

Sharad attacks Ajit, tells party workers to ignore deserters

By TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar made a couple of startling claims about the circumstances leading to his joining hands with the ruling BJP and his uncle withdrawing resignation as the NCP chief, Sharad Pawar on Saturday exhorted his party workers not to bother much about the things spoken by the "deserters" but begin preparations for the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.



Addressing his party workers and leaders in Pune, NCP chief Sharad Pawar alluded to disclosures made by Ajit Pawar on Friday and said: "Some people raised new questions, commented. Those who left the party and those who tried to hijack this party are criticising you and me today. There is no reason to think too much about it."

elections, the state witnessed a different (Janata Party-led coalition) government? Afterwards I went abroad for a few days and upon my return, I was surprised to see that out of the sixty MLAs, only six remained with me, while the rest of the newly elected MLAs had gone to other parties.

stand among the common people to gain their support, people live with them. That situation was seen in Maharashtra on this occasion". It may be recalled that Ajit Pawar had rebelled against his uncle and NCP President Sharad Pawar, walked away with 40-odd MLAs and joined the Eknath Shinde-BJP alliance government on July 2.

Will intensify operations against terror, sponsors, says J&K LG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

After witnessing a series of attacks on the army personnel in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch in recent months, Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday announced the intensification of anti-terror operations in the Union Territory.



Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir range, V. K. Birdi while chairing a high-level security review meeting in South Kashmir's Awantipora on Saturday asked the police officials to strengthen the intelligence grid on the ground to effectively deal with the terrorists.

Thousands of well-paying jobs in fields of materials and supply chain management are waiting for prospective candidates across the country. Having a degree in engineering/science or humanities is just not the mandatory qualification to enter into the corporate world.

Jobs in supply chain, warehouse sectors in plenty across India



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Table with 3 columns of car numbers: MH15BK4065, DL4SAH6811, UP16N3807, etc.

Case filed against me for calling Hamas terrorist: Chandrashekhar

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Those who speak truth are becoming persona non grata in Kerala, according to Union Minister of State for Information Technology and Skill Development.



discriminate people based on religion and community. We grew up learning to address a spade a spade," said the minister reacting to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

the numero uno position in the comity of nations. "When Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister in 2014, was at its lowest ebb with low investment and high inflation.

Mai Bhi Kejriwal campaign getting massive public support, says AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Senior AAP leader and minister Atishi conducted a door-to-door campaign in her constituency, Kalkaji Assembly, on Saturday and claimed that 'Mai Bhi Kejriwal' signature campaign are getting huge public support across the city.

Senior BJP leader Vijay Goel on Saturday conducted a survey and claimed 83 per cent of the respondents opined that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should resign if he was arrested in the excise policy case.

83 per cent people opine Kejriwal should resign if arrested, BJP leader cites its survey report

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Under the campaign, AAP leaders and volunteers are collecting public feedback on whether Kejriwal should step down from the post of chief minister if he was arrested.

The chief minister did not appear before the central agency, claiming that its summons was "illegal and politically motivated".

Perna makes history as first woman to head Navy warship

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Commander Perna Deosthalee has become the first woman officer to command an Indian Navy warship. She was presented with the appointment letter on Saturday by Western Fleet commander Rear Admiral Praveen Nair.

3 sharpshooters associated with Bishnoi gang held

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Three sharpshooters associated with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang have been arrested here, police said on Saturday.



The crime branch team arrested the third accused was held in Sector 37 on Friday. Two country-made pistols, four cartridges and two magazines were recovered from their possession.

MRC Colonel to head Army Training Command

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ MRC WELLINGTON

Lieutenant General Manjinder Singh took over as the 24th General Officer Commanding in Chief of the Shimla-based Army Training Command on 01 December 2023.

Researchers discover distinct mechanisms controlling different types of immune cells

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a ray of hope for patients having autoimmune skin disorders, a team of researchers has discovered distinct mechanisms controlling different types of immune cells, and found that, by precisely targeting these mechanisms, they could selectively eliminate 'problematic cells' and reshape the skin's immune landscape.



"Specialised immune cells in our skin are diverse: many are critical to prevent infection and cancer, but others play a big role in mediating autoimmunity," said Dr Park.

MoS Bhatt to visit Ghana to attend UN Peacekeeping Ministerial meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State for defence Ajay Bhatt will pay an official visit to Accra, Ghana for two days starting December 5 to attend the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting.

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Advertisement for Kumaun University featuring a list of courses and contact details.

Govt bans 'dark patterns' on e-commerce platforms

Notifies guidelines

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In order to protect consumers' interest, the government has banned use of "dark patterns" on e-commerce platforms which intend to deceive customers or manipulate their choices.

A gazette notification in this regard as "Guidelines for prevention and regulation of dark patterns" was issued on November 30 by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) which is applicable to all platforms offering goods and services in India, and even advertisers and sellers.

Resorting to dark patterns will amount to misleading advertisement or unfair trade practice or violation of consumer rights. The penalty will be imposed as per the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, it added.

"In the emerging digital commerce, dark patterns are increasingly being used by the platforms to mislead the consumers



by manipulating their buying choices and behaviour," Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh told PTI.

The notified guidelines will ensure clarity in the minds of all stakeholders — buyers, sellers, marketplaces and regulators — as to what is not acceptable as unfair trading practices, the latter being liable under the Consumer Protection Act, he added.

According to the notification, dark patterns have been defined as any practice or deceptive design pattern using user interface or user experience interactions on any platform that is designed to mislead or trick users to do something they originally did not intend or want to do, by subverting or impairing the consumer autonomy, decision making or choice.

For instance, 'basket sneaking' is a dark pattern that includes additional items such as products, services, payments to charity or donation at the time of checkout from a platform, without the consent of the user, such that the total amount payable by the user is more than the amount payable for the product or service chosen by the user.

Another dark pattern called "forced action" means forcing a user into taking an action that would require the user to buy any additional goods or subscribe or sign up for an unrelated service or share personal information in order to buy or subscribe to the product or service originally intended by the user.

Likewise, CCPA has specified 13 dark patterns to provide only as a guidance for the industry. Initially, CCPA had identified 10 dark patterns but after the public consultation another three were included.



International air travel penetration remains low in India: CAPA

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Even as India has become the third largest market in terms of domestic traffic, the penetration of international air travel remains low, CAPA India chief Kapi Kaul said on Friday.

He also pitched for regulatory reforms, saying if corrective measures are not taken, the capacity pipeline will reduce further.

"In terms of domestic traffic, we have reached number 3. But in terms of international (traffic), we are ranked at 18. In spite of being the third-largest domestic market, the penetration of (international) air travel remains lowest among the top 20 domestic markets," Kaul said.

He was delivering the keynote address at a function organised here by Tata Memorial Trust to mark the 119th birth anniversary of JRD Tata.

Kaul said India's seats per capita consumption stands at 0.13, whereas the same for a country like Australia is as much as 3.11. The long-term fundamentals for growth are very strong, he said, adding that "we have only

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wipro Consumer Care — Ventures, the venture funding arm of Wipro Consumer Care and Lighting, on Saturday said it has launched the second fund with a corpus of Rs 250 crore.

The Fund II will focus on investing in consumer startups in India and Southeast Asia, a company statement said.

"We would look for e-comm driven companies at Pre Series A onwards, with minority stake approach (up to 25 per cent), and continue with our strategy of helping and nurturing the startups as required," it added.

Wipro Consumer Care — Ventures, launched around four years ago with a corpus of Rs 200 crore, has made 10 investments so far.

"The fund performance is robust

Wipro Consumer Care Ventures launches second fund with ₹250 crore corpus

with MOIC (Multiple on Invested Capital) running at over 2.2x as well as strong IRR (internal rate of return), which are above market benchmarks," it said.

Wipro Consumer Care — Ventures has done part exits from two of its investments so far from the first corpus. Moreover, "in one of them, we have clocked a 10x increase in a short period," the funding company said.

"While a large majority of this fund has been committed, a couple of more new investments would be made from this fund



as well as few follow ons too. Our portfolio construct is varied and a mix of investments in startups in India, in SE Asia, as well as in a VC fund," it said.

Wipro Consumer Care — Ventures Managing Partner Sumit Keshan said the focus would be on companies, which operate in categories and sub-categories of personal care, skin care, home care, wellness, food, fragrances, BPC etc.

"Geo coverage would continue to be India and Southeast Asia where we feel we can add value beyond providing capital. We have been successful in value-

Tata Power acquires Bikaner, Neemrana Transmission Project

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power on Saturday said it has acquired Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project through a bidding process.

Bikaner-III Neemrana-II Transmission Ltd is a special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up by PFC Consulting, for the project.

The company has acquired Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project to boost renewable energy evacuation in India, a company statement said.

The company received the letter of intent (LOI) after emerging as a successful bidder in the Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process, as per the guidelines issued by Ministry of Power, it added.

The project, which will be developed on a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) basis, will enable the evacuation of 7.7 GW of renewable energy from the Bikaner Complex in Rajasthan.

The project entails establishment of a 340-km transmission corridor from Bikaner-III pooling



station to Neemrana II substation.

Tata Power will maintain the transmission project for a period of 35 years. It is estimated to cost Rs 1,544 crore and is expected to be commissioned within 24 months from the date of transfer of the project

Coal output from captive, commercial mines rises 37 per cent in November

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday said coal production from captive, commercial coal mines registered a 37 per cent rise to 11.94 Million Tonnes (MT) in November.

The coal output from captive, commercial coal mines was at 8.74 MT in November 2022-23. Coal dispatch from captive, commercial coal mines in November was at 12.92 MT, registering a growth of 55 per cent as against 8.36 MT in the year-ago period.

"The average daily coal dispatch from such mines in November 2023 is the highest

ever with 4.3 lakh tonnes per day," the coal ministry said in a statement.

The total coal production from captive, commercial coal mines during the April-November period was around 83.90 MT, while the total coal dispatch was 89.67 MT, registering a year-on-year growth of 24 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively, from the same period in FY23.

The government is committed to achieving the target coal production and dispatch, which is a crucial step towards ensuring the country's energy security and driving economic growth, the statement added.



India's tea production rises by 12.06 pc to 182.84 million kg in October

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Tea production in the country increased by 12.06 per cent to 182.84 million kg in October this year as compared to 163.15 million kg in the corresponding month last year.

According to Tea Board data, production of the crop in West Bengal rose to 54.98 million kg in October, as against 49.75 million kg in the same period in 2022.

Assam, the country's largest tea-producing state, also registered a higher crop at 104.26 million kg in October. The state produced 90.72 million kg of tea in October 2022, according to the data.

In south India, production was marginally lower at 18.89 million kg in October 2023, as against 18.92 million kg in the same month of the previous calendar year.

Category-wise, production of the CTC variety touched 167.72 million kg in October 2023, whereas that of orthodox tea was 12.98 million kg across both north and south India.

Green tea production was at 2.14 million kg, the data said.

Production by small tea growers (STGs) stood higher at 95.24 million kg in October 2023 across the country, compared to 78.19 million kg in the same month of 2022.

Shrinithi Capital aims to double AUM to ₹600 crore by 2024

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Shrinithi Capital Pvt Ltd Sengaged in commercial vehicle and two-wheeler loans aims to double its total assets under management to Rs 600 crore by 2024, a top official said on Saturday.

The Chennai-headquartered firm currently has assets under management of Rs 300 crore.

Under its expansion drive, Shrinithi Capital Pvt Ltd has planned to strengthen foot prints in southern parts of the country.

"Shrinithi's rapid ascent in the industry, coupled with exemplary collection figures even during challenging times, has garnered attention across the sector. As part of our expansion process, we plan to open 30 more branches in South India and aim to double our AUM from Rs 300 crore to



Rs 600 crore by 2024," company managing director and CEO S Sellamani said in a statement.

The company today tied up with ESAF

Small Finance Bank to offer a business correspondent facility.

Sellamani and ESAF Small Finance Bank executive vice president Hari Velloo exchanged documents as part of the tie-up between the two entities.

"Our partnership with ESAF Small Finance Bank aligns with our expansion goals, as we plan to disburse loans to small truck transporters and owners cum drivers, particularly focusing on customers at the bottom of the pyramid who face challenges in securing loans with traditional banks and NBFCs," he said.

Under the expansion plan, Shrinithi Capital aims to increase its branch network from 50 to 80, extending operations to Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, the statement added.

AI pilot unions express concern over flight duty, rest period scheme

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Air India pilot unions IPG and ICPA on Saturday expressed "deep concern" over the flight duty and rest period scheme adopted by the Tata Group airline, accusing the carrier of deviating from the DGCA-approved norms.

The two unions -- Indian Pilots' Guild (IPG) and Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA) -- in a joint communication to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation also alleged that the introduction of a side policy, along with the flight duty time limitation (FDTL) scheme, by Air India seems to "undermine the authority and purpose" of the DGCA approval.

The pilot unions have also sought a review and assessment of the issue by the DGCA,

requesting it to take appropriate measures to address the matter.

Pilots and cabin crew's flight duty time limitations are governed by the aviation safety regulator DGCA, which proposed more rest hours for the pilots last month.

In recent months, the issue of fatigue has been in focus, especially after the death of an IndiGo pilot, who had collapsed at the boarding gate of Nagpur airport in September. And last month, an Air India pilot during a training session showed signs of discomfort and later died at the Delhi airport. However, Air India said the pilot was not on active flying duty and was undergoing conversion training to operate wide-body aircraft.

"We are writing to express our deep concern and disappointment regarding recent developments concerning the Flight and Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) scheme at Air India," the two Air India pilot unions said in the communication addressed to the DGCA.

Alleging that there has been a "deviation" from the DGCA-approved Air India FDTL scheme, and an "Air India Rostering practices Policy" has been suddenly framed and implemented by the management from December 1, the letter stated that the "policy is in violation of DGCA CAR FDTL and that it is not part of the DGCA-approved Air India FDTL Scheme."

"The said policy is not approved by the DGCA. The DGCA plays a pivotal role in ensuring the safety and reliability of civil aviation operations in our country.

Fed's Powell notes inflation is easing but downplays discussion of interest rate cuts

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Inflation is slowing steadily, but it's too early to declare victory or to discuss when the Federal Reserve might cut interest rates, Chair Jerome Powell said on Friday.

Speaking at Spelman College in Atlanta, Powell noted that consumer prices, excluding volatile food and energy costs, rose at just a 2.5 per cent annual rate in the past six months. That's not far above the Fed's 2 per cent inflation target.

Still, more progress is needed, Powell said. He added, "It would be premature to conclude with confidence" that the Fed has raised its benchmark interest rate high enough to fully defeat inflation.

Nor is it time to "speculate on

when policy might ease," Powell said, referring to the possibility of cuts in the Fed's benchmark interest rate, which affects many consumer and business loans.

Instead, he said, the Fed's interest-rate-setting committee "is moving forward carefully" — phrasing that analysts consider a signal that the central bank doesn't plan any changes to interest rates anytime soon.

Many Wall Street investors have recently stepped up their bets that the Fed will cut rates as early as May, according to CME Fedwatch, in part after another Fed official earlier this week appeared to open the door to rate cuts by this spring. Still, the Fed's policymakers are expected to leave interest rates alone when they next meet



December 12-13. It would be the third straight meeting in which they have kept rates at their current level. Beginning in March 2022, the Fed raised its key rate 11 times from near zero — to about 5.4 per cent, the highest level in 22 years.

Those rate hikes have made loans significantly more expensive across the economy, notably for mortgages, auto loans, credit cards and business borrowing. The result has been diminished purchases of homes, cars, furniture and appliances, a trend that has slowed the economy and forced prices modestly lower in those categories.

Powell's remarks Friday follow comments from a raft of Fed officials this week, with most of them signalling that the Fed can afford to keep its key rate steady in the coming months.

But like Powell, they have mostly shied away from signalling a definite end to rate hikes.

Yet some officials have sounded more optimistic than others. Christopher Waller, a key Fed official who typically favors keeping rates relatively high, said Tuesday that he was "increasingly confident" that the central bank's benchmark rate is high enough to return inflation to the Fed's 2 per cent target.

Waller went so far as to open the door to the possibility that the Fed would cut rates as early as spring as long as inflation continued to cool.

Some other Fed officials, however, suggested that one more rate hike remains potentially on the table should inflation remain chronically high.

John Williams, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, who is close to Powell, said on Thursday that the Fed's key rate is "at or near" its peak. Williams added that the central bank's benchmark rate is the most economically restrictive it has been in 25 years.

Still, he added that "it will be appropriate to maintain a restrictive stance for quite some time" to bring inflation back down to 2 per cent.

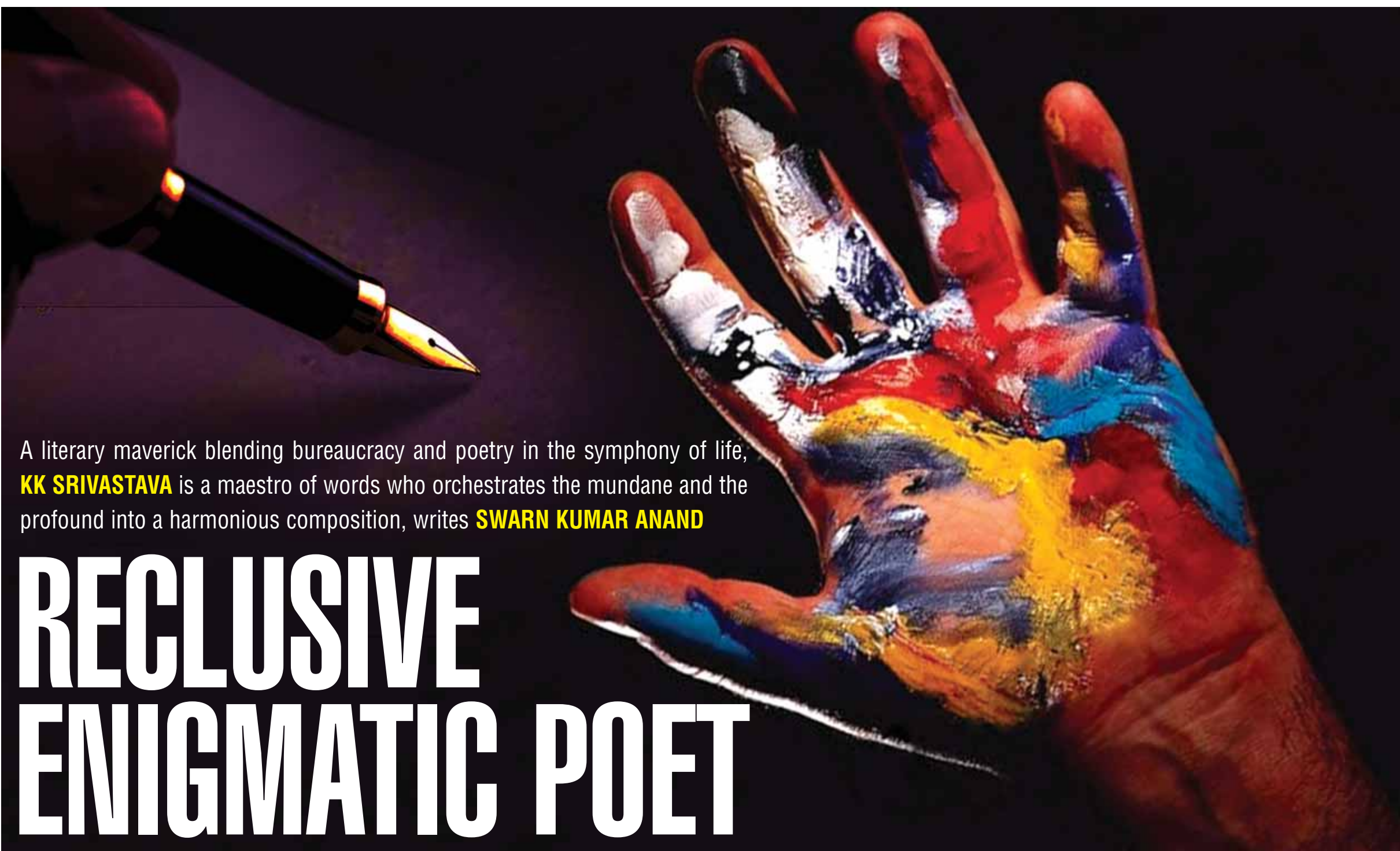
Vincent Reinhart, a former Fed economist and now chief economist at Dreyfus & Mellon, said that many Fed officials are reluctant to take the possibility of another rate hike off the table because doing so would immediately raise pressure on the Fed to cut rates.

"Doing nothing is hard work," Reinhart said. Any sign the Fed is done raising rates and simply wants to keep them at their current level for an extended period will nevertheless spur speculation about the timing of rate cuts, he said.

On Thursday, the government reported that inflation fell to 3 per cent in October compared with 12 months earlier, according to the Fed's preferred gauge. That was the lowest such level since the spring of 2021.

Core prices, which exclude food and energy, rose 3.5 per cent from a year earlier. From September to October, overall prices were essentially unchanged, and core prices ticked up 0.

"Walk away from 'friendships' that make you feel small and insecure and seek out people who inspire you and support you"
— Michelle Obama

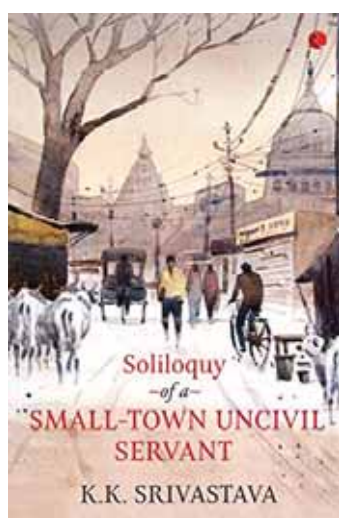


A literary maverick blending bureaucracy and poetry in the symphony of life, **KK SRIVASTAVA** is a maestro of words who orchestrates the mundane and the profound into a harmonious composition, writes **SWARN KUMAR ANAND**

RECLUSIVE ENIGMATIC POET

In the realm of literature and bureaucracy, Kuldeep Kumar Srivastava emerges as a unique figure: A man of diverse accomplishments seamlessly blending the rigour of a top bureaucrat with the soulful expressions of a poet. Armed with a Masters in Economics from Gorakhpur University in 1980, KK Srivastava served as a former Additional Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General at the office of the CAG of India. But beyond the corridors of bureaucracy, Srivastava's poetic prowess shines through three collections: *Ineluctable Stillness*, *An Armless Hand Writes*, and *Shadows of the Real*. His literary journey takes a captivating turn with *Soliloquy of a Small Town Uncivil Servant*, published by Rupa in 2019, marking his return after a seven-year hiatus. Venturing into varied territories, Srivastava's words traverse cultural boundaries with a Russian translation of *Shadows of the Real* by Adolf Shvedchikov released by the Russian Cultural Centre. His commitment to language extends further, with Nardeo Sharma and Jaswinder Singh translating thirty-five of his poems into Hindi, published by Vani Prakashan. As he navigates the intricacies of bureaucracy, Srivastava does not shy away from critiquing societal structures. His collection of essays and critiques, released in 2022 by Authors Press, New Delhi, delves into various topics, including reflections on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Amid these professional accomplishments, Srivastava also embraces a role as a literate representative on the Ethics Committee on Mental Research at IHBAS, actively engaging with ethical considerations in mental health research. Wendy Mary Lister, a nurse and poet from the UK, aptly described him as "a master of unique genius" in her review in literary journal "Enchanting Verses", after reading his first two poetry collections, capturing the essence of Srivastava's literary brilliance. In 2009, Carls Kraus, an Austrian poetess, wrote in one of her letters to Srivastava about his book, *AN ARMLESS HAND WRITES*, "All these poems in this collection are just 'wonderful' and on a very high level so that the reader has to know a lot about English literature, philosophy, and psychology. I was delighted to read such 'clever' poems as yours. I

am very sick, and I don't know whether I will even live till today's end." After a few days, Carla died. Three years later, he paid tribute, perhaps to the departed soul, in his book *Shadows of the Real*, "Once, she was the river and/ she was the shore/ she flew/ she halted, she stayed awake in me/ her purity melted into mine... Death has not ended a life/ Finishing a tiny journey is no death/ There is no death in her death... Hidden beneath shades of silence/ I gaze/ Her reflection expands as I grow older." Memories and symbols depict anguish and pang in Srivastava's mind. Rosemary C Wilkinson, President Emeritus of WCP/WAAC, USA, responded to the editor of a literary magazine who requested her to review Srivastava's first book of poetry, *Ineluctable Stillness*: "First, I want to say that someone much more knowledgeable than I should be reviewing Srivastava's collection of poetry, for I am in awe of who he is and the commendable challenges he has overcome in his life. This poetry draws us to a new appreciation of new forms, which attract us to read and continue reading until devoured." Srivastava has led a troubled life. The first chapter of *Soliloquy of a Small Town Uncivil Servant*, titled "Growing up in Gorakhpur," encapsulates his childhood memories. "For us, a joint family meant nothing more than sharing a common sandas (toilet) and kitchen. Leave these two apart, and you had people leading scattered lives with no feelings, no emotions, and no real relationships. Moreover, every six months or so, a new soul would make an entry into the family." Srivastava recalls that his schooling in municipal schools was "an extension of the milieu obtained in my house and neighbourhood. The Principal and the only other teacher were both jaded, poor, wearing undistinguished clothes, thin and weak, fragile and weird - and then the uncontrollable crowd of noisy, ill-mannered, directionless, suffocating sixty children never interested in what was to come next." Srivastava's name was removed twice: once in intermediate and once in degree college due to non-payment of school fees. On both occasions, his teachers came to his rescue, and he was readmitted. Continuing his studies at Gorakhpur University posed no problem. His outstanding performance, earning the highest marks in all three subjects during



"WE MEET HUGE FIGURES EVERY DAY THEN HUGE FIGURES MEET AMONGST THEMSELVES. THEY TALK TO EACH OTHER; THEY LAUGH... THEY TALK ABOUT OTHERS; THEY RUB THEMSELVES AGAINST EACH OTHER, THEY TOY WITH THEIR 'SELF'; THEY JETTISON OTHERS' SELVES. MOST OF US NOWADAYS ARE SICK"

graduation, secured him a scholarship of one hundred rupees per month. Srivastava aspired to become a teacher and applied for the position of a lecturer in a newly opened degree college owned by a wealthy man, who intended to offer the job to his prospective son-in-law. Dr. BK Singh, an upright figure heading the interview board, saw through the game plan and refused to conduct the interview. A new board was formed with a pliable chairman who questioned Srivastava about the difference between economic growth and development. Realising that the die had already been cast, he attempted to explain the difference by referencing Gunnar Myrdal's concept of "instrumental value premises" with "ten indices of economic development" and their relevance to Adelman and Morris's forty-eight qualitative indicators applicable to developing economies. However, he sensed the disquieting demon of the "holier than thou syndrome" raising its head, as learned members appeared least interested in what he was articulating. Clearly, they might have been a bit miffed. His first career dream came to an end. Veteran media personality Seema Mustafa helped organise a conversation between Brazilian poet and critic Regis Bonvicino and Srivastava. This scholarly interview, titled "Poet of a Shared Paranoia," was published in THE CITIZEN, where Srivastava tells the interviewer, "One should look at uncivil people too, so one may know how civil one is." The interviewee emphasised how the higher echelons of society tend to look down upon individuals from non-elite backgrounds. In *The Descent: Essays and Critiques*, Srivastava recalls his meeting with Ashok Vajpeyi, a retired IAS officer and internationally acclaimed writer, who asked Srivastava, "Do you get strange questions from some people like I get about finding time to write?" Srivastava's reply is unmistakable: "Sir... the company of ignorant ought to be shunned; otherwise, their collective ignorance will engulf a tiny majority like ours. They spend a lot of time networking and are not given to valuing artistic and literary pursuits." Any Doubting Thomas? Srivastava's poems and narratives do not explicitly reveal the true identity of the narrator, giving his writings the semblance of fiction. One could argue that they are autobiographical, at least in parts but fictionalised. His

concerns for the downtrodden strata of society, including those in bureaucracy, manifest in his critical observations in some of his books. Let us examine two extensive poems: *Saturday Dinner Party* from his book *Ineluctable Stillness* and "Oh! That One Year Get-together And Our Very Own Mr Monsieur Maillard" from his poetry book *An Armless Hand Writes*. Reading these two poems together reveals how different aspects of party and hostel life, pledged to collective ethos, are twisted to look down upon people from non-elite classes. Consider a few lines: "Am I in St Petersburg? Dostoevsky and his St Petersburg/Hellish congestion. Now when congestion has come/can Dostoevsky's characters be far behind?" Further, "there is no heart here, no soul here/only stories are told/by room bearers/old, simple, peaky and weak with no voices." In the concluding lines, "We cannot glory in the years we spent together/it was a life full of/vile ambitions and low achievements. It was a life dissembled to the core... We set off on an odyssey/an unsure/obscure odyssey. *Soliloquy of a Small Town Uncivil Servant* continues to delve into the connections between the civil and uncivil in chapters titled "Rendezvous With a New World," "The Behemoth Ethos," and "Within the Cave or Cave Within." Throughout these chapters, the central theme revolves around the ignominy directed towards the "uncivil" within the context of the collective ethos of coexistence. Cryptic quotes like these convey profound messages, such as "they know the art of defacing clean faces to hide their unclean ones." "We meet huge figures every day then huge figures meet amongst themselves. They talk to each other; they laugh... they talk about others; they rub themselves against each other, they toy with their 'self'; they jettison others' selves. Most of us nowadays are sick". Unfortunately, space limitations prevent additional citations. The Pioneer talked to a few individuals to discover unknown facets of Srivastava's personality. Dr. NL Srivastava, his college mate and former Director of the Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Lucknow, recalls, "Kuldeep was very studious. I was pursuing my PhD in psychology from BHU when he inquired if I could arrange Allport's book on theories of personality for a couple of days as he needed it for the civil services examination. The book was

not available in the Gorakhpur University library. Yes, I sent him a letter. Two days later, he took the early morning train, came to me, collected the book, and went back in the evening. Four days later, he again came to return the book. Can you believe it? He copied almost a hundred pages from the book in registers with his own hands within three days. Libraries were his home. He is a completely self-made man." Meenakshi Mishra, former Director General from the CAG office and his service batch mate known for her uncompromising attitude, recalls, "Brooding and no-nonsense type. A competent administrator and auditor. A different CAG gave him very difficult and big offices where others virtually feared going, like Jharkhand, Rajkot, MP, and Kerala, and he very effectively managed these offices. So many transfers he was subjected to. An outspoken man. When very senior IA&AS officers, both retired and even serving, were critical of GC Murmu's appointment as CAG, KK's was a lone voice defending him in the public domain, describing Murmu as 'a very suitable selection and down-to-earth CAG.' He further justified by saying, 'The organisation needs such a CAG.' An ardent supporter of Prime Minister Modi, his article on the Mann Ki Baat programme, 'Aesthetic Blend of Flames of the Minds,' was the very first article on this program and a wonderful literary piece. Gyanendra Pandey, a former editor of Dainik Bhaskar, recalls his association with Srivastava in these words, "My admiration and connection with Srivastava stem solely from his literary achievements." Pandey highlighted that despite the demanding responsibilities of a top CAG bureaucrat, he managed to find time for literary pursuits, an uncommon feat among bureaucrats who are typically engrossed in their professional obligations. Srivastava is certainly, given modern times' standards/methods of obtaining name and fame, a unique aberration: he does not believe in circulating and networking. The best way to conclude this article is to quote from *Soliloquy of a Small Town Uncivil Servant*, "Eidetic merger of insights and intuitions is at the core of my narratives. Preparing to ride a bicycle has never guided that merger. I have truly ridden the bicycle. I know both: the bicycle and the ride." His books reveal as much about the world inside as the world outside.

In a positive step towards raising awareness and fostering collaborative efforts to protect lives and livelihood from the adverse health impacts of global warming, the COP28 in Dubai on December 3, will host the first "Health Day" ever held at the climate talks. ARCHANA JYOTI reports how climate change is affecting health system

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH



NEWS BRIEF

GURUGRAM DOCTORS USE REVOLUTIONARY DEVICE ON IRAQI MAN TO TREAT HEART FAILURE



DOCTORS at Max Hospital, Gurugram, have successfully implanted a cardiac contractility modulation (CCM) device on the man, aged 44 with overt heart failure. He had initially sought a heart transplant. Dr. (Col.) Manjinder Singh Sandhu, Principal Director-Cardiology at Max Hospital, said that the patient, an Iraqi resident was in overt heart failure and after optimising his medication, it was concluded that the patient was not a candidate for heart transplant but rather for the new revolutionary therapy CCM. He said that the CCM device marks a significant leap forward in the treatment options available for patients with compromised heart pumping capacity or damaged muscles.

While implantable cardioverter-defibrillators (ICD) have been effective in preventing sudden cardiac death, they fall short in addressing death due to progressive pump failure. Further, the introduction of cardiac resynchronisation therapy with defibrillator (CRTD) was a crucial step for patients with a left bundle branch block on ECG, but this only addressed a subset of individuals, Dr Sandhu said. "Recognising the critical need for a more inclusive solution, CCM has become a beacon of hope for the majority of patients who were ineligible for CRTD. This cutting-edge therapy aims to improve heart function and quality of life for those facing limited options," he said.



Having Sleep Troubles? Practise Sleep Hygiene!

Many of us have trouble falling asleep. Many of us do not have a refreshing sleep, or one keeps waking up in between. By following basic sleep hygiene practices, these problems can be easily resolved, and you may not have to resort to sleeping pills. A few points to be remembered are as follows:



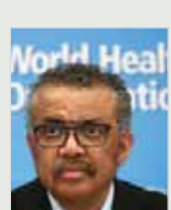
DR RAHUL JAIN

- A regular sleep-wake schedule should be made. Fix your timing. You may use an alarm clock to wake up at a fixed time every day, including the weekends.
- Avoid caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol in the evenings and at bedtime.
- The bedroom should have a quiet and cool environment. There should be no or low light, preferably.
- There should be no napping during the day.
- Do not watch television while on the bed. Avoid using computers, phones, or other light-emitting devices around bedtime.
- Go to sleep only when you feel sleepy. If you are unable to fall asleep within 20 minutes of lying down on the bed, then get up and preferably go to another room, read something or listen to some relaxing music, and return to bed only when sleepy. This may be repeated as many times as you feel necessary.
- Daily physical exercise for half an hour is recommended. It helps release stress.
- Do not plan for the next day's activities at bedtime. It just makes your brain work harder, and it cannot relax, which hampers sleep.
- Adequate sleep time varies from person to person. You should sleep for the amount of time your body feels rested. You should wake up fresh. Do not set any fixed targets.

By following the above few suggestions, you can make a lot of changes in the quality of your sleep. It is rightly said that a good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything. Invest in your sleep. It will help reset your brain and allow you to be more effective in the daytime. Restful sleep is indeed the foundation of good health.
Consultant Neurologist

The writer is Consultant Neurologist and Director, Jain Hospital and Jain Neuro Centre

EXPERTS SPEAKS



DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS, WHO Director-General: Prioritizing health is not just a choice; it is the foundation of resilient societies. We must change the conversation and demonstrate the massive benefits of bolder climate action on our health and well-being.



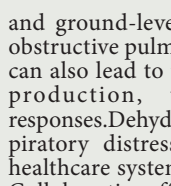
DR MANSUKH MANDAVIYA, Union Health Minister: The effects of climate change is the biggest threat that humanity is currently facing and it is having an immense impact on health systems...We commit to prioritising climate-resilient health systems...



SUNITA NARAIN, CSE director general: Our report attempts to build an evidence base on the frequency and expanding geography of extreme weather events in the country. This assessment clearly shows, what the country has witnessed so far in 2023 is the new 'abnormal' in a warming world.



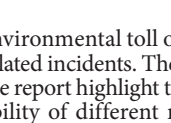
DR VIKRAMJEET SINGH, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, Aakash Healthcare, Delhi: The evolving landscape of climate change significantly raises concerns about its direct and indirect impacts on respiratory health. Rise in temperatures contributes to the proliferation of air pollutants, such as particulate matter and ground-level ozone causing asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Increased heat can also lead to the intensification of allergenic pollen production, triggering allergic respiratory responses. Dehydration and heat stress too can cause respiratory distress, placing an additional burden on healthcare system.



DR KAVITA SINGH, DNDI: Climate change is altering patterns for dengue fever and other diseases. Before, we didn't have as many cases, or as many deaths...More R&D and investment is needed to combat these diseases so as to benefit the entire world, not just the countries that currently suffer from them.



and ground-level ozone causing asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Increased heat can also lead to the intensification of allergenic pollen production, triggering allergic respiratory responses. Dehydration and heat stress too can cause respiratory distress, placing an additional burden on healthcare system. Collaborative efforts are essential to address adaptation measures to meet the health challenges linked with changing climate



environmental toll of climate-related incidents. The details of the report highlight the vulnerability of different regions in India to these extreme events, with Bihar being particularly affected. This underscores the need for upgrading key inter-

AT-RISK GROUPS: Children, socially vulnerable people, indigenous populations, older adults, people with chronic medical conditions, people with disabilities, workers, and pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women

ventions such as vector control, epidemiological surveillance, and access to safe water and sanitation. To reduce the negative impact on health, the health community stresses the importance of reducing and stopping emissions. Another report by the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, is equally alarming. It highlights concerning trends in heat and health, indicating a rise in exposure to high temperatures that jeopardise livelihoods and endangers public health in India. The report reveals a 43% increase in the total number of heatwave days experienced by children under the age of one from 2013-2022 compared to the 1986-2005 period. Adults over 65 saw a staggering 216% increase in heatwave days during the same timeframe. These alarming statistics underline the immediate impact on health and the urgency of mitigation and adaptation actions. The economic toll of heat exposure is substantial, with 191 billion potential labor hours lost in 2022 alone, a 54% increase from 1991-2000. This loss amounted to a potential income loss of USD219 billion in 2022, equivalent to 6.3% of the country's GDP. Agricultural workers bore the brunt, experiencing 64% of potential hours lost and 55% of potential income losses. The projected scenario, where temperatures exceed a 2°C

increase, indicates a nearly 5-fold rise in heatwave exposure for individuals over 65 by mid-century, underscoring the dire consequences if mitigation efforts are not implemented urgently.

The report also red flags the health impacts of air pollution, attributing increasing deaths to small particulate matter (PM2.5) generated from human activities. Transitioning to renewable energy sources is identified as a crucial step to mitigate air pollution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote universal, affordable, and clean energy.

As India participates in the Dubai Climate Summit, these findings should serve as eye-opener and add a sense of urgency among the developed nations to discussions around climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to tackle the shared challenges posed by a changing climate.

With the health sector grappling with unprecedented challenges, it is imperative to address the glaring disparity in financial support.

In fact, the current allocation of a mere 0.5% of global climate financing to the health sector is inadequate to meet the demands and complexities of the health challenges posed by climate change. A substantial increase in resources for the health sector is not only warranted but deemed essential. Adequate funding is crucial for the development and implementation of strategies to address climate-related health impacts, including extreme weather events, infectious diseases, and other health crises. The ongoing global health crisis, likely exacerbated by climate change, underscores the interconnectedness of health and environmental issues.

A robust and well-funded health sector is crucial for effectively responding to both the immediate health crisis and the long-term impacts of climate change on public health.

The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer

Early body contact augments premature babies' social skills

Combining the immediate medical care of very premature babies with a relatively simple intervention such as skin-to-skin contact can help develop the infant's social skills faster, says a study published in JAMA Network Open by researchers from Karolinska Institutet and others

In current practice, very premature babies are usually placed in an incubator to keep them warm and to stabilize them during the first hours after birth. In the "Immediate parent-infant skin-to-skin study" (PISTOSS), 91 premature babies born at 28 to 33 weeks were randomized to either traditional care in an incubator or immediate skin-to-skin contact with one of the parents. The study has generated several results that show, among other things, that immediate skin-to-skin contact is safe for babies and beneficial for their cardiorespiratory stabilization and temperature maintenance, and that it is perceived as valuable by the parents. Now, as part of this study, the

researchers have also studied the social development at four months of age of 71 of these premature babies. The children were randomly assigned to receive either standard care in an incubator or to receive care resting on one of their parents' breasts, either the mother's or the father's, for the first six hours after birth. "What is new about our study is that we also allowed the fathers to have skin-to-skin contact immediately after the birth. In most previous studies, it is the mother who is the primary caregiver, but in our study it was the fathers who had the most skin-to-skin contact," says Wibke Jonas, midwife, senior lecturer and associate professor at Karolinska Institutet's Department of

Women's and Children's Health, as well as research leader and last author of the study. "The study has identified fathers as a previously untapped resource that really has an important function in having immediate skin-to-skin contact with their infant if the mother is not available," says Siri Lilliesköld, PhD student at the same department and specialist nurse in neonatal care, and first author of the study. After four months, the social interaction between mother and infant was filmed and assessed by two psychologists who did not know which infant had received early skin-to-skin contact and which had not. The quality of the interaction was measured according to



the Parent-Child Early Relational Assessment (PCERA) scale, where different elements are graded between one and five, with one being cause for concern and five being very good quality. The

study also shows that fathers may play a more important role than previous research has shown. The infants who received immediate skin-to-skin contact had significantly better results

in a subscale measuring the infant's communicative and social skills. On the five-point scale, their average score was closer to four, while the infants cared for according to current practice were just above three. "What you could see was that the infants in the skin-to-skin group had slightly better communication skills, they were a bit more social and happier," says Wibke Jonas. Premature babies have developmental challenges as they grow up and need a lot of support. Even though medical developments have come a long way, the care of these babies still needs to be developed, the researchers say.

"If we combine the immediate medical care of the very premature babies with a relatively

simple intervention such as skin-to-skin contact, it has effects on the infants social skills," says Jonas Wibke and continues. "Previous studies have shown that premature babies perform slightly poorer when socially interacting, for example, they do not give as clear signals in the interaction with their mothers. The closeness between babies and their parents at birth may therefore stimulate later interaction and thus the development of the infant."

The benefits of immediate skin-to-skin contact are so clear that both Wibke Jonas and Siri Lilliesköld believe it should be introduced now in Swedish neonatal care. And this work is already underway, they say.

"We have worked very actively to minimize separation between infants and parents in general, and now we have the evidence to do the same with these very premature babies," says Siri Lilliesköld. The research team will continue to report on the development of the infants at 12 and 24 months. The study is a collaboration between researchers from Karolinska Institutet and the University Hospital of Stavanger, Norway, and the University of Turku, Finland. The research was funded by, among others, the Swedish Research Council, Region Stockholm and Stiftelsen Barnavård. The researchers declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Beyond Lunar Geopolitics: Governance architectures

India is in an interesting geopolitical moment. On one hand, India has joined the Artemis Accord, and on the other hand, it has plans to collaborate with Japan to send a probe called Lunar Polar Exploration Mission in 2026, also referred to as the Chandrayaan-4 mission. With this astute act of balancing, in the coming years, some space analysts estimate that India's Lunar South Pole capacity can help scale up some of the goals of the Artemis programme, including lunar resource utilization. However, while these incidents suggest an acute act of external balancing, one needs to also ask whether governance and geopolitics have a meeting point.

As India navigates its position, it should carefully consider the nature of space norms. In this context, one must ask whether there are any suggestions for lunar governance, particularly after India's successful moon landing of Chandrayaan-3. There has been substantial public interest in the topic of lunar water ice since then. Questions related to water ice on the Moon have been a focus of lunar exploratory missions in the past. In fact, a recent report claimed that water has not only accumulated at the lunar poles but may also be found in Permanently Shadowed Regions (PSR) depressions that have been permanently blocked from sunlight. It has also been estimated that some of these PSRs must have been eliminated in the past, with water sublimating into gas. This implies that PSRs are non-renewable and finite resources.

Given the unique ecosystem of space and its multiple resource systems, questions related to the sustainable management of lunar governance have become significant. When conceptualising how lunar ice (and other non-renewable lunar



resources) might be governed, terrestrial water governance regimes can provide an important reference point, shedding light on numerous complex dynamics in managing common pool resources. However, the significance lies not in its strategic value but in the analogous criteria it offers from the perspectives of water laws, politics, and governance. These provide a lens through which we can understand how lunar resources of strategic value may be governed. Given the significance of governance in Outer Space, many analogous references have been made. Facets related to ocean governance, which were negotiated through the United Nations Convention on the Laws of Seas (UNCLOS) have highlighted issues related to sustainable management and freedom of movement in global commons.

Similarly, questions related to soft and hard laws through the Antarctic Treaty System are also significant. However, when one deliberates on the nature of challenges and the politics of space resources, the management of the oceans is not the only relevant analogy. Riparian laws and regimes also offer a significant paradigm on which to build. Some of the issues explored in riparian regimes pertain to property rights, questions of ownership and regulation, adaptive and risk governance, and temporal priority, among others. Riparian regimes are significant because they have negotiated similar governance issues relevant to outer space in general, lunar governance in particular, and more specifically, the management of lunar water ice in Permanently Shadowed Regions. For instance, the issue of prop-

erty rights has been enduring, especially concerning water rights. In rivers, these rights are partially public and partially private. Significantly, the articulation of property rights differs between surface water regimes and groundwater regimes. Riparian regimes typically grapple with balancing two competing principles. In surface water regimes, the "Riparian Integrity" suggests absolute use over resources within its territory, regardless of the impact on lower riparians. On the other hand, the "Riparian Integrity" doctrine states that a country may not alter the natural flow of water in a way that adversely affects upper or lower riparians. A compromise formula has been suggested, stressing "equitable and reasonable use" and the "No Harm principle". Most countries have negotiat-

ed bilateral and multilateral arrangements according to their interests. In both groundwater and surface water debates, "reasonable use" is normatively emphasised, meaning one cannot exhaust the water source or prevent others from using it. However, given the politics of water resources, water laws have been interpreted and translated differently by countries worldwide. Similar issues are nearly guaranteed to arise with respect to lunar resources, where rules regarding the prohibition and extraction of resources are ambiguous. In riparian governance, several potential solutions have been explored: water shares, collective rights, and prior appropriation. Proportionate sharing rights entail that users can use rights in proportion to their licensed allocations, converting water rights into water shares.

Alternatively, some cases emphasise correlative rights, limiting water users to reasonable shares, as opposed to unlimited use. The concept of prior appropriation advocates that only those with a permit may divert water from the resource-meaning the one who captures the resource first gets to use it first. These alternate and sometimes contentious approaches provide analogous perspectives to space resource use, emphasising the importance of crafting an overarching architecture while considering these debates.

Thus, the long history of riparian negotiations, its issues, and solutions should be relevant for lunar governance, where distinct resource systems are available for exploration and use. For instance, the Permanent Shadowed Regions and Lunar Regolith are small ecosystems with their own specific characteristics associated with the roles different stakeholders can play. In this case, activities like mining, scientific investigations, manufacturing, construction, and tourism draw attention to the concept of "boundaries," specifying who has access, how resources are allocated, and the purpose of such allocation. Principles of adaptive governance can help shed light on some of these complex areas.

What lessons can be drawn from riparian regimes? In terms of solutions for riparian regimes, adaptive governance has emphasised the need for integrated management and conjunctive uses of surface and groundwater. This involves formulating resilient water institutions based on self-organization principles articulated by Elinor Ostrom. These principles address collective action problems, suggesting that actors should be able to switch between levels and solve problems collaboratively. A networked governance structure,

grounded in effective communication, collaboration, and interaction, is key to such institutional designs.

Thus, elements that could enable, bridge, match, and facilitate actor interaction were considered fundamental for adaptive governance. Moreover, like rivers, we can characterise outer space resources such as lunar water ice as 'common pool resources' and draw on the rich literature and insights of Ostrom and her followers in successfully managing such systems. These insights are valuable for understanding the resilience of international regimes, the nature of multi-stakeholder interactions, and global rule-making. Questions like these can significantly inform issues related to lunar and outer space governance.

Similar to terrestrial common pool resources, methodological frameworks of socio-ecological systems (SES) can effectively help study the interactions between social, ecological, and governance systems. To date, no effort has been made to create an SES model for the Moon. While much of the current debate centres on great power politics and the control of lunar resources and their impact on geopolitical configurations, it is crucial that aspirational emerging powers like India consider the architectures of lunar governance, enabling them to assume a leadership role. By expanding the debate to include the use of common pool resources, India could lead in establishing principles of adaptive governance. Insights from ongoing water governance debates could offer valuable suggestions toward creating a workable lunar governance system.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, South Asian University)

India, at a crucial geopolitical juncture, aligns with Artemis Accord and plans Chandrayaan-4 mission with Japan. Drawing from riparian regimes, the discourse on lunar governance explores adaptive solutions and common pool resource principles, positioning India as a leader in shaping lunar exploration's future



MEDHA BISHT

PERSPECTIVE

Fossil fuels, funding gaps, deforestation in focus

The COP28 climate conference in Dubai marks a pivotal moment as world leaders confront urgent climate challenges. Focused on fossil fuels, funding disparities, and deforestation, the conference seeks concrete actions to mitigate the escalating climate crisis and prioritise environmental sustainability



BK SINGH

The COP28 climate conference, launched on November 30, is a pivotal event that aims to address critical objectives with far-reaching implications for the global community. These objectives include conducting a comprehensive global stocktake to assess nations' commitment fulfillment, securing funding for loss and damage, and addressing the contentious issue of phasing out fossil fuels. However, negotiations on the latter have been marred by opposition from oil-producing and developing countries, leading to significant conflicts during the deliberations. The plenary session of COP28 witnessed the United Nations underscoring the urgency and severity of climate change, highlighting a concerning 1.4-degree Celsius warming of the Earth. In response to this alarming trend, there is a renewed emphasis not only on phasing out coal but also extending this commitment to oil and gas. Notably, an agreement on the loss and damage deal has been reached, with Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany pledging financial contributions of \$10 million, \$17.5 million, \$75.89 million, and \$100 million, respectively. However, the adequacy of the US funding commitment, given its status as the wealthiest and second-highest emitter of greenhouse gases, has sparked criticism.

Preceding the COP28 conference, a research publication by NASA and Columbia University scientists has sounded an alarm, indicating that the world is on track to surpass the critical 1.5 degrees Celsius warming threshold above pre-industrial temperatures within this decade. The study provides evidence suggesting that the goals set for 2030 through nationally determined contributions (NDC) are unattain-

able. This revelation follows a series of extreme weather events globally, from heatwaves in China and Europe to flooding in Libya, rainfall deficits in parts of Asia due to El Niño conditions, and widespread forest fires in Canada, the United States, Europe, and Russia. The year 2023 is projected to be the warmest on record.

Published in the journal "Nature Climate Change," the report proposes an urgent need for the world to achieve net-zero emissions by 2034 to have a 50 per cent chance of containing warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius. This is significantly earlier than the 2050 pledges made by several Western countries. Despite the consistent inclusion of the objective to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius in annual conferences, tangible actions to meet this goal have been insufficient.

Developing nations, particularly those in the global south, have borne the brunt of extreme weather events, a consequence of the fossil fuel burning practices of developed nations since the inception of industrialization. While the climate finance agenda was initiated during the 2009 Copenhagen conference to aid adaptation and facilitate the transition to renewable energy for developing nations, there is a noticeable lack of substantial commitment and compliance from developed nations.

A concerning pattern has emerged where major emitters, such as the United States and China, deflect responsibility onto nations with lower emissions, hindering collective progress in combating climate change. The recent criticism faced by India for methane emissions highlights this issue, prompting the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to develop technologies and mitigation processes to minimise



such emissions. India is expected to address these allegations assertively during the COP28 summit.

The impact of wildfires in the developed world on global warming is profound, with the Earth's warming contributing to a surge in wildfire incidents worldwide. Regions such as Siberia, North America, the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, Africa, and the Indian subcontinent have experienced devastating wildfires. The Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) reports alarming statistics about Canadian wildfires, which emitted over 1 gigatonne of CO2 equivalent in the current year, equivalent to the emissions from 285 coal-fired power plants. Global wildfires in 2021 contributed a staggering 6.45 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent, constituting approximately 20 per cent of the total greenhouse gas emissions from all human activities on Earth.

This revelation underscores the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address and mitigate the escalating impact of wildfires on climate change. It is disconcerting that 20 per cent of greenhouse gas

emissions originate from wildfires in developed countries. Rather than hindering the developmental aspirations of nations with minimal emissions, developed countries must take responsibility and address the impact of wildfires on global warming.

The ongoing COP28 in Dubai provides an opportunity for concrete discussions and actions to ensure equitable global cooperation in addressing climate change and its associated challenges. The G20 countries, in their recent Delhi declaration, acknowledged the substantial \$5.9 trillion required to fulfill the financial commitments necessary for achieving the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets of developing nations by 2030. This financial support is crucial for enabling these nations to effectively tackle climate challenges and transition toward sustainable development.

However, developed countries are falling short of the commitments articulated in their NDC under the 2015 Paris climate accord. The failure to provide financial support and technology to aid developing nations in climate-resilient

adaptation and the transition to renewable energy is evident. The loss and damage funds agreed upon during the Sharm El Sheikh COP 27 to mitigate impacts in impoverished nations have languished unutilised for a year until certain countries pledged funding during COP28.

The ongoing Global Stocktake (GST) in COP28 is exerting moral pressure on countries that are lagging in achieving their NDC goals. There is a notable resurgence in the combustion of coal, oil, and natural gas for energy, both in developed and developing nations. This surge has been particularly pronounced following the COVID-19 pandemic, with China setting a record-high coal consumption of 4.5 billion metric tonnes in 2022. In contrast, India's consumption was 1.1 billion tonnes during the same period.

Reflecting on past climate negotiations in Glasgow and Sharm El-Sheikh, both China and India have opposed fervent pleas from numerous developing nations to "phase out" fossil fuel consumption, opting instead for a more lenient "phase down" approach. The consequence is a surge in con-

sumption and a subsequent acceleration of global warming. At COP28, there is a notable push from activists for the establishment of a "Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty." Ironically, the host country opposes this initiative, given its economic dependence on oil. Despite economic dependencies that resist changes, world leaders must make concerted efforts to transition away from fossil fuels and embrace more sustainable practices.

During the Glasgow climate summit, nations controlling 90 per cent of the world's forests pledged to halt deforestation by 2030, with India choosing not to sign this agreement. Furthermore, amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980 have raised concerns about expedited diversion of forest lands, contributing to deforestation. Trees, crucial for capturing CO2 through photosynthesis, play a vital role in mitigating climate change. Deforestation, however, contributes to increased CO2 release, exacerbating global warming.

Despite the commitment made at Glasgow to end deforestation by 2030, subsequent discus-

sions at other forums, including the Sharm El-Sheikh climate conference, have failed to reaffirm this stance. No country has reported tangible progress towards ending deforestation.

The India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEEEC), stemming from the G20 countries' declaration in Delhi, aims to counter China's Belt and Road initiative. The corridor envisions transporting goods from India's eight ports on the western coast to the UAE's port, with a rail corridor through the UAE and Saudi Arabia extending up to the Haifa port in Israel. However, the IMEEEC faces economic challenges, with two additional handling steps at intermediate ports and rail freights ten times more expensive than shipping costs.

India's efforts to enhance rail connectivity to ports raise concerns about potential exploitation of the Western Ghats forests and pose environmental challenges in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The installation of three additional pipelines for the transportation of oil, green hydrogen, and data along the sea and rail route raises questions about the necessity for such infrastructure in the context of the global push to phase out fossil fuels.

As world leaders convene in Dubai, there is a pressing need for a clear roadmap to steer nations away from economically and environmentally non-viable projects. Concerted efforts are needed to proactively reduce emissions, ensuring that global warming is contained within the 1.5 degrees Celsius target. Leaders must prioritise sustainability and environmental responsibility in the face of evolving infrastructure projects.

(The writer retired as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Karnataka)

