future, building awareness about the maritime domain and its economic potential is essential. Universities and defense institutions must collaborate to design programs that will prepare future generations to embrace India's maritime identity. Through a combination of education, policy, and strategic investment, India has the opportunity to emerge as a true maritime power and an influential global leader.

(The writer is former Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University and former Vice-Chancellor of Gandhigram Rural Institute; views are personal. Inputs by A. Subramanyam Raju)

Education in the Age of AI: Why traditional methods no longer fit the future

As automation and artificial intelligence reshape industries, the education system faces an urgent need for transformation

The growing controversy around entrance exams, particularly regarding paper leaks, has spotlighted the need for reforms in our education and evaluation systems. One obvious solution is transitioning to computer-based exams, which have already been implemented for major tests like JEE Mains, BITSAT, and CAT. These exams feature randomly generated questions and simultaneous distribution across various nodes, effectively preventing paper leaks. Additionally, the possibility of immediate grading offers transparency. Conducting such exams multiple times a year could also alleviate the immense pressure students face. However, while the method of testing is a critical discussion,



RAJNEESH BHANDARI

it is equally important to reassess the fundamentals of our education system. The questions of "why to teach," "what to teach," "how to teach," "how to evaluate," and "why to evaluate" should be at the heart of this debate. Oscar Wilde once remarked, "Education is an admirable thing, but nothing that is worth learning can be taught."

This statement resonates deeply with the current state of education. Our system tends to follow a one-size-fits-all model, assuming that sixty students in a classroom can learn the same material at the same pace and, more importantly, enjoy the process.

Rote learning, which dominates the Indian education system, is a clear indicator of how outdated the approach has become, especially in an era of artificial intelligence. Until 2011, CBSE even offered Typewriting as a subject, reflecting how antiquated parts of the curriculum are. The pressure on students has reached a breaking point, contributing to alarmingly high suicide rates among those preparing for competitive entrance exams. Many stu-

dents begin preparing for entrance exams like the IITs from as early as the ninth grade, which hampers their childhood and overall development.

Each individual is unique, and every human brain functions differently. Despite advancements in pedagogy—the science of learning—we continue to follow an archaic, cookie-cutter approach that aims to mass-produce education. The original purpose of mass education was to prepare individuals for jobs. However, automation and AI are now poised to eliminate many of these jobs. Technological advancements are rapidly rendering certain skills obsolete. A large number of young professionals today are employed in the app and web develop-



ment sectors, jobs that can now be done by generative AI systems like ChatGPT. These systems can create apps or websites based on simple prompts. Furthermore, with tools like generative AI, anyone has the potential to become a writer, artist, musician, or coder, drastically reducing the skill gaps that once existed between experts and novices. The most critical skill in the

future, therefore, will not be the ability to perform a specific task, but the ability to learn and adapt continuously. In an ever-changing world, much of the knowledge we acquire will either become irrelevant or require frequent updates. Education should not be seen as a one-time investment made during the early years of life. Instead, learning should be recognised as a lifelong journey. The degree one earns at the beginning of their career may be irrelevant by the time they are halfway through it. Traditional degrees, once crucial for securing jobs, may lose their relevance in the coming years. Many software developers, for instance, learn programming from online platforms like Coursera, rather than from formal university

programs. The way companies evaluate job candidates is also evolving. Resumes are increasingly being replaced by portfolio reviews, where individuals can showcase their skills and creativity. The impact of AI on education is already evident. Last year, ChatGPT made headlines by passing the US Medical Licensing Exam, the law school exam, and Google's coding exam. This has sparked debates about whether AI tools should be banned in educational institutions. Nassim Taleb recently commented on this by stating, "ChatGPT passing is not a reflection of ChatGPT but of the examination system." The core purpose of education should not be to test students by limiting their resources, but

rather to prepare them to solve real-world problems using all available tools. A calculator, for example, is a common tool allowed in many international board exams but still restricted in some Indian boards like CBSE. Generative AI holds the potential to revolutionise education by generating personalised lesson plans and assessments. Virtual tutors providing real-time feedback are already available through platforms like Khan Academy and Duolingo. The future of education lies in learning that is seamlessly embedded in everyday life, facilitated by mentors rather than traditional teachers.

(The writer is founder Founder NeuroEquilibrium; views are personal)

11 killed in Israeli strike on school in Gaza

An Israeli airstrike hit a school sheltering thousands of displaced Palestinians in northern Gaza on Thursday, killing at least 11 people and wounding 22, including women and children, the territory's Health Ministry said.



Iranian worshippers chant slogans as they hold up posters of Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group flags during an anti-Israeli rally after Friday prayers in Tehran, Iran, Friday.

Israeli forces have repeatedly struck schools, saying Hamas fighters use them as "command centres" to plan attacks. The military says it uses precision weapons to avoid civilian casualties. The strikes have brought heavy death tolls. Tens of thousands of Palestinians are living packed in schools across Gaza after fleeing their homes in the face of Israeli bombardment and offensives.

living packed in schools across Gaza after fleeing their homes in the face of Israeli bombardment and offensives. More than 1.9 million of Gaza's 2.4 million people have been displaced in the nearly yearlong conflict, according to the United Nations. In the southern city of Khan Younis, authorities buried in a mass grave the bodies of 88 Palestinians that Israel returned to the Gaza Strip a day earlier.

Air raid sirens sound across Israel's populous area, including Tel Aviv

New York (AP): Israel's military says it has intercepted a missile fired from Yemen that set off air raid sirens across the country's centre. Air raid sirens rang out across Israel's populous central area, including the seaside metropolis of Tel Aviv. Another missile from Yemen landed in central Israel about two weeks ago.

Kamala Harris leads Trump in several battleground states, polls say

Washington (PTI): US Vice President Kamala Harris has taken the lead over her Republican presidential rival Donald Trump in several key battleground states like Arizona, Michigan and Pennsylvania, according to various polls released here.

State against Trump, it said. "For a swing state, this margin is good news for the vice president's campaign," Rodrigo Castro Cornejo, UMass Lowell political science assistant professor and Center for Public Opinion associate director, said. If Trump wants to beat this margin, he has an uphill battle to fight in the Great Lakes State.

Erdogan skips mention of Kashmir at UN; focuses on Gaza

New York (PTI): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan did not mention Kashmir in his address at the United Nations General Assembly this year, the first time he has skipped the issues since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. The focus of his 35-minute speech this year was the humanitarian situation in Gaza, where over 40,000 people have died in Israeli attacks against Hamas.

Sudan military offensive sparks new fighting in Khartoum

AP ■ CAIRO New fighting rocked Sudan's capital on Thursday with airstrikes and drone attacks in and around Khartoum amid a worsening cholera outbreak, officials said. Sudan's military launched an operation in the early hours of Thursday aimed at taking control of areas in the capital that had been in the hands of its enemy, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, or RSF.

heaviest in the capital area in months. Mohamed Ibrahim, the health ministry's spokesperson in Khartoum, said in a statement that four civilians were killed and 14 others wounded in the latest fighting in the Karrari district of Omdurman, a city next to the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. A military spokesman confirmed the operation was underway, but declined to comment further. A military spokesman confirmed the operation was underway, but declined to comment further.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE ICICI Bank Limited. The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED Registered Office: Aggarwal Corporate Tower, Plot No. 23, 5th Floor, Govind Lal Sikka Marg, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008. E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE "APPENDIX IV-A" [SEE PROVISION TO RULE 8(6)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES.

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor(s), Description of Property/Asset to be enforced, Date of Notice sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice, NPA Date. Includes details for Rakesh Kumar Singh and others.

PUBLIC NOTICE ICICI Bank. The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA).

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor(s), Description of Secured Asset to be enforced, Date of Notice sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice, NPA Date. Includes details for Dipanjali Dass and Shruti Singh.

उत्तराखण्ड आयुर्वेद विश्वविद्यालय. General public is hereby informed that we 1. (i) Veena Duttia late Sudeshan Kumar Dutta, (ii) Shivani Raizada W/o Rakesh Kumar Raizada Dio late Sudeshan Kumar Dutta, (iii) Gitika Dutta Dio late Sudeshan Kumar Dutta, (iv) Asha Rami Dutta W/o late Sudesh Kumar Dutta, (v) Anurag Dutta S/o late Sudesh Kumar Dutta, (vi) Tarun Dutta S/o late Sudesh Kumar Dutta, (vii) Shashi Sudan W/o Pradeep Kumar Sudan Dio late S.R. Dutta, (viii) Nilam Sharma W/o Vinod Kumar Sharma Dio late S.R. Dutta, (ix) Col. Subhash Chander Dutta S/o late S.R. Dutta are filing application in LADO for substitution of the property No. G-88, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019 in the name of 1. (i) Veena Duttia, (ii) Shivani Raizada, (iii) Gitika Dutta, (iv) Asha Rami Dutta, (v) Anurag Dutta, (vi) Tarun Dutta, (vii) Shashi Sudan, (viii) Nilam Sharma, (ix) Col. Subhash Chander Dutta on the grounds of Legal Heirs.

PUBLIC NOTICE. Information is given to general public at large that Mr. Rajat Nagar S/o Mr. Gyanendra Nagar who is/are purchasing the Property No. 1/11168-A, on Second Floor, area measuring 60 Sq. Yards, Plot No. 3, Out of Kharsa No. 159, situated at Village Pochanpur, Delhi vide Gift Deed Dt. 18.10.2023 executed by Mr. Vijender Kumar, Now Mrs. Saroj is the undisputed owner of the said property.

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Koral Bagh, New Delhi-110005. PUBLIC NOTICE: Builder Cancellation. This is to bring to your notice that HEMALATA YADAV/AVANISH KUMAR (borrowers) has availed Home Loan facility vide facility agreement number LBDEL0000519396 located at FLAT NO 604, 6TH FLOOR, TOWER D2, AANGAN, VILLAGE HARSARU, SECTOR- 88A/89A, GURGAON.

ICICI Bank Branch: Lajpat Nagar Branch, A-13, 1st Floor, DDA Complex, Defence Colony, Delhi-110024. Email: LS12@indianbank.co.in. (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY) Date: 24.09.2024. Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the INDIAN BANK, LAJPAT NAGAR BRANCH (Br. Code-4363), DELHI under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act No 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 14.05.2024 calling upon the Borrower M/S MAHASHAKTI ENTERPRISES PROP. MUKESH KUMAR S/O SHRI ROOP CHAND & Guarantor(s) (1) Mr. MUKESH KUMAR S/O SHRI ROOP CHAND Borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs 1,00,56,884.00/- (Rupees one crore fifty six thousand eight hundred eighty four only) Inclusive of interest applied upto 13.05.2024, and interest thereon from 14.05.2024 till date of repayment within 60 days from the date of said notice together with incidental expenses, Cost Charge etc.

PUBLIC NOTICE. To be known to all, Vrinda Upadhyaya W/o Shri Yogesh Upadhyaya R/o Flat No. 209 F, Pocket 1, Mayur Vihar, Phase 1, Delhi-110091, is the owner of Property Flat No. 209 F, Second Floor, Pocket 1, Mayur Vihar, Phase 1, Delhi-110091, has/have applied for certified copy & conversion from leasehold to freehold in DDA. The original Possession Letter, of the above said Flat has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR No. 2156391/2024 dated 27/09/2024 on this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi.

MANIBHAVNAM HOME FINANCE INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED. POSSESSION NOTICE (Appendix IV) Rule 8(1). Whereas the Authorized Officer of Manibhavnam Home Finance India Pvt. Ltd. (a hereinafter referred to as "MBHF"), MBHF, which has duly been authorised by the Central Government, vide a notification dated 17.06.2021, to be treated as a Financial Institution, for the purposes of the "The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, having its registered office at: 2nd Floor, N-2, South Extension Part-I, New Delhi-110049 under the provisions of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) (hereinafter referred to as "Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice to the following borrower(s) and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 as per under mentioned Date.

UK's Starmer meets Pak PM agrees to 'deepen' relations

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer met his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, where they agreed to deepen bilateral ties across trade, climate and security. According to a Downing Street readout of the discussions on Thursday, Starmer also congratulated Pakistan's election as a non-permanent member to the UN Security Council for the 2025-2026 term earlier this year.



Keir Starmer and Shehbaz Sharif during their meeting in New York.

"They discussed the deep relationship between the UK and Pakistan, including strong people to people links, and on trade and investment," Downing Street said of the Starmer-Sharif meeting. "They agreed to work together to deepen these relations further, particularly on trade, climate, and security. The Prime Minister also congratulated Prime Minister Sharif on Pakistan's election to the UN Security Council and agreed on the importance of working to strengthen the multilateral system," the statement added.

"I call on Israel and Hezbollah: stop the violence; step back from the brink. We need to see an immediate ceasefire to provide space for a diplomatic settlement, and we are working with all partners to that end because further escalation serves no one," said Starmer.

"This is intimately linked with the situation in Gaza where, again, we need to see an immediate ceasefire. It shames us all that the suffering in Gaza continues to grow. The answer is diplomacy, the release of all the hostages, and the unfettered flow of aid to those in need. That is the only way to break this devastating cycle of violence and begin the journey towards a political solution for the long term which delivers

the long-promised Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel," he said.

In his first speech to UNGA as the UK's recently elected Labour Prime Minister, Starmer said the UN needs to "work together for peace, progress and equality" - including "preventing a regional war in the Middle East".

With reference to the UN's role, he added: "The entire framework of arms control and counter-proliferation - painstakingly constructed over decades - has begun to fall away. Iran continues to expand its nuclear activity in violation of its international commitments. Incredible new technologies like AI are being deployed for military use without agreed rules. "These are dif-

icult challenges to grip and too urgent to ignore.

We must put new energy and creativity into conflict resolution and conflict prevention, reverse the trend towards ever-greater violence, make the institutions of peace fit for purpose, and hold members to their commitments under the UN Charter," he said.

Starmer also went on to hold discussions with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, as well as a meeting with US presidential candidate Donald Trump at Trump Tower in New York. A meeting with his Democrat opponent, US Vice-President Kamala Harris, reportedly could not be scheduled due to diary clashes.

15 killed in landslide at gold mine in Sumatra, Indonesia

Padang (AP): A landslide triggered by torrential rains struck an unauthorised gold mining operation on Indonesia's Sumatra island, killing at least 15 people, officials said Friday.

Dozens others were reported missing. Villagers were digging Thursday for grains of gold in the remote Solok district of West Sumatra province when mud plunged down the surrounding hills and buried them, said Irwan Effendi, head of the local disaster mitigation agency office. He said at least 25 people were still buried, and that three people were pulled out alive with injuries by rescuers. Search efforts in the worst-affected area, near Nagari Sungai Abu village, were hampered by mudslides that covered much of the area, blackouts and lack of telecommunications. "The devastated mining area can only be reached by walking for four hours from the nearest settlement," said Ilham Wahab, the agency's spokesperson. Informal mining operations are common in Indonesia, providing a tenuous livelihood to thousands who labour in conditions with a high risk of serious injury or death. Landslides, flooding and collapses of tunnels are just some of the hazards facing miners. Much of gold ore processing involves highly toxic mercury and cyanide and workers frequently use little or no protection.

EU moves forward on Ukraine war without US

AP ■ BRUSSELS

As the war in Ukraine enters a critical period, the European Union has decided that it must take responsibility for what it sees as an existential threat to security in its own neighbourhood and is preparing to tackle some of the financial burden, perhaps even without the United States. EU envoys have been working in Brussels this week on a proposal to provide Ukraine with a hefty loan package worth up to 35 billion euros (USD 39 billion). It was announced by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during a trip to Kyiv last Friday. "Crucially, this loan will flow straight into your national budget," she told President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "It will provide you with significant and much-needed fiscal space. You will decide how best to use the funds, giving you maximum flexibility to meet your needs."

Zelenskyy wants to buy weapons and bomb shelters and rebuild Ukraine's shattered energy network as winter draws near. In international matters, particularly involving major conflicts, the EU rarely moves ahead without the US, but it hopes this decision will encourage others to come forward. Almost 1,000 days since their full-scale invasion, Russian forces are making advances in the east. Ukraine's army has a shaky hold on part of the Kursk region in Russia, which has provided a temporary morale boost, but as casualties mount it remains outnumbered and outgunned.

On the political front, Zelenskyy hopes to secure support for a "victory plan" that might force Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table. He's trying to persuade US President Joe Biden and other allies to help strengthen Ukraine's hand in any future talks. But a US election looms, and polls suggest that Donald Trump might return to the White House in January. Trump has been critical of US aid to Ukraine. On Wednesday, he said Zelenskyy should have made concessions to Putin before the invasion began in February 2022. Most of the 27-nation EU fears that a Putin victory would lead to deep uncertainty. Russia's armed forces are depleted and currently incapable of another war, but the prospect of a future land grab in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Poland remains.

The EU loans are part of a plan by the Group of Seven major industrialised nations to take advantage of interest earned on about USD 250 billion worth of frozen Russian assets, most of them held in Europe. These windfall profits are estimated at around 4.5 billion to 5.5 billion euros (USD 5 billion to USD 6 billion) a year. The profits underpin the G7 plan. The EU would stump up USD 20 billion, the US USD 20 billion, and Canada, Japan and the UK USD 10 billion together, for a combined total of USD 50 billion. The scheme expires at the end of the year, before the next US president takes office. Now, amid differences over how long the

Russian asset freeze should be guaranteed, the EU has decided to go it alone. Its offer of up to USD 39 billion in loans accounts for almost the entirety of the US share as well. The US wants to ensure that the assets are locked away for at least three years to guarantee the income. But EU member Hungary insists this should only happen in 6-month increments. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban styles himself as a peacemaker and is too close to Putin for many of his partners' comfort. The other 26 EU countries feel they must move now because time is running out.

The US election is just weeks away. The Europeans are wary of Trump's unpredictability and are testing scenarios to help protect themselves from the kind of battering, like tariff hikes, their economies received during his past presidency. But they also see the Democrats as more inward looking these days. Biden's Inflation Reduction Act left European leaders fuming over rules that favored American products. China and war in the Middle East are the foreign policy priorities of Democrat or Republican candidates alike, and for now the US is in the grip of election campaign fever. The EU hopes that Vice President Kamala Harris, if she is elected president, would enter the loan programme as previously planned and reduce the EU's financial burden. But that remains an open question for now, and EU members say Ukraine's position is too precarious to hesitate.

Former Defence Min Ishiba to become Japan PM

Tokyo (AP): Japan's ruling party on Friday picked former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba as leader, setting him up to become prime minister next week.



Shigeru Ishiba, former defence minister, speaking at a podium.

The party leadership win is a ticket to the top job because the Liberal Democratic Party's ruling coalition currently controls the parliament. Considered a defense policy expert, Ishiba has proposed an Asian version of the NATO military alliance and a more equal Japan-US security alliance. Ishiba is a supporter of Taiwan's democracy. He calls for an establishment of a disaster management agency in one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

Fumio Kishida has been dogged by party corruption scandals, and the LDP wanted a fresh leader in hopes of a regaining public trust before a likely general election.

Some experts believe that party turmoil could mean that Japan will return to an era similar to the early 2000s, which saw "revolving door" leadership changes and political instability.

A succession of short-lived governments hurts Japanese prime ministers' ability to set up long-term policy goals or develop trusted relations with

other leaders. On Tuesday, Kishida and his Cabinet ministers will resign. Ishiba, after being formally elected in a parliamentary vote, will then form a new Cabinet later in the day. The main opposition - the liberal-leaning Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan - has struggled to build momentum, despite the LDP scandals. But experts say its newly elected leader, centrist former Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, is pushing a conservative shift for the party, could trigger a broader political regroupings.

Cricket record

Singapore (PTI): Migrant workers, particularly from South Asian countries, played social cricket free in Singapore and won recognition in a Guinness Book for World Records for a tournament at a single venue, a report said on Friday. GWR recognised the Singapore Social Cricket League (SCL) as the "largest cricket tournament played at a single venue" from July 13 to September 15 involving 102 teams, 286 matches, and 2,220 players.

SIGNALING WORKS IN KATIHAR DIVISION

Tender Notice No.: N-2024-K-15, Date: 24-09-2024. E-Tender is invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No.: N-2024-K-15; Name of Work:** Signaling work during various Engineering machine work (PQRS and Unimat machine work in Kishanganj-Old Malda Junction section) over Katihar Division. **Tender Value:** ₹ 22,56,677.62/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 45,100/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 16-10-2024. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 16-10-2024 in the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

DRM (S&T), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Harpreet Singh S/o, Gurdev Singh, R/o. M-133-136, Raghuvir Nagar, Tagore Garden, Delhi - 110027 that My Wife's name Pawan Kaur Wrongly Written in my minor daughter Brahamleen Kaur (Date Of Birth 19/04/2021) school's documents but her correct name is Pawan Kumari. PD(789)C

LOST & FOUND

I, Mr. Siddharath Bhardwaj S/o Mr. S.P. Bhardwaj has to inform that I have misplaced the Original Share Certificate of C-102, Mayurdhwaj Apartments, Plot No.60, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092 having Membership No.73 and is not traceable by my best efforts. PD(800)A

ELECTRICAL WORK IN KATIHAR DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No.: EL/29/09_2024/K/785, dated: 25-09-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No:** 09_2024; **Name of work:** At Katihar Division:- Comprehensive AMC of Cummins make 500 KVA DA Generator Sets for schedule maintenance of Diesel Engines and its alternator in power cars with enroute escorting and operation of DG sets from originating to destination and back for a period of 03 years. **Tender Value:** ₹12,34,25,720.22; **Earnest Money:** ₹7,67,200.00. E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 16-10-2024 and Opened at 15:30 hrs. on 16-10-2024. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 16-10-2024 in website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DEE/G & Chg./Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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कार्यालय माध्यमिक शिक्षा मण्डल मध्यप्रदेश, भोपाल

क्रमांक/3555/2024 भोपाल, दिनांक : 26.09.2024

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

वर्ष 2024-25 की परीक्षाओं में उपयोग हेतु केन्द्र, मूल्यांकन एवं अन्य सामग्री का (मय कागज) मुद्रण कर, माध्यमिक शिक्षा मण्डल, भोपाल तक पहुँचाने (परिवहन व्यय सहित) के कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर उपलब्ध है।

महत्वपूर्ण तिथियाँ

1. निविदा प्रकाशन तिथि :	04.10.2024
2. निविदा दस्तावेज डाउनलोड करने की तिथि :	05.10.2024 सायं 5:00 बजे
3. निविदा की अंतिम तिथि :	25.10.2024 सायं 5:00 बजे
4. तकनीकी बिड्स खोलने की तिथि :	28.10.2024 अपराह्न 3:30 बजे
5. वित्तीय बिड्स खोलने की तिथि :	30.10.2024 अपराह्न 3:30 बजे

म.प्र. माध्यम/116626/2024 सचिव

PUBLIC NOTICE

OFFICE OF THE CITY MAGISTRATE/MARRIAGE OFFICER, GAUTAMBUDH NAGAR

NO.959/ST-CM (Marriage Registration)/2024

Date: 20 September, 2024

A notice of intended marriage has been received from Mr. Siddharth S/o Mr. Haribandhu Panda R/o Flat No.-1805, 18th Floor Mahagun Maple, Sector-50 Noida, Gautambudha Nagar and Ms. Naphatalin Wichumapraphat D/o Mr. Natthiphat R/o 49/2/8 Village No.5 Lat Sawai Lam Luk K. Thailand in the Office of the undersigned, any person interested therein, may file objection to it on any day upto 18-10-2024 in The Office of The undersigned.

Deputy Collector/City Magistrate/Marriage Officer Noida Gautambudh Nagar

ENGINEERING WORKS IN KATIHAR DIVISION

Tender Notice No.: KIR/Engg./38 of 2024, Dated: 19-09-2024; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Brief Description of Work:** At Radhikapur - Construction of two new lines and extension of other three short CSL existing lines to make it full CSL. **Tender Value:** ₹6,95,12,711.77/-; **Bid Security:** ₹4,97,600/-; **Date & time of closing of above tender at 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 21-10-2024.** For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 21-10-2024 in website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (W), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT KATIHAR DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. EL/29/10_2024/K/786 Dated: 25-09-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No. 10_2024. Name of work:** At Katihar Division:- Comprehensive AMC of Greaves make 500 KVA DA Generator Sets for schedule maintenance of Diesel Engines and its Alternator in Power Cars with enroute escorting and operation of DG sets from originating to destination and back for a period of 03 years. **Tender Value:** ₹3,92,75,071.19/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,46,400/- **Date & time of closing of tender: 15:00 hrs. of 16-10-2024 and opening at 15:30 hrs. of 16-10-2024.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. of 16-10-2024 in website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DEE (G & Chg), Katihar
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NOTICE

Locker Hired by MONIKA JUNEJA having address at B-4-1 SECTOR-7 ROHINI New Delhi-110085 Delhi India with Branch Janakpuri B-3/63, Ground Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058 remains un-operated from last 9 years.

All the 3 letters earlier sent to MONIKA JUNEJA calling upon her to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unserved and she is not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice, if dues not cleared and locker is not operated by MONIKA JUNEJA within 90 days from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **December 28, 2024** at around 12p.m.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given to whomsoever it may concern that "Hestabit Technologies Private Limited" through its authorized signatory Mr. Prashant Gautam, is the owner of the Property bearing Flat No-12A-04 (Super area 1125 Sq.Ft.) Nandini Metro Suites, Sector-04, Vaishali, Ghaziabad ("Property") who intends to sell his property and my client Chakshu Salotra W/o Kapil Kumar R/o A-110, Chander Nagar, Ghaziabad (U.P) 201011 intends to buy the said Property. In case any person/entity (a) have/have any claim, right, title, interest, lien or charge etc. or any other impediment whatsoever over the said property or (b) has/have any objection to such sale or otherwise has any knowledge to such claim, right, title, interest, lien or charge etc or any other impediment whatsoever over the said property, then such person/entity may inform/notify/provide its objection/claim to their undersigned along with documentary evidence within 10 days from the date of this Notice. Failing which it shall be Presumed that the above owner has absolute, clear and marketable title, free from all encumbrances and also for sale/complete the transaction of sale, of such property to my client.

Sd/-
Anil Kumar (Advocate)
Chamber No.-50, Tashil Compound Ghaziabad (U.P) Mob.-9818774325

E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2024

E-Auction additional programme for sale of Railway Scrap materials under jurisdiction of Lumding Division for the month of October '2024 is hereby fixed as under:

SN	MONTH	DATE FIXED
1	OCTOBER '2024	01/10/2024, 30/10/2024

Interested bidders may participate in E-auction through IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Material Manager, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers with a smile

NOTICE

Locker Hired by MEENA BAJAJ & LOKESH BAJAJ having address at S-2-125 MAHAVIR NAGAR SEC II TILAK NAGAR JANAKPURI EAST New Delhi-110018 Delhi India with B-3/63, Ground Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058 remains un-operated from last 9 years.

All the 3 letters earlier sent to MEENA BAJAJ & LOKESH BAJAJ calling upon them to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unserved and they are not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice, if dues not cleared and locker is not operated by MEENA BAJAJ & LOKESH BAJAJ within 90 days from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **December 28, 2024** at around 12p.m.

NOTICE

Locker Hired by EKTA ARORA & SANDEEP ARORA having address at 69-1 2ND FLOOR ASHOK NAGAR NEW DELHI Delhi-110018 Delhi India with B-3/63, Ground Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058 remains un-operated from last 9 years.

All the 3 letters earlier sent to EKTA ARORA & SANDEEP ARORA calling upon them to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unserved and they are not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice, if dues not cleared and locker is not operated by EKTA ARORA & SANDEEP ARORA within 90 days from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **December 28, 2024** at around 12p.m.

NOTICE

Locker Hired by CHAND SETH & NITIN SETH having address at C-1-203 JANAK PURI New Delhi-110058 Delhi India with Branch Janakpuri B-3/63, Ground Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058 remains un-operated from last 9 years.

All the 3 letters earlier sent to CHAND SETH & NITIN SETH calling upon them to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unserved and they is not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice, if dues not cleared and locker is not operated by CHAND SETH & NITIN SETH within 90 days from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **December 28, 2024** at around 12p.m.

NOTICE

Locker Hired by AMRIK SINGH having address at WZ-9,GALI NO 1,SECOND FLOOR SHIV NAGAR, JAIL ROAD New Delhi-110064 with Branch Janakpuri B-3/63, Ground Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058 remains un-operated from last 9 years.

All the 3 letters earlier sent to AMRIK SINGH calling upon him to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unserved and he is not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice, if dues not cleared and locker is not operated by AMRIK SINGH within 90 days from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **December 28, 2024** at around 12p.m.

NOTICE

Locker Hired by MONIKA JUNEJA having address at B-4-1 SECTOR-7 ROHINI New Delhi-110085 Delhi India with Branch Janakpuri B-3/63, Ground Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058 remains un-operated from last 9 years.

All the 3 letters earlier sent to MONIKA JUNEJA calling upon her to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unserved and she is not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice, if dues not cleared and locker is not operated by MONIKA JUNEJA within 90 days from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **December 28, 2024** at around 12p.m.

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All the 3 letters earlier sent to AMRIK SINGH calling upon him to clear dues and to operate the locker has returned unserved and he is not contactable.

It is hereby informed that despite this notice, if dues not cleared and locker is not operated by AMRIK SINGH within 90 days from the date of this notice, break open of the said locker will be done on **December 28, 2024** at around 12p.m.

Maggie Smith, star of stage, film and 'Downton Abbey,' dies at 89

London (AP): Maggie Smith, the masterful, scene-stealing actor who won an Oscar for "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" in 1969 and gained new fans in the 21st century as the dowager Countess of Grantham in "Downton Abbey" and Professor Minerva McGonagall in the Harry Potter films, died Friday. She was 89.



Smith drily summarized her later roles as "a gallery of grotesques," including Professor McGonagall. Asked why she took the role, she quipped: "Harry Potter is my pension." Richard Eyre, who directed Smith in a television production of "Suddenly Last Summer," said she was "intellectually the smartest actress I've ever worked with. You have to get up very, very early in the morning to outwit Maggie Smith." "Jean Brodie," in which she played a dangerously charismatic Edinburgh schoolteacher, brought her the Academy Award for best actress, and the

British Academy Film Award (BAFTA) as well in 1969. Smith added a supporting actress Oscar for "California Suite" in 1978, Golden Globes for "California Suite" and "Room with a View," and BAFTAs for lead actress in "A Private Function" in 1984, "A Room with a View" in 1986, and "The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne" in 1988. She also received Academy Award nominations as a supporting actress in "Othello," "Travels with My Aunt," "Room with a View," and "Gosford Park," and a BAFTA award for supporting actress in "Tea with Mussolini." On stage, she won a Tony in 1990 for "Lettice and Lovage." Her work in 2012 netted three Golden Globe nominations for the globally successful "Downton Abbey" TV series and the films "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" and "Quartet." Smith had a reputation for being difficult, and sometimes upstaging others. Richard Burton remarked that Smith didn't just take over a scene in "The VIPs" with him: "She commits grand larceny."

SC clears GMR Airports to operate Nagpur airport, closes curative plea of Centre, AAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday cleared decks for private firm GMR Airports to upgrade and operate Nagpur's Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport (AAI) by closing the proceedings on a curative plea of the Centre and the Airport Authority of India.

The Centre and the AAI had filed a curative petition against the dismissal of their review plea by the top court.

Prior to this, the apex court had rejected the petition of the Centre and the AAI against a Bombay High Court judgement allowing GMR Airports to upgrade and operate the Nagpur airport.

A special four-judge bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai and J K Maheshwari closed the proceedings on the curative plea against its verdict after taking note of the opinion of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the petition of the Centre and the AAI did not



fall under one of legal parameters prescribed for entertaining such pleas.

The curative plea is the last legal recourse available to a litigant and it was devised by the top court by a 2002 judgement in the Rupa Ashok Hurra case and such a plea, after the dismissal of the main case and the review petition, can be filed if there are certain violations.

They are that there should be a violation of the principle of natural justice, apprehension of bias and the abuse of judicial process.

The top law officer told the bench the curative plea may not fall under the 2002 judgement and they cannot argue that ground of bias and

analogous ground that the government was not heard.

"These proceedings cannot be made into an intra court appeal. I must own my decision.... I have not even consulted the Centre," the solicitor general said.

The law officer, however, submitted one aspect where the impugned judgement said the Centre and the AAI were not the necessary parties to the litigation may be reconsidered because of negative consequences in similar matters.

The bench appreciated views of the solicitor general, and said the curative plea is disposed of as 'not pressed'. Allowing the submission of the law officer, the bench said,

"The observation ...Of the judgment that the AAI and the Union of India are not necessary parties would not be the correct position in law."

Earlier, the bench had sought the "dispassionate views" of the solicitor general as an officer of the court and not as a lawyer of the Centre and the AAI in the case.

The top court had on May 9, 2022 upheld the Bombay High Court order which quashed a March 2020 communication issued by a joint venture firm cancelling a contract awarded to GMR Airports for the upgradation and operation of the airport.

The Centre and the AAI had filed the curative plea against the 2022 order of the top court.

The special bench had taken up the curative plea in an open court for hearing.

The bench said since it was taking up the curative petition, it has to keep in mind the balance of equity as there are competing interests of the State and the private firm.

Prior to this, the bench had

directed the civil aviation ministry to submit the file notings pertaining to the tender process for the airport.

In 2022, the top court, while upholding the high court's order which quashed the March 2020 communication issued by the joint venture firm, MIHAN India Ltd (Multi Modal international Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur), cancelling the award of contract to GMR Airports, had said the impugned judgment was based on sound reasoning and true analysis of facts and did not warrant interference.

"We are of the considered opinion that the findings recorded by the High Court allowing the writ petition are in accordance with law. Those findings do not suffer from any illegality, warranting interference by this court in exercise of the power under Article 136 of the Constitution. All these appeals are hereby dismissed," a bench of Justices Vineet Saran, since retired, and J K Maheshwari had said on May 9, 2022.

Government plans 4.5-6 crore textile jobs by 2030

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has prepared a road map for creating 4.5-6 crore jobs in the textile sector by 2030, Union Minister Giriraj Singh said on Friday, asserting that efforts are being made to take the sector's market size to USD 350 billion from around USD 165 billion at present.

Addressing a press conference on the 100-day programme of Ministry of Textiles, Singh said: "The 100-day road map we have prepared includes (attracting) investment to the tune of lakhs of crores (in the textile sector) going forward. We have prepared a road map for creation of 4.5 crore to 6 crore jobs by 2030."

He shared that the seven PM-MITRA integrated mega textile parks approved earlier will have investment to the tune of Rs 70,000 crore when fully functional, thereby creating 21 lakh jobs.

Taking a dig at previous Congress-led governments, he said, they would not do anything in the first three months whereas the Modi government has started with



a 100-day road map.

"Earlier, when a new government was formed, for three months, they would speak in irreverent terms. Which, they (in an apparent reference to Rahul Gandhi) are currently doing abroad. On the other hand, the Modi government has drawn a road map for development in the first three months," Singh said.

He said that there are plans to take the size of India's textile sector to USD 350 billion.

"To reach a size of USD 350 billion in the coming days, we need man-made fabric, whether it be synthetic, viscose or natural fibre, we are preparing for everything," said the minister, adding that over 350 brands globally

procure clothes from India and one should look not just the export figures but domestic numbers also.

Notably, India's textiles exports declined for the second year in a row in 2023-24.

The government has set an ambitious target to achieve USD 100 billion export for textile products by 2030.

Exports of textiles and apparel from India during FY24 fell 3.24 per cent at USD 34.4 billion, as compared to USD 35.5 billion a year ago.

Singh stated that efforts are underway to promote Make in India for the textiles sector, adding that neither Bangladesh nor Vietnam poses a challenge to the domestic industry.

"We are promoting Make in India for the country's textiles sector (to meet the demand of growing population). It is a different matter that our population increases by more than the size of Australia's population every year. In the last ten years, more than 21 crore people were born (in India)," he said.

Karnataka launches draft GCC policy to attract investments, create jobs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Friday launched a draft Global Capacity Centres (GCC) policy with the aim to generate USD 50 billion economic output and attract 500 new GCCs by 2029, creating 3.5 lakh jobs.

According to officials, this policy is designed to enhance investor confidence, promote seamless collaboration with the local innovation ecosystem, and position Karnataka as a global leader in AI research and development.

Crafted through extensive industry research and stakeholder consultations, it draws insights from over 500 discussions with experts and industry leaders, they said, adding, the result is a comprehensive framework that sets ambitious goals for growth, incentives, and

collaboration.

Speaking at the event, Information Technology and Biotechnology Minister Priyank Kharge said: "Today, we proudly launch India's first dedicated policy for Global Capacity Centres (GCCs), reaffirming Karnataka's position as the top destination for innovation and business transformation.

GCCs have evolved from back-office operations to becoming critical drivers of global strategic initiatives, R&D, and technology solutions."

He emphasised that with a workforce of over 1.2 million and contributing USD 22.2 billion to the economy, GCCs have been a vital source of growth and employment for Karnataka.

"Through this policy, we expect the GCC sector to grow at a compound annual rate of 12-14 per cent over

the next decade and foresee Karnataka holding nearly 50 per cent of the National GCC market share by 2029. We are committed to creating an ecosystem that fosters innovation, supports R&D, and nurtures top talent, ensuring Karnataka remains the most attractive destination for GCCs globally," Kharge said.

The draft policy is now open for public comments, and the government invited inputs from all stakeholders to refine and strengthen the policy further.

Secretary to the Government of Karnataka's Department of Electronics, IT, BT and S&T, Ekroop Caur, presented an overview of the draft GCC policy, detailing its objectives, vision, and goals and emphasised that it seeks to expand the GCC ecosystem beyond Bengaluru through the introduction of the 'Beyond Bengaluru

Package', aimed at attracting investments and fostering development across the state.

"Our target is to establish 500 new GCCs by 2029, which will create 3.5 lakh new jobs and generate an economic output of USD 50 billion," she said.

According to officials, a key highlight of the policy is the establishment of Global Innovation Districts, with three new state-of-the-art technology parks - one in Bengaluru and two in "Beyond Bengaluru" clusters. These parks will feature cutting-edge infrastructure to foster collaboration between startups, tech leaders, and academia. Anchor investors in these districts will receive special incentives, with mega projects eligible for customised packages, they said.

Pravin Kumar, the officer said.

Government considers merging RINL with SAIL amid financial woes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering merger of RINL with another state-owned steel company SAIL as one of the options to ensure survival of RINL's plant and resolve the financial and operational issues being faced by the Andhra Pradesh-based steel maker, sources said.

To provide capital for continuity of operations at the RINL's steel plant, plans like sale of land parcel to NMDC and bank loans are also being worked out, they told PTI.

The DFS secretary, steel secretary and top officials of public sector lender SBI also held a meeting recently over the RINL issue. SBI has significant loan exposure to RINL.

"The government wants to provide a permanent solution to the issue. One of the options being discussed is the merger of RINL with SAIL," the sources said.

Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), under the Ministry of Steel, owns and operates a 7.5 million tonnes plant at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. It holds the distinction of being India's first shore-based integrated steel plant.

SAIL (Steel Authority of India Limited) also comes under the steel ministry.

Sources further said that arranging capital for operations are also being considered, besides other measures like having talks with lenders for financial assistance and monetising assets through sale of a land parcel of 1,500-2,000 acre to NMDC for a pellet plant.

Unlike other primary steel makers, RINL never had the advantage of having captive iron ore mines. Workers union say this is one of the major reasons for the crisis being faced by RINL.

"RINL never had captive mines. All other primary steel makers who make steel



through blast furnace enjoy benefit of captive mines which helps with cost of raw material. We have always bought iron ore at market price," said J Ayodhya Ram, leader of a union protesting against privatisation of RINL.

In January 2021, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gave its 'in-principle' approval for 100 per cent disinvestment of government stake in RINL, also called Visakhapatnam Steel Plant or Vizag Steel, along with RINL's stake in its subsidiaries/joint ventures

through strategic disinvestment by way of privatisation.

According to a steel ministry document, RINL is in serious financial trouble. It has been running at minimal capacity and facing continuous losses. The overall dues of RINL have gone above Rs 35,000 crore and it is at the risk of being classified as non-performing asset by banks.

The document said that the ministry is taking steps to keep RINL as a 'going concern' in consultation with the finance ministry.

India's wedding tourism industry gears up for an exciting winter

KUSHAN MITRA ■ NEW DELHI

The 'Great Indian Wedding' has had movies and documentaries made about it, but the industry now worth an estimated Rs 50,000 crore annually and growing at an estimated 25 percent per year, it has been the driving force of more industries in India than any other. From wedding event planning to gifting and of course aviation and

hospitality. Try to get a banquet hall or even a hotel room in the months of November and December in destinations as varied from Goa to Nainital and rates are through the roof.

And countries across the world also want a piece of the pie, from cruise ships hosting large pre-wedding functions across the Mediterranean and beach resorts across South-East Asia now making

arrangements for everything like beachside mandaps and even diving excursions during weddings and top chefs from across the world now specialising in wedding food, India is also exporting large sums of money abroad thanks to weddings.

Little wonder then that Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January announced that Indians should 'Wed In India' in order to keep the



wedding industry ecosystem in India growing. But there should also be increased government support for all the start-ups in the space, from those who design cards to the thousands employed by the industry every year from make-up artists and waiters. For better or for worse, a large part of the wedding industry ecosystem is still cash-driven and outside the tax net. In fact, it

might not be a bad idea for different states to start competing for wedding traffic by offering incentives to host weddings in their states, this could be through tax incentives to hotels and catering services as well as taxi operators. The ease of doing business should apply to the wedding industry as well. It is understandable that many people find the ostentatious display of wealth

at weddings grotesque, especially since at a per capita GDP of less than \$3000, Indians are far from being rich. But the wedding industry provides employment and opportunities to millions across the country every year and authorities should do more to ensure that a majority of the funds spent remain in India.

NBCC bags contract for IIIT Nagpur infrastructure expansion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NBCC (India) Ltd has bagged a Rs 75 crore contract to build additional infrastructure at Indian Institute of Information Technology, Nagpur.

The company said in a statement on Thursday it has "secured a prestigious project for the construction and development of additional infrastructure at the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Nagpur."

With an estimated project cost of Rs 75 crore, this endeavour marks a significant step forward in enhancing the educational facilities at IIIT Nagpur, located approximately 25 kilometres

from the city.

Following the successful completion of Phase I, which included an Academic Block (G+5), an Admin Block (G+2), and a Residential Block (G+11), the institute is now ready to expand its infrastructure further.

The upcoming Phase II will encompass the construction of an Academic Block B, alongside essential external development work and associated electrical and mechanical services.

Additionally, the project will feature a canteen with the capacity to serve about 200 students and a multi-purpose hall that can cater to up to 1,000 students and guests.

New PLI scheme for specialty steel: Government

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is working on the another round of the PLI scheme for specialty steel as the response for the first round of the initiative did not meet expectations, according to Steel Secretary Sandeep Poundrik.

The top ministry official made the remarks at CII Steel Summit 2024 in the national capital on Friday.

In his address, Poundrik said specialty steel is still one area where more is needed to be done. The government

brought a PLI to incentivise specialties steel but the offtake was not as expected.

"So we are bringing another round of PLI so that we can get more interest in the specialty steel business," he said.

Later speaking to PTI, the secretary said the government had launched Rs 6,400 crore PLI Scheme for specialty steel, out of that only Rs 2,600 crore could be allocated.

Specialty steel is high grades used in sectors like defence, automobile, and electrical among others.

Delhi Jewellery and Gem Fair returns with over 650 exhibitors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jewellery and Gem Fair (DJGF) returns for its 12th edition at Pragati Maidan, running from September 29 to October 1, 2024. Organised by Informa Markets in India, the fair is set to be North India's leading international B2B jewellery exhibition. DJGF 2024 will feature over 650 exhibitors and 700 exclusive brands, displaying more than 150,000 jewellery designs, including collections in gold, silver, diamonds, pearls, and cutting-edge technology.

A key attraction of the event is the DJGF Silver Show, which will showcase a stunning array of silver jewellery. The fair is expected to draw over 25,000 visitors, including major buyers, wholesalers, and retailers, providing ample networking and business opportunities. The event will also highlight



gold, Polki, and diamond jewellery, with notable brands such as Shree Ram Krishna Exports and Hare Krishna participating.

Additionally, DJGF 2024 will host a series of knowledge sessions covering topics such as responsible sourcing, retail trends, and export opportunities.

Other highlights include the Retail Jewellers Guild Awards and the 'Shakti - Honouring Women Achievers' initiative, recognizing contributions by women in the industry.



AICTE, OPPO India launch second phase of 'Generation Green' campaign

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and OPPO India launched the second phase of their 'Generation Green' campaign with a nationwide e-waste awareness drive at Ramjas College, University of Delhi.

Ramjas College became the first 'Eco-Conscious Champion Institute' under the initiative. The campaign aims to educate youth on e-waste management and promote sustainable practices.

In the first phase, over 5,000 students from 1,400 institutions were selected as

Sustainability Interns, participating in green activities such as awareness sessions and surveys. The second phase focuses on the challenges of electronic waste disposal, targeting 10 lakh students by the end of 2024.

During the launch, Dr. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairperson of the National Education Technology Forum (NETF), highlighted the importance of educating students on sustainability to drive societal change. Rakesh Bhardwaj, Head of Public Affairs at OPPO India, emphasized the role of youth in achieving India's Net-Zero vision.



AN EVENING OF GRACEFUL RHYTHMS

Anandita Narayanan, a talented young dancer and disciple of Padma Shri Geeta Chandran, presented her solo Bharatanatyam performance, 'Sopaan - The Next Step,' captivating the audience at Triveni Kala Sangam in New Delhi, writes SAKSHI PRIYA

Photos: Pankaj Kumar

In a world where emotions often remain hidden, dance speaks volumes, transforming feelings into a breathing art form. On a recent evening, the prestigious Triveni Kala Sangam auditorium in New Delhi became the stage for a captivating performance by young Bharatanatyam dancer, *Anandita Narayanan*. Her solo performance, titled 'Sopaan - The Next Step,' promised to take the audience on a journey not only through the intricate movements of classical dance but also through the emotional depths that only art can reach. As the evening unfolded, it became clear that *Anandita*'s performance was more than just a showcase of talent; it was a mesmerising expression of her dedication to Bharatanatyam.

Anandita, a disciple of the esteemed Padma Shri *Geeta Chandran*, stepped onto the stage with grace, drawing the audience into the world of traditional Indian dance from the moment she began. Her performance commenced with the Pushpanjali in Ragam Shree, a ritualistic offering of flowers symbolically presented to the stage, her teacher and the audience. This introductory piece, set to the rhythm of Adi Talam, established a humble yet powerful tone for the evening, filled with reverence for the art form she holds so dearly. The simple yet elegant movements of the Pushpanjali invited the audience into the performance, preparing them for the deeper narratives that would follow.

The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the Varnam in Ragam Poorvikalyani, a piece that provided a showcase for *Anandita*'s technical brilliance and emotional depth. In this Varnam, composed by the legendary *Dandayudha Pani Pillai*, *Anandita* embodied the Virahotkantitha Nayika - a heroine tormented by her separation from her beloved, the god Kartikeya. Through her expressions and gestures, *Anandita* conveyed Nayika's intense longing and sorrow with remarkable sensitivity. The audience could feel the emotional weight of the performance, as she brought to life the pain of unrequited love, working it into the intricate footwork and hand movements that define Bharatanatyam. Her portrayal made it seem as though the stage had transformed into a canvas for her emotions, with every movement adding to the visual poetry unfolding before the audience.

The ability to seamlessly blend emotion with technique is a hallmark of great dance and *Anandita* demonstrated this with ease. As she transitioned to the next part of her performance, she moved from the intense, heart-wrenching narrative of the Varnam to lighter, more playful pieces, displaying her versatility as a performer. One such piece was the Padam 'Inendu Vachitira' set in Ragam Surrati, where she portrayed the Khandita Nayika, a woman confronting her unfaithful lover, Krishna. *Anandita*'s portrayal of the heroine was both poignant



ANANDITA, A DISCIPLE OF THE ESTEEMED PADMA SHRI GEETA CHANDRAN, STEPPED ONTO THE STAGE WITH GRACE, DRAWING THE AUDIENCE INTO THE WORLD OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN DANCE FROM THE MOMENT SHE BEGAN. HER PERFORMANCE COMMENCED WITH THE PUSHSPANJALI IN RAGAM SHREE, A RITUALISTIC OFFERING OF FLOWERS SYMBOLICALLY PRESENTED TO THE STAGE, HER TEACHER AND THE AUDIENCE



and humorous, as she conveyed a mix of anger, sarcasm and hurt. Her facial expressions and body language effortlessly conveyed the heroine's frustration, while also injecting a sense of lightness into the performance. The audience responded with appreciative laughter and applause, a tribute to the range of emotions *Anandita* was able to convey.

Following the Padam, *Anandita* performed a Javali in Ragam Paras, titled 'Smara Sundaranguni.' In this piece, she depicted the Swadheenapatika Nayika, a confident and assured woman who takes pride in her secure relationship. *Anandita*'s performance here was full of joy and exuberance, a stark contrast to the sorrowful tone of the earlier Varnam. Her ability to switch between such diverse emotional landscapes was nothing short of impressive, as she continued to captivate the audience with each new piece.

The evening reached its crescendo with the final performance, a Tillana in Ragam Yamuna Kalyani, composed by Shri Lalgudi G. Jayaraman. The Tillana is traditionally the concluding piece in a Bharatanatyam performance, known for its fast-paced rhythms and celebratory tone. *Anandita*'s rendition was no exception, as she delivered a vibrant and energetic performance that left the audience captivated. Her footwork was sharp and precise, while her movements were full of life, embodying the joy and devotion of the piece. The performance celebrated Lord Krishna, and *Anandita*'s energy lit up the stage, drawing the audience into the festive mood.

What made *Anandita*'s performance truly special, however, was not just her technical skill

but the emotional depth and sincerity she brought to each piece. She was not simply performing a series of dances; she was telling stories, sharing emotions and inviting the audience into her world. This sense of connection was visible throughout the performance and it was clear that *Anandita* loves for dance went beyond just the physical movements. As one audience member remarked, "Anandita's expressions and storytelling took us into the heart of each character. It was not just beautiful but deeply moving." Another attendee added, "Watching her dance was like seeing poetry come to life. She made complex emotions feel real."

For *Anandita*, dance is not merely a performance but a way of life. In her own words, "Dance flows through every cell of my being. It's an integral part of who I am." This dedication to her art was evident in every gesture and movement on stage. The connection between *Anandita* and her dance was clear to all who were present and it added an extra layer of depth to the performance, making it a truly memorable evening.

'Sopaan - The Next Step' was not just a dance recital; it beautifully showcased *Anandita*'s growth as an artist. Under the guidance of her guru, *Geeta Chandran*, *Anandita* has mastered both the technical precision and emotional depth that bring Bharatanatyam to life. The performance highlighted her potential to become a prominent figure in classical dance, and the audience had the privilege of witnessing the rise of a gifted young talent. With her journey only just beginning, many more remarkable performances are sure to come. The grace, emotion, and artistry she displayed in 'Sopaan - The Next Step' will leave a lasting impression on all who watched.

THROUGH A SATIRICAL LENS Art That Reflects Reality

In *Satirical Symphony*, A. Rajeswara Rao showcases his unique reverse painting technique on acrylic sheets. This vibrant exhibition at Visual Art Gallery invites viewers to reflect on the humorous and thought-provoking themes of materialism and social mimicry in society, writes **TEAM VIVA**

The recent exhibition of *Satirical Symphony* by A. Rajeswara Rao showcased a vivid exploration of societal dynamics, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended. The crowd's reaction to his artwork was visible, as the humour and critique embedded within each piece resonated deeply with viewers. The series, characterised by Rao's reverse painting technique on acrylic sheets, offers more than just visual appeal; it is a mirror reflecting the characteristics of a society undergoing rapid change. Curated by Annapurna M. and Kiran K. Mohan, the exhibition was not just a display of artistic brilliance but a reflection of Rao's sharp observations on human behaviour.

At the heart of Rao's works lies a sharp satirical lens. His paintings humorously capture the essence of people, their desires, and their attempts to mirror a high-society lifestyle. Rao himself drew inspiration from the transformation he witnessed in a village near his studio. Once a place of modest lifestyles, where people walked or cycled through narrow lanes, the village changed almost overnight after an industrial group arrived. "All of a sudden, people started driving motorbikes, cars, and adopting



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

fashionable items like sunglasses and leggings," Rao explained. He found this shift amusing and decided to reflect it in his work, seeing it as an exaggerated attempt to imitate higher society. This theme of sudden wealth and social mimicry is evident throughout the *Satirical Symphony*.

Among the standout works in the exhibition was *1947 Classmates*, which, along with pieces like *My New Ray-Ban*, prompted both laughter and introspection on the impact of materialism on self-image. Guests were particularly captivated by *My New Ray-Ban* and *New Billionaire With Her*



Golden Ducks, both of which explored this abrupt transformation in a humorous



yet thought-provoking manner. Rao's bold use of colour and exaggerated figures transforms these everyday scenes into a striking spectacle of satire. His reverse painting technique, especially on acrylic, introduces a dynamic layer to his compositions, allowing light to

interact with the transparent surface and creating an almost ethereal depth.

What was most engaging, though, was how his art connected with the audience on a personal level. Visitors could easily see reflections of people they knew or perhaps even of themselves in his depictions of men and women adorned in flashy attire, oversized sunglasses, and luxury items they didn't quite seem to belong with. Yet, in all the laughter and satire, there was a genuine warmth in how Rao portrayed these characters, making them endearing rather than simply objects of mockery.

The exhibition also drew attention to the artist's masterful technique. Rao's ability to layer humour with critique, using a vivid colour palette, kept the audience mesmerised. Paintings such as *Smoking Zone* and *Massage Centre* demonstrated how he uses space and detail to draw viewers into his world. The juxtaposition of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances added to the intrigue and made each painting a story in itself.

It was heartening to witness the engagement between the artist and his audience. Many of those present spent considerable time in front of each painting, clearly appreciating not just the

technical brilliance but also the wit that Rao brings to his art. Conversations among visitors frequently circled back to how well the paintings captured the ridiculousness of societal pretensions. In this way, the *Satirical Symphony* did more than entertain; it provoked thought, forcing viewers to reflect on the often comedic ways in which people chase status.

A. Rajeswara Rao's *Satirical Symphony* was a winning showcase of satire at its finest. It reminded everyone that while art can be a serious reflection of society, it can also be a source of humour and lightness. Each painting, from *The Kings to The Merry World*, invited viewers to look beyond the surface, to laugh at the follies of human nature, and to leave with a sense of connection, not only to the art but to the society it so cleverly critiques. Rao's work leaves one pondering how wealth and societal pressures shape identity, all while smiling at the absurdity of it all.

The exhibition will continue at Art Magnum Gallery until 20 October 2024, offering those who haven't experienced this thought-provoking show a final opportunity to immerse themselves in Rao's satirical vision. Don't miss the chance to explore this engaging dialogue between art and society!

AKASH DEEP, ASHWIN KEEP INDIA AHEAD ON RAIN-HIT DAY 1



PTI ■ KANPUR
Pacer Akash Deep was impressive in a probing opening spell while Ravichandran Ashwin removed the dangerous Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto before rain halted India's progress in the second Test on the opening day, here Friday. Given the forecast, it was expected to be a weather-hit contest from the beginning.

Only 35 overs could be bowled after Rohit Sharma invited Bangladesh to bat in overcast conditions as visitors struggled to 107 for three after a brief resistance through Shanto (31). Mominul Haque (40 batting) and veteran Mushfiqur Rahim (6) were at the crease when heavens opened up. Overnight rain had delayed the start of the match by an hour. Heavy overcast conditions influenced India's team selection as the hosts kept all three pacers from the Chennai Test, which meant that local boy Kuldeep Yadav missed out on another Test match. Akash (2/14 in 10 overs), who bowled round the wicket to the left-handers, consistently hit the good length areas and got the ball to either shape away or come in with the angle. Shanto (57 balls, 4x6), though, batted with positive intent, if not combative, to ensure Bangladesh don't lose way from the start. As expected, the initial bounce and seam movement had openers Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam playing in circumspect manner. Islam (24) worked the ball around but an overcautious Hasan (0) simply couldn't get going. Jasprit Bumrah had the openers squared up as the away-going deliveries kept landing in Rishab Pant's gloves. Mohammed Siraj induced edges that flew to the slip

grab the chance. Akash soon sent back Shadman on a ball that came in and caught him in front of the wicket. The opener reviewed the decision but to no avail. Shanto, who has been in good rhythm, began with two shots to the fence in a sort of statement that he won't get intimidated by the classy Indian bowlers. He also got a boundary off Siraj but those were not the cleanest of hits. His reverse sweep off off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin though stood out. Ashwin, who did not get a wicket in the opening session, trapped Shanto in the third over of the second session. Shanto played for the turn but was beaten. The umpire had no hesitation in raising his finger. The Bangladesh skipper reviewed the decision hoping against hope. Seasoned Mominul grew in confidence as he spent more time at the crease. He hit two boundaries off Akash in a single over and later hit an exquisite drive through mid-off. He raised Bangladesh's hundred with another four. Only nine overs were bowled in the second session when bad light stopped play even as the flood lights were on, forcing the players off the field. Light drizzle followed and soon it was pouring.



Bravo retires from all forms of cricket, joins KKR as mentor

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
World Cup-winning West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket and will join IPL side Kolkata Knight Riders as its mentor, a move that marks the end of his long-standing association with Chennai Super Kings. In KKR, the 40-year-old will replace Gautam Gambhir, who left the role to take over as India's head coach earlier this year. Bravo's last season in the Caribbean Premier League was cut short due to an injury that he sustained earlier this week. "Today is the day I say goodbye to the game that has given me everything," he wrote on Instagram on Thursday. "Twenty-one years as a professional cricketer - it's been an incredible journey, filled with many highs and a few lows. Most importantly, I was able to live my dream because I gave you 100 at every step." "As much as I'd love to continue this relationship, it's time to face reality." Bravo had stepped away from international cricket in 2021 while concluding his IPL career last year. He won three IPL titles as a CSK player after joining the franchise in 2011. He then became the team's bowling coach in the 2023 season. He also worked as a consultant with the Afghanistan men's team. "DJ Bravo joining us is an exciting development. His relentless drive to win, along with his vast experience and deep knowledge, will greatly benefit our franchise and players," Knight Riders Group CEO Venky Mysore said in a media release on Friday. Apart from KKR, he will be in charge of the other franchises under the Knight Riders label in T20 leagues. The new role puts an end to his long association with CSK. "We're also pleased that Bravo will be involved with our other franchises globally, including CPL, MLC, and ILT20," Mysore said. Talking about his role in KKR, Bravo said: "I've been part of the Trinbago Knight Riders for the last 10 years in the CPL. Having played for and against the Knight Riders in various leagues, I have a lot of respect for how they operate. "BODY CAN NO LONGER ENDURE THE PAIN": Ahead of the ongoing CPL season, Bravo had declared it would be his final tournament. However, a groin injury sustained while fielding against the St. Lucia Kings in Tarouba earlier this week cut his CPL stint short. "My mind wants to keep going, but my body can no longer endure the pain, the breakdowns, and the strain. I can't put myself in a position where I might let down my teammates, my fans, or the teams I represent," Bravo wrote in his Instagram post. "So, with a heavy heart, I officially announce my retirement from the sport. Today, the Champion bids farewell." During his illustrious career, Bravo played 582 T20 matches and took 631 wickets, besides scoring nearly 7,000 runs. "Though this ending is bittersweet, I have no regrets about my career or this decision. Now, I look forward to my next chapter. Once again, thank you. See you soon on the other side," he added.

Injury is fine now, next big target is 2025 world championship: Neeraj Chopra

PTI ■ SONEPAT
Promising to be 100 per cent fit for the new season, India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra on Friday said a podium finish in the 2025 Tokyo World Championships is the next big target on his mind going forward. The 26-year-old is back in the country after winding up his season with a second-place finish at the Diamond League finale in Brussels. This was after he became the first Indian track-and-field athlete to claim successive Olympic medals by adding a silver in Paris to the momentous gold clinched in Tokyo. "The season is over now. The biggest target for next year is the World Championship, and we will begin preparations for that now. The Olympics are always on our minds,



but we have four years for that," Neeraj told PTI Videos on the sidelines of a conference on 'Mission Olympics 2036' organised at the Sports University of Haryana here. The world championship is scheduled to be held from September 13 to 21 next year. Chopra battled an adductor muscle niggle throughout the year and it also affected his performance at both the Olympics and the DL finale, where he also competed with a fractured left hand. He had spoken about consulting doctors at the end of the season to decide whether to go for a surgery to fix the problem. Asked about his fitness, Chopra played down concerns and also stated that he will look to improve his technique. The Haryana-lad is trained by renowned German biomechanics expert Klaus Bartonietz.

performance, which yielded six medals but no gold this time, Chopra pointed out that the country could have got more as reflected by the half a dozen fourth place finishes. "There were a lot of fourth positions. (But) this time, we had a very good performance in the Paralympics and won several medals. "In the coming times, we expect strong performances in both the Olympics and the Paralympics," said Chopra. Chopra has been working hard to hit the 90m mark but hasn't managed so far despite coming close. In the Paris Olympics, his silver-winning throw was 89.45m and he was bested by Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who broke the Games record with a 92.97m effort. At the DL finale, Chopra threw 87.86m to miss the top finish by just one centimetre.

Medvedev beats Monfils in Beijing, Draper upsets Hurkacz in Japan

AP ■ BEIJING
Daniil Medvedev safely navigated a tricky first outing at the China Open on Friday, winning 6-3 6-4 against French veteran Gael Monfils. The third-seeded Medvedev, runner-up to Jannik Sinner here last year, broke Monfils' serve three times in a dominant opening set. After trading breaks in a closer second set, former No. 1-ranked Medvedev clinched the match with another service break to seal the win in 92 minutes. Roman Safiullin, who made the main draw as a lucky loser in qualifying, beat three-time major winner Stan Wawrinka 6-3 6-4 and will face top-ranked Sinner. No. 3-ranked Carlos Alcaraz, seeded second in Beijing, begins against No. 51 Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard of France later Friday. In the women's draw, sixth-seeded Emma Navarro was upset by Chinese wildcard Zhang Shuai 6-4 6-2 in 75 minutes. The 35-year-old Zhang, a doubles specialist, played well above her current singles



ranking of No. 595 as she took five of her seven breakpoint opportunities against the U.S. Open semifinalist. Zhang will play Greet Minnen of Belgium, who beat 28th-seeded Anastasia Potapova 7-5 2-6 6-4 in the third round. Also, 12th-seeded Diana Shnaider beat former Australian Open winner Sofia Kenin 6-2 6-3 and Yulia Starodubtseva had a 6-2 6-2 win over 27th-seeded Katerina Siniakova. Second-seeded Jessica Pegula was due open her tournament later Friday against Diane Parry of France, and Coco Gauff faced Clara Burel in a night match.

US Open champion Aryna Sabalenka plays Saturday against Thai qualifier Mananchaya Sawangkaew. Top-ranked Iga Swiatek was not playing this week for personal reasons. **JAPAN OPEN:** Second-seeded Hubert Hurkacz lost 6-4 6-4 to US Open semifinalist Jack Draper in the second round in Tokyo, a day after top-seeded Taylor Fritz and third-seeded Casper Ruud were eliminated from the tournament. While the 22-year-old Draper and Hurkacz were evenly matched on aces and winners, it was the Polish player's 30 unforced errors, to Draper's 20, that proved costly. Draper will next play either Brandon Nakashima or Ugo Humbert in the quarterfinals. Defending champion Ben Shelton also progressed to the quarterfinals with a 6-4 6-3 defeat of Mariano Navone. Shelton, along with Fritz, traveled to Japan from the Laver Cup in Berlin, where they represented Team World in a loss to Alcaraz's Team Europe.

India U-17 face Nepal hurdle in semifinals

PTI ■ THIMPHU
A buoyant Indian football team will take on Nepal in the semi-finals of the SAFF U17 Championship here on Saturday, hoping to continue its good run of form in the continental age-group tournament. The Blue Colts eased into the last four as Group A table toppers after beating Bangladesh (1-0) and Maldives (3-0). Nepal, on the other hand, sneaked into the semi-finals, thanks to a late winner against Bhutan in their last group match, which lifted them to second place in Group B behind Pakistan, who will face Bangladesh in the second semi-finals later on Saturday. India have had ample rest between their matches so far, including three full days to prepare for their semi-finals. Head coach Ishaq Ahmed stated that the rest days for



players are more about recovery and staying injury-free. "This rest is about recovering because we are playing on artificial turf. It's not easy to play and train on turf everyday. It has its negative impacts also. We've been training mostly to recover our boys. "It has been raining here everyday and we are stuck inside the hotel. Sometimes that can be a good thing because you spend a lot of time with each other and that helps.

mark for the Indian backline as the Nepalese striker in the competition top-scorer with four goals, including a hat-trick against Sri Lanka and the all-important match winner against Bhutan. "I rate Nepal as a good side. They are not afraid of playing. They have done quite well, coming from 0-1 down, showing character and beating the hosts," said Ahmed. "Since it's a knockout match, you have to take your chances. In both matches so far, we created a lot of chances but failed to make the most of them. Whether it was a good save by the goalkeeper or a missed shot, it doesn't matter. We need to convert our ball possession into goals. "If we get an early goal against them, it will be a little bit easier for us. We wouldn't want the match to stretch because then you have to keep one eye on the defence as well," Ahmed added.

Tottenham overcomes early red card to post 3-0 win in revamped Europa League

AP ■ LONDON
Tottenham marked its return to European competition after one-year absence by overcoming an early red card to beat Qarabag 3-0 in the revamped Europa League. Defender Radu Dragusin was sent off in the eighth minute for bringing down Juninho to prevent the forward from going in alone on goal. But the hosts opened the scoring just four minutes later. Brennan Johnson's angled shot was his third goal in three games. Pape Sarr doubled the advantage early in the second half off a corner kick and Dominic Solanke finished it off

on a rebound in the 68th. "The red card was not ideal, we started really sloppily but the reaction afterwards was good," Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou told TNT Sports. "We wanted to press high, even with ten men." Johnson also scored in a 3-1 win over Brentford in the Premier League and had a stoppage-time winner in a 2-1 victory over second-division Coventry the English League Cup three days earlier. Tural Bayramov wasted a golden opportunity to score from the spot when the Azerbaijan visitors were 2-0 down. Travel disruptions forced the game to start 35 minutes late.

Roma blows lead Roma allowed a late goal and settled for a 1-1 draw with Athletic Bilbao following the Italian club's turbulent recent stretch that included firing coach Daniele De Rossi. Aitor Paredes headed in the equalizer in the 85th minute to offset Artem Dovbyk's first-half goal. Roma beat Udinese 3-0 in Serie A on Sunday in the first game under new coach Ivan Juric. Bilbao winger Nico Williams came on as a substitute for last 30 minutes in his return from an ankle injury. Ajax cleans up Mika Godts had two goals, Kian Fitz-Jim and Kenneth Taylor added one

each for Ajax in a 4-0 rout of Besiktas. Czech side Viktoria Plzen scored two late goals from Prince Adu and Vaclav Jemelka to hold high-flying Eintracht Frankfurt to a 3-3 away draw. Frankfurt, the 2022 Europa League winner led 3-1 on goals from Hugo Ekitike, substitute Junior Dina Ebimbe and defender Rasmus Kristensen. Olympiacos, last year's Conference League champion,

started with a 2-0 loss to Lyon in France on second half goals by Rayan Cherki and Said Benrahma. Braga rallied to beat nine-man Maccabi Tel Aviv 2-1. Romania's FCSS beat Latvia's RFS 4-1 in Bucharest. Fenerbahce, Rangers score early wins Fenerbahce opened the competition with a 2-1 home win over Belgian club Union Saint-Gilloise with both teams finishing the game with 10 men. Defender Caglar Soyuncu opened the scoring for Jose Mourinho's team in the 26th with a half-volley from close range and Christian Burgess' own goal in the 82nd made it 2-0 for Fenerbahce. Ross Sykes

scored in stoppage time for the visitors. Union defender Kevin Mac Allister received a red card in the 74th and Fenerbahce substitute Bright Osayi-Samuel was sent off in the final minute. Last season, Fenerbahce eliminated Union in the round of 16 of the third-tier Conference League. Europe's second tier is a familiar turf for Mourinho, who led Manchester United to the 2017 title. He took the Fenerbahce job in the offseason. With Mourinho in charge, Roma lost the 2023 final to Sevilla after a penalty shootout. In another early game, Rangers won 2-0 at Malmo.

The 2022 Europa League beaten finalist didn't waste time. Nedim Bajrami scored in the opening minute. Ross McCausland scored in the second half. Rangers lost in the 2022 final to Eintracht Frankfurt. The German club will be in action later Thursday, hosting Czech side Viktoria Plzen. As in the Champions League, the traditional group stage of the Europa League has been replaced with an expanded league phase with all 36 teams competing in a single standings. Each Europa League team will play eight games against eight different opponents through Jan.