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INSIDE

SPORTS 11
CRISTIANO RONALDO SCORES AS AL-NASSR BEATS DEFENDING CHAMPION AL-AIN 5-1



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DONALD TRUMPS KAMALA HARRIS

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump was Wednesday elected the United States' President for a second term in one of the greatest political comebacks in American history, four years after an election loss in 2020 that sparked a violent insurrection at the US Capitol. The 78-year-old Republican leader, convicted of felony charges and awaiting sentencing in a hush-money case in New York, defeated his Democratic rival Kamala Harris in a bitterly fought election.

According to races called by the Associated Press up to 7 pm (IST), 277 electoral votes had gone to Trump and 224 to Harris. Trump, the oldest person in US history to be elected president, crossed the halfway 270 votes-mark in electoral college votes with victory in the battleground state of Wisconsin.

Addressing his supporters at West Palm Beach in Florida, Trump declared his victory in the presidential election, calling the mandate "unprecedented and powerful". "Many people have told me that God spared my life for a reason," Trump said, referring to the two assassination attempts on his life during the election campaign this year.

Amid cheers of his jubilant supporters and his family by his side, Trump declared that this will be the "golden age" of America. "This is a magnificent victory for the American people. This was a movement like nobody's ever seen before, and frankly, this was, I believe, the greatest political movement of all time. There's never been anything



like this in this country, and maybe beyond," Trump said. "And now it's going to reach a new level of importance because we're going to help our country heal. We'll help our country... We have a country that needs help, and it needs help very badly," he said. Soon after projections indicated Trump's victory, congratulatory messages started pouring in from world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, for his "historic return to the White House."

After President Grover Cleveland (1885-1889 and 1893-1897), Trump is the only person to return to the White House for another term after a gap of four years. Trump served as President from January 2017 to January 2021. "We made history for a reason tonight, and that reason is going to be just that we overcame obstacles that nobody thought possible, and it is now clear that we've achieved the most incredible political thing," Trump said in his speech. "I want to thank the American people for the extraordinary honour of being elected your 47th president and your 45th

president," he said. "I will fight for you, for your family and your future." "Every single day, I will be fighting for you and with every breath in my body, I will not rest until we have delivered the strong, safe and prosperous America that our children deserve and that you deserve. This will truly be the golden age of America," said Trump, who wrapped up his speech with a playful dance to the song YMCA by the band Village People. The victory by Trump is being seen as a remarkable comeback after he lost the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden, which seemed then to

be the end of his political career. Trump challenged the election results and even indirectly urged his supporters to march on the US Capitol that reportedly triggered the violent attacks and clashes inside the seat of American democracy, sending shockwaves across the globe. In the following months, Trump unsuccessfully challenged the results in court. A grand jury found him guilty on 34 counts of falsifying business records. The Biden-Harris campaign said at the time that no one is above the law while Trump called the verdict the result of a "rigged" political system. Continued on page 2

Look forward to renewing our collaboration: PM Modi

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

India and the United States' ties across the spectrum including commerce, strategic affairs and defence are likely to see a healthy boost with Donald Trump winning the presidential polls, as he shares a warm relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Prime Minister Modi was one of the first world leaders to congratulate "friend" Donald Trump on his "historic" victory. In his message, Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday said he looks forward to renewing their collaboration to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership.

"Heartiest congratulations my friend @realDonaldTrump on your historic election victory. As you build on the successes of your previous term, I look forward to renewing our collaboration to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership," Modi said in a social media post. "Together, let's work for the betterment of our people and to promote global peace, stability and prosperity," he said. The prime minister also posted pictures of his previous meetings with Trump, who was the US president from 2016-2020.

Both leaders share the same views regarding strategic co-operation and defence. They also shared a hard stance against terrorism, which strengthened ties, especially regarding Pakistan-based threats. During his first term as president, India and the US also shared a vision for a "free and open Indo-Pacific," in an apparent effort to counter China's aggressive postures in the strategically important region. This led to closer defence ties, joint military



Sensex, Nifty surge over one per cent

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets rallied more than 1 per cent on Wednesday with benchmark Sensex soaring 901 points on heavy buying in IT and pharma shares as Donald Trump is all set to win the United States presidential elections. Extending its gains to the second day, the BSE Sensex jumped 901.50 points or 1.13 per cent to settle at 80,378.13. During the day, it soared 1,093.1 points or 1.37 per cent to 80,569.73. The NSE Nifty soared 270.75 points or 1.12 per



cent to close at 24,484.05. From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys jumped over 4 per cent each. HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro, Maruti and Reliance Industries were also among big gainers. Continued on page 2

CBSE cracks whip on 'dummy' admissions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a crackdown on 'dummy' admissions, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Wednesday withdrew affiliation of 21 schools and downgraded six schools from senior secondary to secondary level, officials said. The move comes following a surprise inspection at the schools in Rajasthan and Delhi in September during which several lapses were found.

"The practice of dummy or non-attending admissions contradicts the core mission of school education, compromising students' foundational growth. To address this issue, we are taking decisive action to combat the proliferation of dummy schools and send a clear message to all affiliated institutions to resist the lure of accepting dummy or non-attending admissions," CBSE Secretary Himanshu Gupta said.



He said the vital observations of the surprise inspection committees regarding the irregularities observed during the inspections were communicated as a report to the respective schools. "The replies submitted by the schools were examined in detail by the Board. Based on the inspection findings and supported by videographic evidence, affiliation of 21 schools was withdrawn and six schools were downgraded from senior secondary to secondary level," Gupta added. Continued on page 2

LMV license holders can drive transport vehicles: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday ruled that individuals holding a Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) driving license are eligible to drive transport vehicles with a weight not exceeding 7,500kg. The judgment from a five-judge Constitution Bench, led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, offers clarity on licensing regulations and is expected to prevent insurance companies from rejecting claims based on the license type of drivers involved in accidents. "A driver holding a license for light motor vehicle... for vehicles with gross vehicle weight under 7,500kg is permitted to operate a transport vehicle without needing additional authorisation... of the Motor Vehicle Act. LMVs and the transport vehicles are not entirely separate classes, and overlap exists



between the two," the Bench held, adding the statute should remain practical and workable. Pronouncing the unanimous verdict for the Bench, Justice Hrishikesh Roy, however, said the special eligibility requirement will continue to apply to vehicles carrying hazardous goods. Besides the CJI and Justice Roy, the Bench also comprised Justices PS Narasimha, Pankaj Mishra and Manoj Misra. Continued on page 2

Abandoned at birth, miracle baby Krishna defies death

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ/KANPUR (UP)

In a tale of miraculous survival, an abandoned newborn found clinging to his life from the branches of a tree in Uttar Pradesh's Hamirpur in August has fought back from the jaws of death after surviving 50 wounds, including a deep animal bite, that dotted his tiny, fragile frame.

The boy, who was barely two days old when he was found abandoned in Hamirpur, has defied all odds to not only get a new lease of life, but also a new name - 'Krishna' - and most recently, a temporary abode, the government-run children's home in Prayagraj. Prayagraj district probation officer Sarvajit Singh told PTI that the "fully fit" child is now being properly looked after at the children's home, where he was shifted following the orders of the Bal Kalyan



Samiti (child welfare committee) in Hamirpur. Asked about the possibility of adoption, Singh said, "The profile of every such child is uploaded on the website of the Central Adoption Resource Authority. Whoever wants to adopt a child can apply on the website. However, the profile of this child is yet to be uploaded. Before he arrived in Prayagraj, the paediatrics department of the G SVM Medical College in Kanpur had virtually become his home, helping him stage a

miraculous recovery in about two months, where his charming smile endeared him to the doctors and nurses alike. So it didn't come as a surprise when the medical staff of the hospital were moved to tears at the time of his discharge after a triumphant death-defying battle. "Our hearts rejoiced in equal measure when this little kid, found clinging to a fragile thread of life after being abandoned and attacked, recovered fully," Dr Arun

Kumar Arya, head of the paediatrics department at the G SVM Medical College, said in a statement. "Against all odds, this small and innocent baby endured unimaginable hardship, suffering multiple dog bites and scratch marks on his entire body before being mercifully rescued," Dr Arya said. The child was found in an abandoned field in Hamirpur district and later rescued by the police after being notified by the local authorities, he added. The child was "severely malnourished" and "in desperate need of medical attention" at the time of his rescue. The unfed boy had multiple infected wounds on his body and his cries could be heard from afar, Dr Arya said. "The child was admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) on August 31. Continued on page 2

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Rahul Gandhi announces guarantees at MVA joint rally

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of Rs 3,000 per month for women under the Mahalakshmi Yojana, loan waiver of up to Rs 3 lakh and a Rs 25 lakh health insurance along with free medicines are among the five guarantees that the Opposition Congress held out to the people of Maharashtra ahead of the Assembly polls scheduled for November 20. Addressing a joint rally of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — comprising Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT)

and NCP (Sharad Pawar), in Mumbai, leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi pledged to conduct a caste census and strive for removal of 50 per cent cap on reservations. The five guarantees that Rahul announced at the rally were a DBT of Rs 3,000 per month to women and free bus travel for women and girls under Mahalakshmi Yojana, loan waiver of up to Rs 3 lakh for farmers and incentive of Rs 50,000 for regular loan repayment, health insurance up to Rs 25 lakh and free medicines, a caste-wise census in the state and strive to remove 50

percent reservation limit and Rs 4000 per month to unemployed youth. Rahul unveiled the five guarantees in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, and NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar in Mumbai. "This is a battle of ideology. On one hand, we have BJP and RSS, while there is the INDIA alliance on the other hand. On one hand, there is BR Ambedkar's Constitution, equality and mohabbat (love) and respect, while on the other hand, BJP and RSS are



trying to abolish the Constitution," Rahul said. Earlier in Nagpur, Rahul Gandhi charged that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were covertly "dismantling" the foundational principles of the Constitution and said that both the RSS and BJP were well aware that they would be ripped apart, if they attacked the Constitution directly. Speaking at a "Samvidhan Samman Sammelan" in Nagpur, Rahul went hammers and tongs at both the RSS and BJP for using narratives like "development, progress, and

economy" to camouflage their real intent of eroding the fundamental principles of the Constitution. "The RSS and the BJP cannot attack the Constitution from the front because they will have to pay for it. That's why they hide behind words like 'vikas', 'pragati', 'unity' to carry on their agenda of inequality that ensures benefits only to a few individuals at the cost of the vast majority of people... Their agenda undermines the rights of marginalized communities enshrined in the Constitution," Rahul said. Singling out the RSS for a vicious attack, Rahul demand-

ed to know "from where does the RSS get money to maintain its huge facility here and to run Shishu Mandirs and Eklavya Vidyalayas?". "The money comes from BJP-run governments in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and from favoured industrialists Adani and Ambani," he said. Before attending the "Samvidhan Samman Sammelan", Rahul visited Deeksha Bhoomi — a place where late B R Ambedkar embraced Buddhism way back in 1956 — and paid tributes to Lord Buddha and late Dr Ambedkar, the chief architect of Constitution of India.

NSG officer dies by suicide

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

In a shocking case of alleged death by suicide, a 31-year-old National Security Guard (NSG) officer died in his barrack at the Sudarshan Camp near the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport with his service weapon. According to the police on Wednesday, the deceased has been identified as Narender Singh Bhandari, serving with the NSG on deputation from the Indian Army. The officials said that he was found dead with a self-inflicted gunshot wound. A Police Control Room (PCR) call regarding the incident was reported on Tuesday. Reacting to the incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said, "On Tuesday, a PCR call was received regarding a suicide incident at the NSG Sudarshan Camp near Shiv Murti. Upon receiving the information, police personnel promptly arrived at the location, where the body of Narender Singh



Bhandari, an NSG staff member on deputation from the Army, was found inside his barrack. "Preliminary inquiry suggested that he suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound," Rangnani said. No suicide note was recovered the place of the incident according to a senior police official. While prima facie it looks like a case of suicide, the police are investigating the matter from all angles and ascertaining the cause of the suicide. The DCP further said that forensic and mobile crime teams have examined the scene and collected evidence in the matter. "He was declared brought dead at Safdarjung Hospital. Further investigation in the incident is underway," she added.

SC slams UP Govt for demolishing without following legal procedures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

The Supreme Court on Wednesday slammed the Uttar Pradesh Government for demolishing an individual's house without following legal procedures and ordered to pay Rs.25 lakh as compensation. Welcoming the Supreme Court directive, Samajwadi Party and Congress attacked the State government for "misusing bulldozers". The Opposition parties said officials are taking such action to get themselves "in good books of the government". A Bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra observed that the demolition was 'high handed' and without authority of law and directed the UP Government to initiate criminal proceedings against those



demolition to be carried out. It is clear demolition was high handed and without the authority of law. The petitioner states the demolition was only because the petitioner had flagged irregularities in road construction in newspaper report. Such action by the State cannot be countenanced and when dealing with private property, law has to be followed," the SC said. As per the petitioner, his house was demolished without any prior notice or explanation for allegedly encroaching a highway. The petitioner said the demolition was a retaliatory measure after he informed the media about alleged irregularities in a road construction project. The SC dismissed the UP Government's request for an adjournment, insisting that the matter needs to be promptly addressed.

Kamal Nath communicates inability to campaign for MP bypolls

GIRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

Citing health reasons, former chief minister Kamal Nath has communicated his inability to campaign for the November 13 bypolls in Budhni and Vijaypur constituencies of Madhya Pradesh. The move is, however, being viewed as a bid to distance himself from the rough electoral battle ahead. The absence of Kamal Nath from the massive public meeting of the Congress at Bherunda, in Budhni Assembly constituency, left party leaders surprised, especially as the Congress is desperately trying to put up a show of strength in this BJP mainstay seat. Except for Nath, all other senior leaders were present during the meeting, including AICC General Secretary and in-charge for Madhya Pradesh, Bhanwar Jitendra

Singh, PCC Chief Jitu Patwari, senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh, Sajjan Singh Verma, and former PCC Chief Arun Yadav. Since this meeting was scheduled weeks in advance, Nath attempted to quell speculations over his absence by taking to X (formerly Twitter) on Monday to communicate his inability to participate in the campaign for the two bypolls—the first since the 2023 Assembly Elections in the state—due to health reasons. Political observers feel that Nath has deliberately distanced himself from the campaign, as he never campaigned in Budhni except in 2018, when Arun Yadav was the Congress candidate against former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. In 2023 too, he did not campaign in this constituency, even though he did visit the Salkanpur temple,

in the constituency, to offer prayers. While talking to The Pioneer, Madhya Pradesh Congress media in-charge Mukesh Nayak said that he was in Jharkhand, but he was aware that Nath remained absent due to health reasons and would soon join the electioneering for the by-elections. The campaigning in Budhni is in full swing, as all the senior leaders are visiting regularly. On Tuesday, AICC General Secretary and in-charge of Madhya Pradesh, Bhanwar Jitendra Singh also visited Budhni and addressed a huge gathering, besides PCC Chief Jitu Patwari and a host of party leaders. Former chief minister Digvijay Singh and Arun Yadav are among those spearheading the party campaign in the poll-bound Budhni and Vijaypur constituencies of the state.

Abandoned at birth, miracle...

From page 1

He was put on oxygen support and fed with an infant-feeding tube. The loving care provided by the doctors and nurses brought the child back from the jaws of death as he became the apple of their eyes. Not a day went by when the hospital staff didn't play with baby Krishna," he said. "Dr Arya named the child 'Krishna' because he was found on the auspicious day of Janmashtami (August 26) and emerged victorious after enduring so much suffering at such a tender age," the principal of G SVM Medical College, Sanjay Kala, said.

However, while shifting him to the children's home in Prayagraj, the child welfare committee recorded the infant's name as 'Lov', noting that it was an imaginary ('kalpanik') name. "This baby is a reminder of human resilience and the power of kindness. Though abandoned, they are not alone. They are surrounded by those who believe in second chances. It is a testament to life's determination to persevere," Dr Arya said. The boy was handed over to the child welfare committee on October 25 which moved him to his new abode in Prayagraj over the next couple of days.

President Murmu to embark on INS Vikrant, witness naval operations at sea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu will embark the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and witness naval operations at sea on Thursday, navy said here on Wednesday. It will be her maiden visit to the aircraft carrier. Giving details, officials said Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi will receive the

President at INS Hansa (Naval Air Station at Goa) and present a 150-men Ceremonial Guard of Honour. Soon thereafter, she will embark the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant at sea off Goa. This is maiden sailing of the Supreme Commander onboard the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant to witness the full spectrum of multi-domain naval operations.

Men open fire at supermarket, car workshop in Delhi in two separate incidents

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two firing incidents took place in Najafgarh and Paschim Vihar West area on Wednesday where some men opened fire at a supermarket and a car workshop. This comes within a span of 48 hours when two shooting incidents took place in different areas of the national Capital including one in Outer North Delhi's Alipur

area and Outer Delhi's Nangloi area at a furniture shop and a property dealer's office respectively. According to the police, no casualties were reported in the incidents. The police said that three men opened fire at a supermarket in the Meera Bagh area of outer Delhi on Wednesday. "At around 2.30 pm, a call regarding a firing incident was received at Paschim Vihar

West police station. Teams from the local police reached the location after information," the officer said. During the investigation, the police found that the complainant was working at his shop when three masked men on a motorcycle fired multiple rounds at the shop and fled. The crime team inspected the spot, and based on the complainant's statement, a case was registered.

Donald Trumps Kamala Harris

From page 1

In effect, he became the first former president to get the nomination for the top office on the planet after being convicted of a felony. Trump won the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina and Wisconsin. Counting of votes was still underway in the swing states of Arizona, Michigan and Nevada. Earlier, Harris cancelled an election watch party in her alma mater Howard University after a clear trend in the counting of votes emerged. The results are a big disappointment for Harris. She joined the race after President Biden dropped out from his reelection campaign in July, weeks after

he came under severe scrutiny following his incoherent performance at a televised debate with Trump. The nomination itself was historic as she became the first woman of colour in the US to be fielded by a major party in the presidential race. In her address after formally accepting the nomination, Harris vowed to "chart a new way forward" far devoid of bitterness, cynicism and divisive politics. The US has 50 states and most of them vote for the same party in every election, except the swing states. Generally, there is not much surprise over the candidates picking up victories in states other than the pivotal battleground ones. Overall, a total of 538 electoral college votes are up for

grabs. The swing states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, known as part of the Rust Belt, have been traditionally the strongholds of the Democratic Party. An exit poll by CNN said roughly three-quarters of the electorate holds a negative view of the way things are going in the US today. Only about one-quarter called themselves enthusiastic or satisfied with the state of the nation, with more than four in 10 dissatisfied and roughly three in 10 saying they are angry, according to the poll. Voters remained generally optimistic, with more than six in 10 saying America's best days are in the future, and only about one-third that they're already in the past, the CNN poll found.

LMV license holders can drive...

From page 1

"Road safety is a serious public issue globally. It is crucial to mention that in India, over 1.7 lakh persons were killed in road accidents... and the assumption that they stem from drivers operating light transport vehicles driven by LMV license holders are unsubstantiated," the Bench said. The verdict said that the factors contributing to road accidents include rash driving, speeding, road design and the failure to adhere to traffic laws. Other significant contributors are the use of mobile phones while driving and non-compliance with regulations like seat belts and wearing helmets, it added. "We are able to reach such a conclusion as none of the parties in this case has produced any empirical data to demonstrate that LMV driving

license holders driving a transport vehicle is a significant cause for road accidents in India," the SC verdict read. "An authoritative pronouncement by this court would prevent insurance company from taking a technical plea to defeat a legitimate claim for compensation involving an insured vehicle going below 7,500kg, driven by a person holding a driving license for LMVs in an era where autonomous or driverless vehicles are no longer tales of science fiction and app-based passenger platforms are a modern reality, the licensing regime cannot remain static," it further stated. The amendments that have been carried out by the Indian legislature may not have dealt with all the possible concerns....As we are informed by the Attorney

General that the legislative exercise is underway, we hope that a comprehensive amendment to address the statutory lacunas will be made with necessary corrective measures," the order read. "Our present interpretation on how the licensing regime is to operate for drivers under the statutory scheme is unlikely to compromise the road safety concerns," the court ruled. The Bench said this will also effectively address the livelihood issues for drivers operating transport vehicles who clock maximum hours behind the wheels in legally operating transport vehicles below 7,500 kg with their LMV driving license. The Bench upheld the 2017 judgment of the SC in the Mukund Dewangan case which had held that the LMV license holders can drive transport vehicles weighing upto 7,500kg.

CBSE cracks whip on...

From page 1

Of the 21 schools whose affiliation has been withdrawn, 16 are in Delhi while five of them are in Rajasthan's coaching hubs, Kota and Sikar. Majority of the inspected schools were found to have violated the board's affiliation by-laws by enrolling students beyond their actual attendance records, effectively creating 'dummy' enrollments. Additionally, schools were found to be flouting infrastructural norms of the board," Gupta said. The CBSE has taken cognisance of these serious violations and showcase notices are being issued to the defaulting schools. Legal action is also being contemplated against those found guilty of non-compliance," he added.

Scores of students preparing for engineering and medical entrance examinations prefer to take admission in dummy schools so that they can focus solely on their preparations for the competitive exams. They do not attend classes and straightaway appear in the board exams. Aspirants also choose dummy schools, keeping in mind the quota in medical and engineering institutes available for students from certain states. For example, candidates who have completed classes 11 and 12 in Delhi are considered for admission in medical colleges of the national capital under the Delhi state quota. Earlier this year, the CBSE cancelled the affiliation of 20 schools for enrolling dummy students and ineligible candidates.

Look forward to renewing our collaboration: PM Modi

From page 1

There were some hiccups in trade with Trump favouring America First. Policy leading to tariff disputes. Both sides imposed tariffs on each other's goods. These irritants are likely to go away during Trump's second innings, sources said. Last month, Trump had praised Prime Minister Modi as "the nicest human being", saying the Indian leader is "a friend of mine." Trump had made the comments in response to a question. "Modi, India. He's a friend of mine. He's great... Before him, they were replacing them every year. It's very unstable. He came over. He's a friend of mine. But on the outside, he looks like he's your father. He's the nicest, but he's a total killer," he had said.

Trump had also recalled Modi's visit to Houston in 2019 to attend the 'Howdy Modi' event during his tenure, saying, "It was beautiful. It's like 80,000 people going crazy. We were walking around." The Republican candidate had said he shares a "very good relationship" with Modi. The 'Howdy Modi' event was followed by Trump's 2020 visit to India, where he was welcomed with the 'Namaste Trump' rally, organised by PM Modi in Ahmedabad, with about 100,000 people attending the event at a cricket stadium. Modi and Trump had also met in 2017 in Washington DC. Last week, Trump had extended Diwali greetings and pledged to safeguard the interests of Hindu Americans, vowing to shield them from what he

described as the "anti-religion agenda of the radical left." He highlighted his commitment to protecting their freedoms and enhancing relations with India, a nation he said was a vital ally. Sharing a social media post, Trump wrote, "We will also protect Hindu Americans against the anti-religion agenda of the radical left. We will fight for your freedom. Under my administration, we will also strengthen our great partnership with India and my good friend, Prime Minister Modi." Trump also condemned the attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, including Hindus and Christians, amidst the resignation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "I strongly condemn the barbaric

violence against Hindus, Christians, and other minorities who are getting attacked and looted by mobs in Bangladesh, which remains in a total state of chaos," Trump said. The Congress also congratulated Trump with party chief Mallikarjun Kharge saying "we look forward to working closely with the United States for global peace and prosperity". Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also congratulated Trump and wished success to him in his second term. "Congratulations on your victory, @realDonaldTrump! Wishing you success in your second year as US President. All the best to @KamalaHarris in her future endeavours," Gandhi said in a social media post. In a social media post, Kharge

said, "On the behalf of the Indian National Congress, we extend our congratulations and best wishes to President @realDonaldTrump for his election victory." India and the United States share a robust comprehensive global strategic partnership, underpinned by long-standing shared democratic values, aligned interests, and extensive people-to-people connections, the Congress president said. "We look forward to working closely with the United States for global peace and prosperity," Kharge said. Several world leaders including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President of the European Union Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, had also sent their congratulatory messages to Trump. "I warmly

congratulate Donald J. Trump. The EU and the US are more than just allies. We are bound by a true partnership between our people, uniting 800 million citizens. So let's work together on a strong transatlantic agenda that keeps delivering for them," der Leyen said. Netanyahu was among the first leaders to acknowledge Trump's victory on social media and send his greetings, calling it history's greatest comeback. "Dear Donald and Melania Trump, Congratulations on history's greatest comeback! Your historic return to the White House offers a new beginning for America and a powerful recommitment to the great alliance between Israel and America," he said, signing it off with "yours, Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu".

Sensex, Nifty surge over one per cent

From page 1

Titan, IndusInd Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Axis Bank and HDFC Bank were the laggards. "Global markets experienced a relief rally following the US election results, reducing political uncertainty with Trump securing a strong mandate. This has led to strong risk-on sentiments, driven by expectations of tax cuts and increased government spending," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said. The domestic buying was broad-based, with IT leading the charge in anticipation of a rebound in IT spending in the US. "BFSI spending in the US has improved as per the IT Q2 result which is positive for Indian players," Nair added.

In Asian markets, Tokyo settled higher while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were quoting in the green. Wall Street ended sharply higher on Tuesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 2 per cent to USD 74.02 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,569.41 crore on Tuesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought Rs 3,030.96 crore worth of shares, according to exchange data. Bouncing back from Monday's sharp fall, the BSE benchmark jumped 694.39 points or 0.88 per cent to settle at 79,476.63 on Tuesday. The Nifty climbed 217.95 points or 0.91 per cent to 24,213.30.

Mobility crisis is behind pollution in city: CSE

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the city's air quality continued to languish in the 'very poor' category for the seventh consecutive day, the Central for Science and Environment (CSE) on Wednesday claimed that the mobility crisis is behind the pollution in Delhi. This means vehicular emission is the top contributor to Delhi's pollution during winter season—more than stubble burning, road dust or bursting of firecrackers -- with over 50 per cent of pollution from local sources linked to the city's fragmented transportation system. An estimated 1.1 million vehicles enter and exit Delhi daily, further worsening the air quality. The traffic caused by this vehicle influx intensifies pollution, particularly nitrogen oxides (NOx), which account for 81 per cent of NOx pollution in Delhi. "Even after implementing the largest ever CNG programme

for the public transport and local commercial transport, phasing out of 10-year-old diesel and 15-year-old petrol vehicles, restrictions on entry of non-destined trucks, introduction of Bharat Stage 6 emissions standards, and onset of the fleet electrification, vehicles are still the key pollutant due to the growing mobility crisis", according to a data presented by the CSE. According to data presented by the CSE, local pollution sources in Delhi account for 30.34 per cent of the city's air pollution (50.1 per cent of which is contributed through transportation), while 34.97 per cent originates from the neighbouring NCR districts and 27.94 per cent from other areas. Stubble burning contributes only 8.19 per cent to Delhi's pollution levels. As per data, even though the long term PM2.5 levels have shown a downward trend, since 2022 the annual levels have remained and even shown an upward trend. The



annual PM2.5 levels show an improvement of 7 per cent in 2023 when compared to the 2019 levels. Delhi requires another 60 per cent reduction to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for PM2.5. Similar trend is reflected in the winter pollution, even though the winter peaks have declined the aver-

age level for the winter months have stayed elevated and also seen an increase. These data points are based on the CSE's analysis from different bodies, including the IITM, TERI-ARAI, CPCB's real-time air quality data and traffic data from Google map, among others. Currently, public transport

is Delhi is costly for the users, with around 50 per cent of public transport users spending 18 per cent of their annual income on transit, compared to 12 per cent for private vehicle owners. The CSE highlighted the need for an integrated transportation system focused on improving public transport to address

these issues. Despite the demand, Delhi's public transport system remains inadequate. Although the city has added buses, reaching 7,683 buses (including 1,970 electric buses) by July 2024, it still falls short of the Supreme Court's 1998 directive to deploy 10,000 buses. Currently, Delhi operates about 45 buses per lakh population, below the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' benchmark of 60 buses per lakh population. Bus breakdowns are also on the rise, with cases increasing from 781 in 2018-19 to 1,259 in 2022-23. Bus ridership, despite increasing, remains 25 per cent lower than pre-pandemic levels for DTC buses and seven per cent lower for cluster buses. Meanwhile, metro ridership has shown some recovery, though counting methods were revised in 2019-20 to reflect the number of corridors used instead of unique trips by commuters. Data shows that during peak

traffic hours (5 PM - 9 PM), when average traffic speed drops to 15 km/h, NO2 levels are 2.3 times higher than noon levels (12 PM - 4 PM) when traffic speed averages 21 km/h. These congestion-related emissions worsen air quality, especially during winter when inversion layers trap pollutants close to the ground. To achieve its clean air targets, Delhi must reduce emissions by 62 per cent. However, urban sprawl has increased travel distances, while public transport usage continues to decline, with a 20 per cent drop in bus travel over the past decade. The high cost of congestion affects Delhi's workforce, with unskilled workers losing an estimated Rs 7,500 to Rs 20,100 annually and skilled workers Rs 9,900 to Rs 26,600 due to traffic delays, amounting to 4 to 12 per cent of their income. "The PM2.5 winter peak has reduced by almost 35 per cent in 2023-24 compared to the 2019-20 level but the

average PM2.5 concentration has almost stagnated and is the highest in the last five years. In the last five years, the winter average of PM2.5 concentration was the highest in 2023-24 at 189 µg/m3. There is a 9 per cent increase in the winter average concentration in 2023-24 compared to 2019-20. This upward trend needs immediate action. "The cost of congestion extends beyond delays to include loss of productivity and fuels. Sparse indicative assessments are available for Delhi. Yearly fuel waste cost due to congestion was estimated by the University of Leeds at USD 1.6 million in 2010 in 2013. IIT Madras projected in 2015 that by 2025, USD12,003 million, and by 2030, USD 14,658 million will be the cost of congestion in Delhi, which includes productivity loss, air pollution loss and damage cost", it said.

Delhi's air quality 'very poor', smog blankets city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality index (AQI) stood at 352 placing it in the 'very poor' category, as the city endured another morning blanketed by shallow smog, for the seventh consecutive day on Wednesday. According to IQ air, PM2.5 concentration in Delhi is currently 31.6 times the WHO annual air quality guideline value. The most polluted places in Delhi were Bawana, Mundka, Wazirpur, and NSIT Dwarka, which reported air quality in the "severe" category. Meanwhile, dense, toxic foam was detected floating on the Yamuna River at Kalindi Kunj, and the river continues to have elevated pollution levels. At present, the major contributors to PM2.5 pollution are local and regional sources. The transport sector is the most significant contributor



at 12.768 percent, as per the Decision Support System data by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM). While the residential sector contribution is 3.204 percent, industries contributed (2.88 percent), construction 1.66percent, energy sector 1.485 percent, waste burning 1.148 percent, and road dust 0.96 percent. The AQI was recorded 356 at 9 am. Dwarka Sector 8 reported an AQI of 355, IGI Airport

347, ITO 327, Jahangirpuri 398, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium 315, Lodhi Road 309, Narela 377, New Moti Bagh 381, North Campus DU 373, Patparganj 381, Punjabi Bagh 388, RK Puram 373, Rohini 395, Siri Fort 341, Vivek Vihar 382, Anand Vihar 372, Ashok Vihar 398, and Mathura Road 333, among others. According to Air Pollution Early Warning System for Delhi, mainly smog condition with predominant surface

wind from variable directions with wind speed reaching 04-08 kmph prevailed during daytime and calm winds during night. The ventilation index lower than 6000 m2/s with average wind speed less than 10 kmph is unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants. Meteorological conditions are likely to be extremely unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants. Compounding the poor air quality, the India Meteorological Department reported a visibility drop to 2100 metres over the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Wednesday, down from 2500 meters the previous night. As air pollution levels in Delhi have sharply risen after Diwali, the Transport Department has directed its enforcement wing to carry out aggressive campaigns against overage vehicles and closely monitor BS-II and BS-III vehicles entering the city at

the border, officials said. The drive against overage vehicles was launched on October 11. "The enforcement wing has been asked to conduct the drive against petrol and diesel vehicles that have completed 15 and 10 years of their life as vehicular emissions is one of the key reasons for pollution... So, we are conducting the drive very actively," said an official. Over 500 vehicles, including cars, e-rickshaws and two-wheelers, have been impounded after Diwali in the last three days. Addressing a press conference, Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai announced the formation of 58 teams by DPCC and DSIIDC, tasked with the regular inspection of industrial units across the capital. Additionally, 191 patrol teams from three departments have been deployed to oversee the disposal of industrial waste across Delhi.

HM Shah to unveil Birsa Munda's statue at Baansera Park

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will unveil a towering 20 feet metal statue of Birsa Munda weighing 3,000 kg at his 150th Birth Anniversary at the entrance of Baansera Park on Ring Road on November 15. The statue is being installed by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on the same day, which is being celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas across the country. A statement by the authority said, "After the Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for celebrating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Birsa Munda in a befitting manner, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena had decided on getting this statue installed." It added, "Its strategic location at a site where the Ring Road,



RTTS Station, ISBT, Nizamuddin Railway and Metro Station, NH-24, Barapullah Flyover and DND Flyway converge to form a multi-modal transport hub, will ensure that lakhs of visitors and travellers get an opportunity to see the towering statue." "Largely unsung till now in these parts of the country, the installation of the statue of Birsa Munda in the National Capital itself, will provide an

opportunity to the people to learn about his pioneering contribution towards India's struggle for independence, upholding of tribal rights and forest conservation amongst others," the statement said. An official said that the statue has been crafted by two experienced sculptors from West Bengal, who have been trained in fine arts. "Their craftsmanship has ensured liveliness in its entire form," it said.

Juvenile sentenced to 10 years RI for raping minor girl

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court has sentenced a juvenile to rigorous imprisonment of 10 years for raping a 10-year-old girl in 2017, saying he could not be released at the present stage and required reformation. Observing that there was "absolute chaos, confusion and uncertainty" regarding the role of various officers in rehabilitating the children in conflict of law (CCL), the court also directed the Delhi government to issue a standing order to address various concerns regarding juvenile cases.

The legal provisions of the JJ Act and JJ Model Rules. Perfunctory reports in the name of ICP and periodic review have been submitted from time to time on the initiative of the court and they are of limited value because they are not a product of any rehabilitative process..." the court said. "The court said that there was "absolute chaos, confusion and uncertainty" regarding the roles of the various officers in implementing the scheme of rehabilitating CCLs. "There seems to be no role clarity and neither here appears to be any attention accorded to such matters at the operational level," the court said. The court directed the secretary of Delhi government's women and child development (WCD) to issue a detailed standing order to address "operational difficulties, issues of non-compliance with the provisions of JJ Act and its rules, procedural ambiguities, suitability of various forms and reports etc. And other issues of concerns pertaining to cases of CCL coming before children's courts".

HC refuses to allow devotees to perform Chhath Puja at banks of Yamuna

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to allow devotees to perform Chhath Puja at banks of Yamuna river here, noting that it was highly polluted and could lead to people falling sick. The high court noted that the Delhi government has made sufficient arrangements for devotees to perform puja at 1,000 different spots in the city and nothing else can be done at the eleventh hour. The high court's ruling came just a day before the start of the Chhath Puja festival. "Please understand you will fall sick. We can't allow you (devotees) to go into the water. It is highly polluted. It is a gigantic task, it cannot be done now. We can't clean up

Yamuna in one day's time," a bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said. It said that "this will be very harmful, we don't want any harm to be done to devotees". The bench observed that there was no unanimity in citizens and while someone wanted to clean up Yamuna, the others wanted the encroachment and authorised construction on the river to stay so that they could do their politics. The court referred to its recent order in another case in which judicial notice was taken about the fact that pollution in the Yamuna river was at an all-time high. "Keeping in view the aforesaid facts as well as the fact that the Chhath Puja festival com-



mences from tomorrow, this court is of the view that no orders can be passed in the PIL. The same is accordingly dismissed," the bench said. The court was hearing a PIL by Purvanchal Nav Nirman Sansthan challenging the ban imposed by Delhi govern-

ment on Chhath puja celebrations at banks of river Yamuna. Delhi government standing counsel Santosh Kumar Tripathi told the court that Yamuna was highly polluted at this juncture and if the devotees were allowed to per-

form Chhath Puja on the river banks, they are likely to fall sick. He submitted that the government has earmarked 1,000 spots to perform the Chhath Puja in Delhi and sufficient arrangements have been made. As the petitioner's counsel said the river banks could be clean and they were willing to take the initiative, the bench said it was a challenging exercise which could not be done overnight. "The problem today is, we cannot be discharging sewage in the Yamuna. We are today discharging sewage in Yamuna. Whether it is industrial sewage or it is our own sewage. Look at the unauthorised colonies built at the banks. Their untreated sewage is going into this," the

bench said. Meanwhile, the BJP and Delhi Congress came down heavily on the AAP government saying this has exposed the Atishi government. South Delhi BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the Kejriwal government did nothing to clean the river Yamuna, except holding four to five press conferences daily. Delhi Congress president Devendra Yadav said the High Court denial to Chhath puja on the banks of Yamuna has exposed the Atishi government's failure to clean the river. He said that the national Capital had already earned the notoriety of being the dirtiest city in the country as well as the "rape capital", which was the sum balance of Kejriwal's 10 years of misrule.

AAP to hold district party workers' conference from November 11

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Delhi elections slated to be held in February next year, AAP will hold district party workers' conference from November 11 to speed up poll preparations for Delhi assembly elections. "In preparation for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, the AAP government has ramped up its grassroots outreach with a series of district conventions aimed at mobilizing widespread support. Led by AAP's Convenor, Arvind Kejriwal, along with senior leaders, these conventions will unite booth-level, mandal-level, and district officers from 14 key districts across Delhi," a statement by the AAP said. Delhi Minister and AAP state Convenor Gopal Rai announced that the conventions will conclude on November 20. During a press conference, Rai stated, "The AAP is continuously active in preparing for the Delhi Assembly elections." He highlighted the party's



recent efforts, saying, "In the first phase, we succeeded in presenting the development work carried out by the Delhi government in each assembly constituency to the public through the 'Aapka Vidhayak Aapke Dwar' program." Following this initiative, he noted that AAP has now completed the formation of booth committees across Delhi, composed of volunteers committed to working for the upcoming assembly elections. He announced, "Before Diwali, Kejriwal, along with

Congress, BJP placing issue of pollution at forefront of their campaigns

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

As the Delhi Assembly elections approach, the BJP and Congress are placing the issue of pollution at the forefront of their campaigns, while also highlighting concerns like corruption, water shortages, and poor infrastructure. Both opposition parties aim to use these issues to challenge the ruling AAP in the upcoming polls, which are slated to be held in February, 2025. The BJP and Congress have been constantly criticizing AAP for the deteriorating air quality in Delhi and the toxic froth seen in the Yamuna River. With AAP having held power in the Capital since 2015, both parties are eager to turn the tide. The Congress, which failed to secure any seats in the last two elections despite a strong history in the city, is looking to regain its footing. Meanwhile, the BJP hopes to break its 26-year streak without power in the national Capital. The BJP's central leadership on Tuesday met with its Delhi unit to review election preparations and fine-tune its campaign strat-

egy. Alongside relying on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal, the party plans to make pollution one of its key issues. According to a party source, as campaigning ramps up in the winter months, worsening air quality will play a significant role in their attack on AAP. Congress, under the leadership of Delhi unit chief Devender Yadav, is set to launch an aggressive campaign called the "Delhi Nyay Yatra" on November 8. The campaign is modeled after Rahul Gandhi's "Bharat Jodo Yatra". The yatra will kick off at Rajghat and is seen as an effort to reconnect with the people of Delhi. It is expected that senior Congress leader and Raebareilly MP Rahul Gandhi will join the yatra in its first phase that will start from Rajghat. Apart from Rahul, Priyanka Gandhi, who is eyeing on the Wayanad seat which was left vacant, is also expected to join the yatra. Additionally, senior leaders from different states of the party will also make an appearance in the campaign which is expected to rekindle the disconnection between the citizens of Delhi and the party leader-

ship. "The Bharat Jodo Yatra did prove to be a game changer for Rahul Gandhi and we are hoping that it has the same impact in Delhi. It is expected that Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi will also join the yatra. However, the exact date is not decided yet. Also different leaders from across India will also likely make an appearance in the constituencies that are best suited according to the demographic," a senior party leader said. The Congress has also initiated a public consultation process for its manifesto, seeking suggestions from citizens. For Congress, pollution is a significant election issue. The party is reminding voters of Sheila Dikshit's 15-year tenure, during which Delhi saw improvements in public transportation, the metro system, and pollution control, as well as the transformation of government schools. Congress leaders argue that under AAP's governance, Delhi has deteriorated, with unfulfilled promises and rampant corruption damaging the city's progress.

NIC warns officials of rising vishing scams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Cyber security advisory has cautioned government officials against trusting the caller ID information that pops up while receiving a phone call, following a spurt in "vishing" attacks aimed at compromising confidential personal information and gaining unauthorised access to official systems. "Attackers may impersonate trusted entities, such as senior government officials, law enforcement agencies, or technical support personnel," the advisory issued recently by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) says. The severity of the communication has been categorised as "high". It has specified that attackers "manipulate" caller ID information to make a call appear as if it is coming from a "legitimate government number". The communication sent to multiple government departments and ministries has been accessed by PTI. It says it was issued as "in recent months, there has been an increase in



vishing attacks targeting government officials to compromise confidential information and gain unauthorised access to official systems". "Vishing" or voice-phishing is a social engineering attack where scammers use phone calls or voice messages to manipulate individuals to share sensitive information, such as log-in credentials, personal information and financial details.

The attackers also deploy the tactic of conveying a "sense of urgency", "coercing" targets into revealing information by implying severe consequences for non-compliance and using "complex technical language" to confuse or intimidate targets, making them more likely to comply, the advisory has said. It has asked government officials to be cautious against such techniques as it has underlined that caller ID information can be "easily spoofed".

"Do not trust the legitimacy of the caller based solely on the displayed number. Cross-check any caller claiming to represent an official agency with official records," the communication has advised. It has also asked officials to mandatorily verify the caller's identity through government channels before sharing sensitive information. The advisory has asked them to call back the organisation or individual using publicly available contact information. Officials, according to the advisory, should always "be suspicious of any unsolicited calls asking for personal or confidential information, especially when the caller is creating urgency or panic to pressure compliance". "Take time to verify the information provided by a suspect caller," the advisory has said. It has also asked government staffers to practise all established protocols for ensuring safe cyber interaction during work and otherwise.

Cabinet approves PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme for student loans

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide monetary support to meritorious students so that financial constraints do not prevent them from pursuing quality higher education, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said. As per the scheme, anybody who gets admission in Quality Higher Education Institutions (QHEIs) will be eligible to get collateral free, guarantor-free loan from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses related to the course. "The Cabinet has approved PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide financial support to meritorious students so that financial constraints do not prevent any youth of India from pursuing quality higher education," Vaishnav said at a Press conference.



The scheme will be applicable to the top QHEIs as determined by the NIRF rankings - including all HEIs, government and private, that are ranked within the top 100 in NIRF in overall, category-specific and domain-specific rankings, state government HEIs ranked in 101-200 in the NIRF and all central government-run institutions. "This list will be updated every year using the latest NIRF ranking, and to begin with 860 qualifying QHEIs, covering more than 22 lakh students to be able to potentially avail benefits of PM-Vidyalaxmi, if they so desire," an official statement said.

Indian Coast Guard Lays Foundation for Tier-III Data Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Director General (Policy & Plans), Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Inspector General (IG) Anand Prakash Badola laid the foundation stone for the Tier-III Data Centre of Project Digital Coast Guard (DCG) on Tuesday at Mahipalpur here, officials said on Wednesday. Equipped with latest technology, the Project DCG's Tier-III Data Centre will serve as the brain centre to monitor and administer all the appli-

cations and vital IT resources, thereby providing critically important support to the administrative functioning of ICG. Project DCG, being executed by Telecommunications Consultants India Limited, includes construction of state-of-the-art Data Centre in New Delhi, 'Disaster Recovery Data Centre' at New Mangalore, Karnataka and Pan-India connectivity among ICG locations including ships and also implementation of an 'Enterprise Resource Planning' application.



Centre approves ₹ 10,700 Crore equity for FCI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday approved infusion of Rs 10,700 crore as equity in state-owned FCI for working capital requirement this fiscal. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains. "The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved infusion of equity of Rs 10,700 crore for working capital in financial year 2024-25 in Food Corporation of India (FCI)," an official statement said. The decision is aimed at bolstering the agricultural sector and ensuring the welfare of farmers nationwide. "This strategic move shows the government's steadfast commitment to supporting farmers and fortifying India's agrarian economy," it added. The FCI started its journey in 1964 with authorised capital of



Rs 100 crore and equity of Rs 4 crore. The operations of FCI increased manifolds resulting in increase of authorised capital from Rs 11,000 crore to Rs 21,000 crore in February 2023. The equity of FCI was Rs 4,496 crore in 2019-20 fiscal, which was increased to Rs 10,157 crore in 2023-24. "Now, the Government of India has approved a significant amount of equity of Rs 10,700 crore for FCI which will strengthen it financially and will give a big boost to the initiatives taken for its transformation," the statement said. FCI plays a pivotal role in ensuring food security by procurement of foodgrains at Minimum Support Price (MSP), maintenance of strategic foodgrain stocks, distribu-

tion of foodgrains for welfare measures and stabilisation of foodgrain prices in the market. "The infusion of Equity is a significant step towards enhancing the operational capabilities of FCI in fulfilling its mandate effectively. FCI resorts to short-term borrowings to match the gap of fund requirement. This infusion will help to lower the interest burden and will ultimately reduce the subsidy of the Government of India," the statement said. The government's dual commitment to MSP-based procurement and investment in FCI's operational capabilities signifies a collaborative effort towards empowering farmers, fortifying the agricultural sector, and ensuring food security for the nation, it added.

Tight waistbands linked to 'petticoat's cancer risk

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Imagine wearing a traditional saree every day, only to discover years later that the tight waist cord of your petticoat might have silently caused a dangerous health issue. Dubbed 'petticoat cancer,' the condition is linked to the chronic pressure from tightly tied waistbands, a stark reminder that even long-standing cultural habits can carry hidden risks, according to a study published in British Medical Journal (BMJ) Case Reports. The doctors in the reports have advised wearing a loose petticoat beneath the saree to ease pressure on the skin and loose clothing if skin problems develop to allow the area to heal. They also advise seeking medical attention if any skin irritation or ulcers develop, as non-healing wounds can eventually turn malignant. The study has revealed how



this seemingly harmless practice can lead to serious skin problems, including ulcers and even skin cancer. The condition, caused by prolonged pressure and friction, can lead to skin irritation, non-healing ulcers, and, in severe cases, skin cancer (squamous cell carcinoma). Doctors, including those from Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College in Uttar Pradesh, explained that continuous pressure and friction from a tight waist cord can cause long-term skin irritation. This irritation can lead to ulcers, which, in some cases, may develop into skin cancer, they said based on the two cases they came through.

According to the authors, a 70-year-old woman sought medical treatment for a painful skin ulcer on her right side, i.e., between ribs and hip bone, which had been present for 18 months and refused to heal. The authors noted that the skin around the ulcer had lost its pigmentation. They also mentioned that the woman wore her petticoat tightly tied around her waist beneath her saree. In the second case, a woman in her late 60s was reported to have had an ulcer on her right flank that had not healed for two years. "A woman in her late 60s presented with a two-year history of an ulcerating lesion on her

right flank. She wore a lugda daily for 40 years. A lugda is tied very tightly around the waist without a petticoat," the authors wrote. The authors further noted that the biopsies revealed that both women had a Marjolin ulcer, also known as squamous cell carcinoma (ulcerating skin cancer). In the second woman, the cancer had spread to one of the lymph nodes in her groin at the time of diagnosis, the authors said. Authors warn chronic pressure from tight clothing can lead to non-healing ulcers and potential skin cancer. "Constant pressure at the waist often leads to cutaneous atrophy, which ultimately breaks down to form an erosion or an ulcer. The ulcer at this site does not heal entirely due to ongoing pressure from tight clothing. A chronic non-healing wound results, which may develop malignant change," the authors wrote in the study.

BJP enrolls over ten Lakh members in Tripura



PTI ■ AGARTALA

The BJP has enrolled over 10 lakh people as its members during an ongoing membership drive, a senior party leader said on Wednesday. A total of 8.51 lakh people have enrolled their names online as members of the ruling party, while another 2 lakh have registered in the offline mode, the party's Tripura in-charge Rajdeep Roy said. "The Tripura BJP had set a target to have 10 lakh members in the state which has a population of 40 lakh and we have achieved it," he told reporters at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport. Roy said of the 2 lakh applications for membership through the offline mode, around 1.50 lakh names have already been uploaded on the membership drive web portal. The drive commenced on September 3 and is scheduled to continue till November 15. The total enrolment includes both fresh members as well as renewal of membership. "This is yet another big achievement for the party's state unit under the leadership of Chief Minister Manik Saha and BJP state president and MP Rajib Bhattacharjee. They did a remarkable job to achieve the target," he said. Tripura's name is now clubbed with big states such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Assam with regard to fulfilment of organisational targets set by the party's central leadership, he said. After completion of the membership drive, active members will be identified for participation in organisational elections, he added.

Manipur CM hails Thadou support for NRC, anti-drug drive

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Wednesday expressed his satisfaction over the recent resolution passed at the Thadou Convention, which voiced support for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the state's 'War on Drugs' campaign. Singh, however, emphasised that the government would not compromise its policies in the name of bringing peace by accommodating outsiders. At a convention in Guwahati last week, the Thadou tribe pledged its support for NRC and also backed the state government's 'war on drugs'. Thadou is the largest tribe within the Kuki community. However, during the recent convention, the community asserted that "it is a distinct ethnic group of people, with own distinct language, culture, traditions and great history and



Thadou is not Kuki, or underneath Kuki, or part of Kuki, but a separate, independent entity from Kuki." Speaking at the launch of the Chief Minister's Coaching Scheme for Entrance Examinations to Professional Courses, Singh said, "Peace will definitely come. Thadou is one of the oldest tribes in the state. Following the Thadou Convention's support for the NRC and the War on Drugs campaign, several civil society organisations in the state have welcomed and appreciated this

stance." He added, "We cannot compromise on our policies in the name of peace. Under the guise of inclusiveness, we cannot accommodate every outsider. We must protect the distinctiveness of our indigenous communities and the rights of old settlers. We have faced numerous challenges because of this objective. We should also not forget that we are Indians." Regarding the coaching scheme, Singh said it aimed to empower students in Manipur

to compete at the national level for professional courses like JEE (Main/Advanced) and NEET. He added, "People with knowledge and education are less likely to get involved in conflict and will maintain decorum in their speech and actions. Defending the unity and integrity of India is our collective duty, and we must understand the rights guaranteed under our Constitution." Singh said there would be an examination at the end of the coaching course, which would be held in March or April. He added that the government would bear the expenses of students who successfully pass the exam. Additionally, Singh urged the selected students to plant a tree under the Prime Minister's initiative "Maa Ke Naam Ek Per" (One Tree in the Name of Mother), encouraging environmental responsibility alongside their academic pursuits.

Swacch Ghat 2.0: Yogi government launches cleanliness drive for Chhath festival

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

In a bid to enhance cleanliness and beautification efforts at river ghats during the Chhath Mahaparva, the Yogi Adityanath-led government has launched the Swacch Ghat Pratiyogita 2.0 (Clean Ghat Competition 2.0) across Uttar Pradesh. The initiative, which runs until November 8 seeks to promote a cleaner, plastic-free environment by actively engaging local communities, schools, NGOs, and volunteer groups. The program has introduced the concept of "Arpan Kalash" at each ghat, where devotees can contribute offerings while being reminded to maintain the cleanliness of the area. Ghats are also designated as "No Plastic Zones" under this initiative, restricting the use of



plastic and thermocol items, which are commonly used in religious rituals. To ensure convenience and sanitation for devotees, temporary toilets and bathing facilities have been installed, with daily maintenance teams in place. This effort is being reinforced by the Swachh Sarathi Club, schools, colleges, universities, and other voluntary groups who are contributing to the success of the competition by spreading awareness on cleanliness. The initiative also emphasizes

waste management by installing dustbins at strategic locations across ghats to facilitate proper disposal. Citizens are being encouraged to actively participate in cleanliness drives, making the festival a community-led effort to beautify the riverside areas. Numerous NGOs and civil society organizations have joined hands with the government, not only conducting cleanliness campaigns but also educating the public on sustainable environmental practices.

Ajit Pawar promises to increase benefits under Shinde Government scheme

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In its manifesto for the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP has promised to increase the quantum of assistance under the "Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana" from Rs 1,500 to 2,100 per month, to enhance the benefit under the Shetkari Sanman Nidhi from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per year and to grant Rs 25000 per hectare bonus for paddy farmers. While releasing his party's 11-point manifesto in his home constituency of Baramati on Wednesday, NCP President and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said that in addition to the state-wide manifesto, his party would also release con-

stituency-specific manifestos in the coming days. Simultaneously, NCP (AP)'s Working President Praful Patel released the NCP (AP) party's at Gondia in Vidarbha region, while State unit chief Sunil Tatkare released the in Mumbai. At a mega high-tech event, the NCP (Ajit Pawar) released the manifesto in all the constituencies from which it is contesting through video-conferencing. All the senior party leaders, including Pawar, Patel and Tatkare, were present at the event. Pawar said that the NCP (AP) -- if re-elected to power -- has promised to increase the amount under Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana from existing Rs 1,500 per month to Rs 2,100



per month. "This initiative will be the largest monthly Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Maharashtra's history providing benefits of Rs 25,000 per year to over 2.3 crore women," the NCP (AP) chief said. "This initiative will be the largest monthly DBT transfer in Maharashtra's history pro-

viding benefits of Rs 25,000 per year to over 2.3 crore women," he added. Among other things, the NCP (AP) talks about increasing the old age pension from Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,100 per month. For farmers, the party has promised to raise the Shetkari Sanman Nidhi from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per year, combining support from both the central and state governments. The manifesto also talks about waiving the farmers loan and giving 20 per cent additional subsidy for all crops sold under MSP. Besides this, NCP has also given an assurance of Rs 25000 per hectare bonus for paddy farmers. "We have resolved to build more than 45000 'panand'

roads in rural parts of Maharashtra. This is the biggest plan to develop the rural agricultural infrastructure", the manifesto stated. Other promises include a commitment to create 2.5 million jobs and provide monthly stipends of Rs 10,000 to 10 lakh students through training. A monthly salary of Rs 15,000 for Anganwadi and ASHA workers and commitment to reduce electricity bills by 30% while prioritizing solar and renewable energy are some other promises made by the NCP (AP). "We vow to implement measures that will curb the prices of essential commodities, making them more affordable for everyone", the manifesto stated.

Parliamentary panel postpones briefing on India's ties with Canada, China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A briefing by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to a parliamentary panel headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on India's volatile ties with Canada and China did not take place on Wednesday and is likely to be taken up later, sources said. They said the briefing by the External Affairs Ministry delegation on its demands for grants for the year 2024-25 went on for a long time and it was decided that the briefing on these issues will be done at a later meeting. The ministry officials also had some other engagement, a MP



said, noting that the panel's meeting coincided with the US presidential election result in which Donald Trump stormed back to power. India's ties with Canada have nosedived over the North American country's allegation of the Indian government's involvement in the killing of a Khalistani activist, a charge rejected by New Delhi. India has accused Canada of pro-

viding safe haven to the separatists. India's relations with China have also been frosty following the Ladakh standoff but have recently seen some thaw after the two countries reached an agreement on the issue. Some MPs said the next meeting should take place after the state elections and the by-elections to allow maximum participation as some of them may be busy in campaign. The results to the polls are scheduled for November 23. Misri had in the earlier meeting of the parliamentary committee on external affairs briefed its members on the "Israel-Palestine Conflict".

Sharda Sinha to be cremated in Patna with full State honours

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

Renowned singer Sharda Sinha, who breathed her last at AIIMS Delhi on Tuesday, will be cremated in Patna with full state honours on Thursday. Patna District Magistrate (DM) Chandrashekhar Singh said her mortal remains reached in the State's Capital on Wednesday. "As per wishes of her family members, Sinha's cremation will take place around 9 am on Thursday", said Singh.

One of the things that Sinha would be remembered for is her rendition of devotional songs meant for 'Chhathi', the most popular festival of the state which, incidentally, falls on Thursday when the 'Bihar Kokila' will be consigned to flames. Sinha's mortal remains have been kept at her Rajendra Nagar house (near Kankarbagh) in Patna where her fans and well wishers will pay their last respects to the popular folk singer. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced cremation with full state honours for Sinha, a recipient of Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan. Kumar visited Sinha's house on Wednesday afternoon to pay last respects to the departed soul. Besides, several VVIPs are also expected to visit



the singer's house to pay homage. Union Minister and BJP national president J P Nadda is also expected to visit Sinha's house on Thursday evening. Sinha passed away on Tuesday night while undergoing treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi. She was 72. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condoled Sinha's death and said, "Saddened at the demise of noted folk singer Sharda Sinha. Also known as 'Bihar Kokila' due to her melodious voice, her songs in Bhojpuri, Maithili,

and Magadhi languages will always be remembered. I express my sincere condolences to her bereaved family, friends and fans." Renowned singer Sharda Sinha's son, Anshuman, on Thursday expressed his wish for his late mother to be considered posthumously for the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honour in the country. Prominent cinema personalities Anurag Kashyap, Manoj Bajpayee, Richa Chadha, Huma Qureshi, and Sonu Nigam were amongst others who

condoled the death of Sharda Sinha, fondly called 'Bihar Kokila' by her fans. The Padma Bhushan recipient lent her voice to songs prominently in Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magahi languages such as "Chhathi Maiya Aayi Na Duariya", "Ho Deenanath", "Dwar Chekai", and "Patna Se", but had also sung Hindi film songs like "Taar Bijli" ("Gangs of Wasseypur"), "Kahe Toh Se Sajna" ("Maine Pyar Kiya"), and "Babul" ("Hum Aapke Hain Koun...").

Production house Rajshri, which backed "Maine Pyar Kiya" and "Hum Aapke Hain Koun...", shared a condolence message on its social media page. Born in Supaul in Bihar, Sinha became famous not only in her home state but also in parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. Popular playback singer Sonu Nigam said it was extremely saddening to lose "respected Sharda Sinha ji during the great festival of Chhathi Puja". Bhojpuri actor and politician Ravi Kishan said without Sinha's voice, every festival seemed empty, especially the festival of Chhathi, which is why "chhati maiya" called her back during this time. Former Bhojpuri actor and BJP MP Manoj Tiwari, who on Tuesday visited the bereaved family after Sinha's death at AIIMS-Delhi, shared a heartfelt post on the microblogging site.

Maharashtra: BJP expels 40 rebel candidates from the party

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



Faced with an unprecedented rebellion in constituencies across poll-bound Maharashtra, the ruling BJP has cracked the whip and expelled as many as 40 party rebel candidates in 36 Assembly constituencies across the state. In a formal statement issued a day after the deadline for withdrawal of nominations ended, the BJP named the 40 rebel candidates whom it expelled from the primary membership of the party for violating the party and indulging in anti-party activities.

Known all along for discipline in its party ranks, the BJP is dealing with massive rebellion across the state. The expelled rebel candidates are the party's official candidates. "There are more rebel candidates in the fray than the ones named in the list. There are 78 more rebel candidates in the fray. All these rebels are contesting against the official candidates put up by our allies - the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-headed NCP," a BJP leader who did

had threatened that it would initiate disciplinary candidate if she did not withdraw her nomination against Padvi. Earlier this year, Dr Heena was trounced in the Lok Sabha polls by Gopal Padvi, son of incumbent Akkalkuwa MLA KC Padvi. Congress has re-nominated KC Padvi as its candidate from Akkalkuwa. Dr Heena's father, Vijaykumar Gavit - who is the state tribal development minister in the Eknath Shinde candidate - remains with the BJP candidate from the neighbouring Nandurbar constituency. However, much to the relief of the BJP, senior BJP leader and former MP Gopal Shetty - who had threatened to contest as a rebel against the party's official candidate Sanjay Upadhyay from Borivilii constituency in Mumbai - has withdrawn his nomination. He had filed his nomination as an independent last week. Similarly, the BJP's former corporator Atul Shah, who had threatened to contest as a rebel against the party's erstwhile functionary-turned Eknath Shinde Shiv Sena candidate Shaina - has backed out of the contest.

Samajwadi Party to focus on alleged land scams, corruption in by-election campaign

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party (SP) plans to spotlight alleged irregularities in land purchases, corruption, fertilizer shortages, law and order, the Constitution, and unemployment in its campaign for the upcoming by-elections. SP President Akhilesh Yadav, during a meeting with supporters in Ghaziabad aimed to convey a political message to party workers and voters across Uttar Pradesh. Yadav has officially launched his by-election campaign from Ghaziabad and will soon extend his efforts to other seats. SP considers these by-elections a "semifinal" for the next state assembly elections. Party leaders believe that a victory here would send a strong message that defeating



the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is achievable for SP. With this goal in mind, SP's focus is on preventing a religious-based polarization of votes and instead, driving from caste-based unity through its 'PDA' (Progressive Democratic Alliance) slogan. A senior SP leader explained, "The PDA strategy is our answer to the BJP's attempts at religious polarization." Yadav used the Ghaziabad rally to

boost morale, emphasising that the public is ready to remove the BJP from power. He encouraged SP workers to remain active at the grassroots level, asserting that a dedicated effort could lead to an SP victory in Uttar Pradesh. The SP is also capitalizing on complaints regarding alleged malpractices in urban land deals. Yadav called for the public release of land purchase

records in key areas like Ghaziabad, Lucknow, and Ayodhya, a move regarded as a strategic "masterstroke" by party insiders. On constitutional issues, Yadav addressed recent Supreme Court rulings related to madrasa education, criticizing several BJP government decisions as unconstitutional. He stated, "All unconstitutional decisions by the BJP government must be reversed." He further noted that both the High Court and Supreme Court have repeatedly admonished the BJP government on such issues. As the by-elections approach, SP is poised to leverage these issues to challenge the BJP's policies and reinforce its image as a viable alternative for voters seeking change in Uttar Pradesh.

FIR lodged against actor-turned-BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty for 'provocative' speech

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Police on Wednesday lodged an FIR against actor-turned-BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty for allegedly delivering a provocative speech during a party programme in North 24 Parganas district last month. According to police sources, the complaint against Chakraborty pertains to a speech he made during a BJP programme at the EZCC in Salt Lake area on October 27, based on which police registered an FIR at Bidhannagar South police station. Union Home Minister Amit Shah was also present at the programme, which was organised to kick off the West Bengal leg of the BJP's membership drive. "We have started an investigation into



the case," said a senior officer of Bidhannagar police station. Although Chakraborty was unavailable for comment, BJP state president and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar described the FIR as a result of "vendetta politics." "There is nothing provocative in his speech. These are nothing but attempts to intimidate him by using police as a political tool," he said. Chakraborty, who received India's highest film honour, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, earlier this year, had asserted

on October 27 that the "masnad" (throne) of West Bengal would belong to the BJP after the 2026 Assembly elections, promising to do whatever it takes to achieve the goal. While speaking at the programme at the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Chakraborty said, "In 2026, the masnad will be ours, and we will do everything to achieve the goal." In an apparent reference to TMC MLA Humayun Kabir's communal remarks aimed at BJP workers during the Lok Sabha elections, Chakraborty cautioned that no one should attempt to intimidate saffron party voters into abstaining from voting in the next Assembly elections. He called upon the booth-level workers of his party to resist any such attempts.

Meghalaya Cabinet approves amendment of building byelaws

PTI ■ SHILLONG

The Meghalaya Cabinet has approved the amendment of the Meghalaya Building Byelaws aimed at regulating the construction of buildings in industrial zones across the state including those in the New Shillong Township. Cabinet minister and MDA spokesperson Paul Lyngdoh on Tuesday said, "This (amendment) is broadly to facilitate the need to categorise the industrial zone to categories earlier not done and also it involves the amendment of the building byelaws for these industrial zones." "The expansion that is happening currently specially in the new Shillong city has to be planned in a very scientific manner, which is why we need these new sets of byelaws for industrial zones to be in place and these were considered and approved by the cabinet on Tuesday," he added. According to the minister, the new regulation would be applicable in designated industrial estates across Meghalaya citing that urbanisation is an ever ongoing process and it is expanding. "There is need to regulate such buildings and therefore, the cabinet decided in view of the growing urbanisation and the emergence of new urban centres so within these industrial zones and estates, the categorisation of these buildings and their applicability of the byelaws will be extended to those industrial zones. These are all for the industrial estates/zones and wherever such activities are taking place so right now new Shillong is the immediate point of attention but it will be across the state wherever such industrial estates are being created," he stated. The state cabinet also approved the amendment of the Meghalaya Forensic Science Laboratory Rules, 2021 for the creation of more posts in the mobile forensic crime scene units.

Union Minister Shivraj Calls INDIA Bloc promises for Jharkhand elections 'dud Bombs'

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday termed the INDIA bloc guarantees for the upcoming Jharkhand assembly elections as "lies" and "dud bombs". Talking to reporters here, Chouhan claimed the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Congress had made promises during the previous assembly elections also but none of them were fulfilled. "They (JMM and Congress) had said that they will provide five lakh government jobs. Not given. They promised to give Rs 2,000 monthly for chulha-kharach (domestic expenses). Not given. They brought a scheme to give Rs 1,000 just two months ahead of elections. They promised unemployment allowance to the jobless. Not given," Chouhan said.



These parties had promised to purchase the paddy crop by giving bonus on the minimum support price (MSP), but it was also not given, the BJP leader said. "The JMM had made 117 promises (in the last assembly elections), Congress made 344 promises. Not even one of them was fulfilled in the last five years and they have now come up with new promises. These guarantees are the dud bombs which never burst and the people have no faith in them," he said. On the other side, the BJP fulfils all its promises, as

witnessed in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, Chouhan said. "We are fulfilling all the guarantees in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, where elections were held recently, because our leader and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the guarantee of fulfilling all the guarantees. Nobody has faith in INDI alliance guarantees because they speak lies," he said. On Tuesday, the INDIA bloc unveiled its manifesto for the upcoming Jharkhand assembly elections, assuring 10 lakh jobs for youth and health insurance coverage of up to Rs 15 lakh for the poor among other promises. Asked about Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's statement about breaking the reservation cap of 50 per cent after a caste census, Chouhan remarked, "On a foreign land, Rahul Gandhi also said he will end the reservation when time comes. Which of his words should be trusted?"

'Answered all questions, told them truth,' says Siddaramaiah after deposing before Lokayukta police

PTI ■ MYSURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said he has answered all questions posed to him by Lokayukta police in the MUDA case and he has told them the "truth". The CM, who has been named as accused number 1 in the FIR lodged by the Lokayukta police, is facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi B M by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA). The Lokayukta police questioned Siddaramaiah for about two hours. "Everything has happened legally, BJP and JD(S) are making false allegations...I have answered all questions posed to me by Lokayukta Police, they have recorded it...They will proceed with further investigation," Siddaramaiah said. Speaking to reporters after



appearing before Lokayukta police, he said: "...A false case was made against me, I was questioned, I have told the truth." "Until it is decided by the court (about any wrongdoing) there is no black spot on my image. What is against me are just allegations. False allegations are made against me. I will respond to such allegations in the court and to the police during the probe," he said in response to a question. Siddaramaiah appeared before the Lokayukta police in response to the summons issued to him and responded

to questions put to him by a team led by Lokayukta Superintendent of Police (SP) T J Udes, official sources said. They had on October 25 questioned his wife, who has been named as accused number 2. Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others have been named in the FIR registered by the Mysuru-located Lokayukta police establishment on September 27. Swamy and Devaraju have already deposed before the Lokayukta police. Asked about BJP's "Go back Siddaramaiah" protest, the CM said, "What was Snehamayi Krishna (RTI activist) plea? What the Governor has said? - to investigate. If they say -- Go back Siddaramaiah -- are they (BJP) against the investigation? This makes it clear that they have made false

allegations." To a question on BJP demanding a CBI probe into the MUDA 'scam', expressing doubts about the Lokayukta investigation, he asked, "CBI is under whom? Has the BJP given any case to CBI (While in power in the state)?" When told about the opposition alleging that the Lokayukta seems to be conducting the probe in a pre-planned way to help the CM, Siddaramaiah said the Lokayukta is an independent agency. "They say CBI is independent, similarly Lokayukta is also an independent agency in the state. They (BJP) don't have respect for law...Have they -- the BJP given any case to CBI?" he asked. Responding to RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna's petition in the High Court seeking direction to transfer the case to CBI, the CM said, "We will fight it in the High Court, that's a different matter..."

J and K Assembly passes resolution seeking restoration of special status

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Union Territory government headed by Omar Abdullah in Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday fulfilled its 'obligation' of passing a resolution, as promised in their election manifesto, seeking a dialogue between the Centre and elected representatives for the restoration of the special status of the erstwhile state. The resolution, which also expressed "concern" over the "unilateral removal" of the special status, was passed without any debate as the Speaker put it to voice vote amidst noisy scenes. As Kashmir-based political parties supported the resolution on the floor of the assembly the Bharatiya Janta Party legislators strongly opposed it. The resolution

papers were torn apart by slogan-shouting MLAs protesting in the well of the house after the resolution was passed. "The assembly has done its job. I will only say this much," Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told reporters outside the assembly complex. Leader of the Opposition Sunil Sharma said the question should be asked to the Congress party whether they supported or opposed the resolution for restoration of special status. It was an illegal move. The assembly is not above Parliament and the Supreme Court. Earlier NC MLA and J-K's deputy chief minister Surinder Choudhary moved the resolution for restoring the special status of J-K, which was revoked by the Centre on August 5, 2019.

The motion was seconded by Education and Health Minister Sakina Itoo. "That this legislative assembly reaffirms the importance of the special status and constitutional guarantees, which safeguarded the identity, culture, and rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and expresses concern over their unilateral removal," the resolution moved by Choudhary said. This Assembly emphasizes that any process for restoration must safeguard both national unity and the legitimate aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the resolution added. As the house witnessed chaos and confusion the Speaker adjourned the House for 15 minutes. However, after the House met again, it continued to witness a



ruckus, forcing the speaker to adjourn it for an hour. Outside the Assembly, the political parties in the Kashmir valley welcomed the resolution and in Jammu, the BJP leaders burnt the effigy of the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister for passing the said resolution. "This resolution is historic and I congratulate the members of

the House," CPI(M)'s MLA from Kulgam, M Y Tarigami said. He said it has been "our commitment that we will restore what has been taken from us on August 5, 2019." Former Mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junaid Azim Mattu in a post on X said, "If this NC resolution is not a cruel joke

with the people of J&K, I don't know what is. - No mention of Article 370. - No mention of J&K Reorganization Act 2019 - No resolve to oppose/reject what was done. - Just vague references begging for "dialogue" over Special Status. Addressing media persons in Srinagar, PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti said, "We welcome the resolution of J&K for restoration of special status. But the language used in the resolution is weak. It is a half-hearted effort. They should have condemned the action of 2019. We should make amendments to the resolution." PDP's youth leader and MLA Pulwama, Waheed Para said some words in the resolution could have been stronger. "We had requested for a dialogue between the members, but there were no

morally, ethically, and legally wrong. It will now be remembered in history how the people of J-K rejected it," Lone said. Congress party, which is an alliance partner of the ruling National Conference, said statehood to J-K with constitutional guarantees, including protection of land and jobs rights must be restored, without any further delay. Congress Legislature Party leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir said the Congress, through a resolution passed in its CWC on August 5, 2019, has endorsed the "resentment of people against downgrading and bifurcation of erstwhile J-K state, describing the move as undemocratic and unconstitutional on the part of BJP government at the Centre."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trump wins hands down

Donald Trump makes a sensational comeback in the closely fought US presidential elections

The US presidential election is one of the most influential political events worldwide, with major implications not only for domestic policy but also for international relations, economic stability, and global security. In 2024, the election has been particularly charged, with significant issues driving the race. Though the counting is still on and the winner is yet to be officially announced but going by the trends, Trump has won and he has already claimed victory. Kamala Harris failed to perform in the swing states leading to her defeat. Trump's victory brings a mix of continuity and radical shifts in several key areas. The 2024 US election has revolved around several pressing issues which were important not only for the Americans but for the people across the world. High inflation rates and concerns over economic recovery post-pandemic have been at the forefront. Voters were focused on job security, rising costs of living, and access to affordable healthcare. Trump's stance included pushing for lower taxes, reducing government spending, and deregulation to stimulate growth, which he claims would address inflation and boost job creation. Another major issue that was widely debated was immigration. The debate over immigration intensified, with Trump advocating for stricter border controls and policies aimed at reducing illegal immigration. His focus includes building stronger physical barriers at the US-Mexico border and increasing enforcement, framing immigration as a matter of national security and economic stability. Besides, healthcare accessibility and costs remain contentious topics.



Trump in his campaign emphasised reducing healthcare costs and revisiting the Affordable Care Act. His approach included providing tax credits and fostering competition among providers, but it also drew criticism for potentially reducing access to affordable care for some citizens. Interestingly Trump has taken a critical stance on climate regulations, advocating for energy independence through expanded oil and natural gas production. His stance contrasts with those calling for robust climate action, as he argues that deregulation is essential for economic stability and growth. However the issue that is of utmost importance for the world at large is the US foreign policy. Foreign policy has emerged as a defining factor, particularly in relation to China and Russia. Trump's "America First" strategy focuses on reducing overseas military commitments and renegotiating trade agreements to protect American interests. This stance resonates with some voters concerned about national sovereignty but worries international allies and those advocating for a more collaborative global approach. However, Trump's victory may be well taken in New Delhi as he has had good chemistry with Prime Minister Modi and has supported India's stand. It would be interesting to see how Trump would steer international choppy waters this time as Ukraine war and Palestine issue would be two major issues he would need to handle immediately after assuming the office.

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PICTALK



A photographer takes a photo of a macaque monkey at the Shrine Galtaji temple, in Jaipur

PTI

Why are women overlooked for leadership? It's time for a change!

Deep-rooted biases and outdated stereotypes frequently overshadow women's capabilities, despite evidence that women leaders enhance company performance and culture

In India, women are frequently overlooked for management and senior leadership roles despite their proven capabilities in both personal and professional settings. It's a complex issue often attributed to stereotypes, unconscious biases, and a society that still grapples with entrenched gender roles. Yet, if we pause and consider the day-to-day roles women play, particularly in an Indian household, it becomes evident that they possess an array of skills crucial to any organisation's success. Imagine a typical day for a woman managing her household. She coordinates with household help, ensures that her family's needs are met, oversees children's schedules, and often also supports extended family members. Each of these tasks requires quick thinking, negotiation skills, empathy, and time management. Such daily acts of coordination and problem-solving are, at their core, management skills. The inquiry at hand is, why do we fail to acknowledge these abilities when they are



showcased in a professional setting?

Do these skills lose their validity simply because they originate from home-based experience? Many argue that women's ability to blend emotional intelligence with logical decision-making makes them especially adept at leadership roles. Their approach is often holistic—they not only focus on completing tasks but also on nurturing relationships, fostering team morale, and ensuring that the process is as smooth as the outcome. Research indicates that companies with gender-diverse leadership teams tend to achieve better financial performance and foster a more satisfied workforce, contributing to a healthier com-

pany culture. Women bring different perspectives and problem-solving approaches, which complement male colleagues' styles. When women are given a seat at the table, companies gain a more nuanced understanding of their markets and customers. And yet, despite clear advantages, women remain vastly underrepresented in senior roles. The reasons are rooted in a long history of gender bias. Women are often pigeonholed as too "emotional" or too "soft" for the challenges of executive positions, while men are assumed to be inherently more decisive and resilient. Yet, resilience is something that women exemplify every day—balancing multiple roles in a society that demands more of them both at home and at work. Change is on the horizon, with many organisations now actively working to bridge the gender gap in leadership. However, it requires a deeper cultural shift to truly unlock the leadership potential of women. Organisations need to embrace mentorship pro-

grams, implement unbiased hiring practices, and encourage flexible work policies that allow women to balance personal and professional responsibilities. Moreover, celebrating women's leadership styles rather than forcing them to fit into traditionally masculine roles can create more authentic, powerful leaders. The argument is simple: women already demonstrate essential leadership skills every day, whether in boardrooms or in households. It's time to recognise their contributions and give them the opportunities they deserve. For any organisation that values growth, empathy, and resilience, overlooking women isn't just unfair—it's a missed opportunity. Let's champion a future where leadership is based on talent and vision, not on outdated biases. Women are ready for the challenge, and it's time we give them the space to lead.

(The writer is a motivator and a freelance journalist; views expressed are personal)



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

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Hazardous Delhi air is putting lives at risk

As Delhiites face a significant decline in their health and life expectancy due to pollution, there is an urgent need for finding solutions to tackle this menace



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Delhi's air quality has reached dangerous levels, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing into the "hazardous" zone shortly after Diwali celebrations. This post-Diwali spike is not new, as the city frequently ranks among the most polluted in the world. In early November 2024, AQI levels in Delhi surged to nearly 500 in some regions, a threshold considered extremely harmful. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), key areas in Delhi like Anand Vihar, Alipur, and RK Puram reported AQI readings above 300. This rise indicates severe pollution levels far above the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended safety limits, posing substantial health risks for millions of residents. The AQI measures air quality on a scale that categorises air quality into six levels: "good," "satisfactory," "moderate," "poor," "very poor," and "hazardous." Readings above 300 signal critical pollution, while values over 400 reach the "severe" range. At such levels, exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) becomes dangerous, as these minuscule particles can infiltrate deep into the lungs, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health. The factors behind this annual pollution crisis are complex, involving both local and regional contributors. Delhi's high vehicular emissions, industrial output, construction dust, and waste burning are persistent contributors. However, during the harvest season, stubble burning in nearby states like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh intensifies the problem. In October and November, farmers often burn leftover crop residue, producing vast smoke clouds that drift toward Delhi and blend with local pollutants. Vehicular pollution is another significant factor, with over 15 million registered vehicles in Delhi alone. Despite policies mandating regular Pollution Under Control (PUC) checks, enforcement remains a challenge. Emissions from diesel vehicles and two-wheelers, which lack proper pollution controls, further degrade the air quality. Attempts by the



Delhi Government to curb pollution have included measures like the odd-even traffic scheme, a firecracker ban during festivals, and incentives to use public transport. However, these initiatives have only provided limited relief. Residents continue to experience issues like breathlessness, sore throats, headaches and dry cough, compounded by long-term respiratory conditions. This year, the Supreme Court criticised Delhi's inadequate enforcement of pollution control measures during Diwali, particularly the lack of compliance with firecracker bans. The court expressed frustration over the non-implementation of its orders, highlighting the collective failure to safeguard public health. The Delhi government has also activated the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), designed to address pollution levels as they rise. GRAP consists of multiple stages, with Stage III activated only when AQI reaches "severe" levels. At this stage, vehicle movement and construction activities are restricted, and educational institutions may close to protect students' health. While GRAP has achieved some improvements, its impact is often temporary, as citizens and businesses frequently ignore these directives. The severe air pollution in Delhi has profound effects on public health and quality of life.

THIS YEAR, THE SUPREME COURT CRITICISED DELHI'S INADEQUATE ENFORCEMENT OF POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES DURING DIWALI, PARTICULARLY THE LACK OF COMPLIANCE WITH FIRECRACKER BANS. THE COURT EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION OVER THE NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS ORDERS

During high-AQI periods, particularly vulnerable groups, like children and the elderly, are advised to stay indoors to avoid severe respiratory and cardiovascular issues. Outdoor activities are restricted, with schools occasionally closed to protect students from toxic air exposure. Additionally, dense smog disrupts transportation, leading to frequent flight and train delays due to poor visibility. As residents increasingly rely on air purifiers to maintain indoor air quality, the economic and psychological impacts of Delhi's air pollution crisis only deepen. In response to the deteriorating situation, the Delhi Government announced a series of measures to tackle pollution. These include developing green pathways, walkways, and open spaces along roads to reduce dust and improve urban greenery. Efforts are underway to enhance municipal waste management, including recycling 100 per cent of construction and demolition waste by 2025. To further manage waste, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is establishing a fifth recycling unit in Tehkhand, capable of processing 1,000 tons daily. Biomining is also planned at major landfill sites, such as Okhla, Ghazipur, and Bhalswa, to excavate and treat years' worth of accumulated waste. Expanding public transportation is another goal, with

plans to grow Delhi's bus fleet to 10,500 by next year, 80 per cent of which will be electric. This is accompanied by a focus on impounding older, polluting vehicles. Such measures aim to address long-standing pollution sources sustainably. Experts emphasise, however, that reducing air pollution in Delhi will require more than Government policies; public engagement and behavioral change are also essential. A multi-pronged approach is crucial to effectively reduce air pollution. Introducing alternative methods to stubble burning, such as subsidising crop-residue management equipment, is one solution. Increasing urban greenery and limiting industrial emissions are further steps toward a healthier environment. On an individual level, Delhi residents can contribute by using public transportation, minimising car usage, and adopting energy-efficient practices at home. Additionally, improved air quality monitoring and early-warning systems could help raise public awareness and enable quicker responses. India's dedication to conservation aligns with the broader goal of creating a healthier environment for future generations.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhii Snruti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PAPER BALLOTS OVER MACHINES

Madam—In spite of being at the top of technologically advanced countries, the United States of America falls back on ballot paper voting to root out any suspicion of foul play stemming from voting through EVM. Over the last two decades, the United States has gradually moved back from electronic voting machines to paper ballots. Given ballot paper voting, unlike EVM, builds confidence among voters and opposition party members, it undoubtedly strengthens democracy. Another highly commendable step the USA election authorities have taken. They have printed the ballot papers in all major languages of a state, depending on its demography. While a voter in New York can choose a ballot paper in Bengali instead of English, Chinese, Spanish, and Korean, voters in Illinois can opt for a ballot paper printed in Hindi. It also shows how a democratic country should honour the mother tongue of even those voters who have origins in different countries. These actions reflect the attitude of catering and prioritising the interests of the demos (people) above everything. India needs to get back to ballot paper voting without any delay. It must also be remembered that to impose a language ignoring the major languages spoken in a particular area flouts democratic principles. There is no room for the 'one nation, one language' policy in a multilingual democratic country like India. Sujit De | Sujit De

DIVISION OVER CASTE

Madam—Since the last Lok Sabha elections, immediately followed by the state Assembly election and ensuing Assembly in Maharashtra and Jharkhand and by-elections in several states, demand for caste census is in top gear in the Opposition camp, while the BJP has been silent on it and is meekly supportive. Though not constitutionally valid and having no authentic official database of individuals' caste identity, the caste politics in the facade of the caste census is

Prioritise student wellbeing



Student suicides are rising worldwide. Every day, we read news about young students taking their own lives due to overwhelming pressure. Many of these students are studying far from their families, aiming to crack high-stakes exams like JEE, NEET, UPSC, and CA. Parents often send them away at a young age, where they're not fully prepared to handle the intense stress. At a time in life meant for playing, making friends, and

retrograde and has its own misgivings. While the political spectrum finds this issue as a crowd-puller and hot for winning formula in elections, it lacks commitment to empowering the backwards impartially and fairly and is selective on favouring region wise dominant castes, which is against the principles of equality and natural justice. Several reports, news, opinions and articles have been published in all the leading newspapers and magazines, as well as on social media. Though the issue of the caste census has not yet come under the judiciary's lens and scrutiny, the issue is a presser in desperation, as if the political class is failing to address the upliftment of the downtrodden, who genuinely deserve governments' welfare schemes with the entire society's helping hand. The demand of the caste census has been perceived as a tool for dividing society on the caste lines, and a counter has emerged, 'Batenge to Katenge,' which appears to have caught the nerve and put the caste census demand on defense.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

exploring their interests, they are pushed to lock themselves in rooms and study for hours. This isolation and pressure can lead to anxiety, and, tragically, some may feel that ending their lives is the only escape.

Parents should avoid imposing career paths on their children and instead allow them to explore and decide what they want for themselves. Governments can also take steps to address this crisis, such as offering personal counselling sessions for students where they can discuss their struggles and implementing mental health awareness programmes in schools and communities. Ultimately, pressuring children to study hard for the sake of a "better future" can end up damaging their wellbeing and happiness. It's far better to let children decide what they want to work towards rather than forcing them into paths that might not be right for them. Priya Thakur | Ujjain

TEMPLE ATTACK CONDEMNED

Madam—The Canadian soil is becoming a battleground for the anti-India sentiments these days, as the Khalistani groups and supporters managed to score win after win in their anti-India agendas. The recent terror attack in the Hindu temple based in Canada is getting a global backlash and condemnation.

India is particularly annoyed with the Canadian authorities for not paving the way for the miscreants who are spoiling India's image and hurting Indian sentiments as a whole. India in particular is condemning this carefully crafted attack on Hindu temples, and this is another low in the Indo-Canadian relationships as a whole. We Indians in particular wish strong Canadian intervention and demand speedy justice from the side of Canadian government and authorities as soon as possible. Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

THE ART OF HEALING

True healing must be comprehensive, nurturing both the physical and spiritual self



RAVI VALLURI

Humans are creatures of their habits. I was addicted to smoking, drinking and consuming 'Gutakha'. It had become almost a quotidian habit and had taken a severe toll on my health. Ailments could be self-inflicted or they could be a professional hazard. In all such cases, the victim suffers physically and emotionally. The healing must be both physical and spiritual. I vividly recall how the Sri Lankan cricket team was a victim of terror and violence in Lahore. They underwent therapeutic care by psychiatrists and underwent several mind management and mental strengthening therapies. Similarly, the Tsunami victims of 2004, those affected by the 26/11 Mumbai terror strikes and the earthquake victims of Gujarat (2001) and Uttarakhand (2013) were revived by the bouquet of self-healing courses by several spiritual organisations and professional help offered by numerous self-help groups. Such tragedies are traumatic experiences. Cities, towns, villages and settlements are razed to rubble.

I come back to my story, where like an ignoramus I started consuming liquor, ignoring all warnings. Thus, my moral compass fell prey to the predilections of a weak mind. It was at this time that my mother, a trained social worker, and a practitioner of Siddha and Pranik healing, refused to entertain my supercilious and specious arguments and extolled certain dormant virtues in me so that I could upend the pyramid. My mother was afflicted by repeated attacks of Paroxysmal Atrial Tachycardia (PAT). This is a type of arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) that is accompanied by severe sweating, dizziness, palpitations, angina and acute breath-



lessness. I had seen my mother suffering from this condition on several occasions and being admitted to the ICU. However, after undergoing the ten-day Vipassana spiritual sojourn, she recovered from the debilitation. She simultaneously learnt Siddha and Pranik healing, which augured well for her recovery.

These healing techniques along with proper medication and diet helped her in healing. This is the unbounded power and scientific attribute of the breath. Breathing techniques, meditation proper medication and diet are all healthy habits. These can change the traction of our lives and rejuvenate the body and mind. During 'Operation Parakram' our defence forces, after a protracted stay of more than a year at our borders, returned to their cantonments. The fractious behaviour of our unfriendly neighbour did not make them lose their sanity. It is not only the deaths, but defence personnel get maimed during such operations.

Further, their mental state becomes foggy and they become highly irritable. Mere administration of drugs does not act as a panacea. It is medication plus something more to revive their physical and mental bodies. As our defence and para-military forces work in hostile environments it is heartening to know that yoga, Vipassana and Art of Living Courses are conducted for them so that they can maintain physical and mental equilibrium. A soldier asked Gurudev whether he would become passive if he continued with his sadhana, to which Guruji responded, "Most certainly not." Further, he added that Gita Upadesh itself was revealed by Lord Krishna during the Mahabharata war. Arjuna regained the power of discrimination after witnessing the "Divine Spectacle." Be it an individual or a cricket team, those affected by environmental disturbances or our defence forces, all require continuous physical and mental healing to continue their journey. The mystic Rumi has succinctly said, "The wound is the place where the light enters you."

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

CoP 29: A pivotal moment to act on climate crisis

With the upcoming CoP 29 summit in Azerbaijan, world leaders face mounting pressure to deliver on pledges for climate finance and reduced fossil fuel reliance



B K SINGH



Back-to-back hurricanes Helene and Milton originating from the Gulf of Mexico, that have battered the western coast of Florida in the United States have led to political debates and blame games ahead of the US Presidential election. The Republican team targeted the Biden-Harris duo for not doing enough to save lives and restore electricity. More than 200 people have perished in each of the hurricanes and also people have lived without electricity for more than 24 hours. Tropical typhoon Trami over the South China Sea claimed more than 150 lives in the Philippines, and 10 in Vietnam, injured thousands and damaged properties and infrastructures in both countries. Further, the deadliest flood in 50 years in Spain has also claimed more than 250 human lives. As against this, India's disaster management response during cyclones has been praiseworthy.

Whether it was cyclone Nisarga on our West coast in 2020 cyclone Fani in West Bengal in 2019, or the recent Dana in Odisha and West Bengal we have evacuated million of people on each occasion in a record time of 24 to 48 hours and as a result, there has hardly been any loss of life. Recent images from Valencia and other regions of Spain, last month's image from Italy where vehicles were swept away as roads became rivers, and before that similar flooding in France, Poland, Austria, and Czech are reminders of frequent flooding and associated misery to people. The global physics of fossil fuels has destabilised the world. The warmer the atmosphere gets; the more moisture it can hold. This would mean more intense downpours and longer drought.

In Spain, a year's worth of rain was dumped in half a day. While India's track record in dealing with disasters is good, what it should relook is its decisions to sacrifice natural forests for infrastructures, development projects and mining. Consumption of coal, oil and natural gas is swelling worldwide, despite leaders knowing that the surge in emission of greenhouse gases leads to increased warming of the planet and we face more destructive and frequent climatic catastrophes. Forests are the best sink for carbon and sacrificing them for GDP is only

to invite more frequent disasters. Earth is already warmed by 1.2 degrees Celsius. The year 2023 has been the warmest in the recorded history of post-industrialisation.

The trend from 2024 till July suggests that we are on course to break the 2023 temperature record. Developed countries are responsible for the warming so far. Scientists are consistently forecasting that beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius warming, part of many countries especially island nations will be submerged in the Sea. United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) has provided a forum for World leaders to meet annually and decide on actions to be taken to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees.



THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO DEVELOPING AND THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES FOR TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AT SPEED AND SCALE IS ANOTHER KEY TO CLIMATE MITIGATION

In the annual conference (CoP 25) in Paris in 2015 countries pledged their nationally determined contributions (NDC) to cut the consumption of fossil fuel and to develop renewable energy at speed and scale by 2030. Among G20 countries India is the only one, which is on course to fulfil the pledge. Donald Trump as US President in 2017 refused to toe the line with the Paris Agreement and said that climate is a hoax.

No CoP meeting took place till he was in office. Corona pandemic delayed it further even after Biden took over and CoP 26 at Glasgow was held in November 2021. Here again, leaders reiterated their pledge at Paris and also revived climate finance of \$100 billion that developed countries would contribute towards the cost of climate adaptation in the developing world annually. Another rhetoric was started during CoP 27 at Sharm el Sheikh that developed and some developing countries like China would pay for loss and damage in global south countries. This has again not been complied with. The climate finance of \$100 billion

annually has been agreed upon in Copenhagen CoP in 2009 but has not been complied with so far. African countries and island nations are suffering from extreme climate events like droughts and floods as well as supply chain disruptions owing to geopolitical tensions in West Asia and Ukraine.

Countries like Namibia and Zimbabwe have ordered to cull thousands of wild elephants (a threatened species) for food. If climate finance and loss and damage funds were made available, there was no need to cull threatened species and endangering the ecological security of the region further. The pledge regarding cutting fossil fuel consumption and transition to renewable energy especially by Western nations and China has been overlooked. There has been unprecedented growth in oil and gas drilling in the US and coal production in China.

Biden and other European leaders are not on course to fulfil their commitment to bring down fossil fuel consumption by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. China has pledged net zero by 2060 and India by 2070. Scientists are telling us to keep the warming within 1.5 degrees lest we face the consequences. 2050 and 2060 are far ahead and the question is whether we will be able to stand the disasters till then.

During the nomination as Republican presidential candidate in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Trump in his address said to abandon climate - drill baby drill. He cut jokes in his election rallies saying that if the Sea level rises due to warming, the people will have more buildings facing the Sea. The transfer of technology from developed countries to developing and third-world countries for transition to renewable energy at speed and scale is another key to climate mitigation. India, China and Western nations have gone

ahead substantially, yet they need to step up their efforts.

Renewable energy transition should take place at such a pace that we automatically cut fossil fuel consumption. Countries' demand at Glasgow CoP 26 to 'phase out' fossil fuel did not have total acceptance and was modified to 'phase down' on the insistence of China and the support of India. Further at Dubai CoP 28 another phrase 'transition away from fossil fuel' was agreed upon. Irrespective of the phrases used in the CoP resolutions, leaders are only concerned about the growth and GDP and are not inclined to bring down fossil fuel consumption. CoP 29 is scheduled to commence in Baku, Azerbaijan on November 13th, when world leaders will again take stock of the situation and roll out further actions.

Unfortunately, the host country along with its neighbours Armenia and Georgia is experiencing relatively more warming as compared to the global average. While every nation should put in their efforts to cut emissions, India should have relook at the projects requiring the sacrifice of natural forests, whether for linear infrastructures in the Himalayas, in Western Ghats or deforestation of 130.75 sq km forests for great Nicobar Development projects.

India's track record for growing compensatory afforestation for the trees lost is very poor. Supreme Court recently threatened contempt against agencies for not taking up planting ten times the trees lost in the project. 3700 trees were sacrificed in 2015 for the widening of NH 123 Bharatpur Dholpur road and Apex court's condition to plant up 37000 trees has not been fulfilled so far.

(The writer is retired principal chief conservator of Forests-Head of Forest Force-Karnataka; views are personal)

How AI, big data and personalisation are transforming B-school curricula

From integrating AI into decision-making processes to adding global perspectives, B-schools are merging traditional education with innovative technology

In 2024, technology is influencing every aspect of life, transforming the way we communicate, learn, and run businesses. With advancements in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, IoT, Big Data, Blockchain, and other digital technologies, we are currently navigating the fourth wave of the industry revolution.



PRABHU AGGARWAL

Businesses primarily prioritise automation and machinery to enhance workforce operations, with 88 per cent of small business owners using automation to increase their workforce efficiency, according to an Unmud study. This shift is driving up the demand for digitally literate and tech-savvy professionals in the industry, inspiring business schools to redesign their academic curricula. Following are the revolutionary ways technology is reshaping the business industry.

Reshaping Business Education through AI: According to the Future of Jobs Survey, 75 per cent of companies plan to adopt AI technologies in the coming years. This signals a significant shift brought about by technology in business education; the integration of AI and ML.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are revolutionising how future business leaders think and make decisions, disrupting the traditional learning models. Emerging technologies such as generative AI provide real-time feedback and high-level interactivity, inspiring B-schools to employ learning approaches to develop AI skills in students, thus, preparing them to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving business landscape. **Integration of Data Analytics into Business Intelligence:** Data has become the primary currency in business intelligence, helping businesses make informed decisions to enhance their growth. Technological trends such as statistical techniques, predictive analysis, machine learning,

and artificial intelligence allow businesses to identify leading patterns and tailor their offerings. As recent studies by Edge Delta point out, more companies will adopt big data and technology, increasing the employment rate by 58 per cent. To help students stay competitive, B-schools actively embed data analysis into their offered curriculum, improving students' data proficiency. Incorporating data analytics into higher education curricula, particularly in PGDM and MBA programmes, will promote innovation and solution-oriented thinking among students. **Experiential Learning and Real-World Applications:** With the rapid inclusion of technology in business, the leading employers are ex-



sively prioritising professionals with industry-ready technical and soft skills. The technologically integrated method of business education complements the traditional teaching pedagogy, preparing students to tackle real-world challenges and provide futuristic solutions. Through industry internships, consultation projects, case studies, and business simulations, B-school students gain hands-on experience and practical skills necessary to

excel in today's competitive job market. While a business degree holds significant importance, practical experience allows students to turn their learnings into actionable solutions.

Personalised Learning Approach: The amalgamation of technology and education has made education personal. The traditional learning model employs a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring individual learning needs. On the other hand, the modern learning model is tailored to meet individualistic demands, making learning seamless for every student. Through tech-integrated personalised education, students can adapt the learning materials and understand at their own pace. This shift is especially impactful in

business education, where personalised learning helps students stay current with industry trends, bridge the skill gap, and learn based on their proficiency.

Balance Between Human Creativity and Automation: While many view the current era as Industry 4.0, others argue we are swiftly moving towards Industry 5.0. Unlike its predecessor, Industry 5.0 emphasises the well-being of professionals, fostering prosperity beyond jobs and promoting ecologically balanced economic growth. The upcoming industrialisation era envisions close collaboration between humans and AI tools, enhancing operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This has led top B-schools to thoughtfully curate the core

management courses, integrating human-centricity, sustainability, and automation.

Bringing Global Perspective to Classrooms: Business challenges today are inherently global in nature, such as sustainability issues, supply chain management, foreign regulations, and cultural diversity. By embedding a global outlook in business education, B-schools equip students with essential tools to effectively address these problems. Facilitating worldly industry collaborations and connecting peers from diverse cultures through virtual modes fosters a deeper business understanding in the students, enabling them to drive positive changes.

(The writer is Dean BMS Hyderabad; views are personal)

KAMALA HARRIS

First woman V-P who fails to score a big first in US politics

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Kamala Harris, the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants, failed to notch a big first in American politics when she lost to her Republican rival Donald Trump in the race to the White House.

The Democratic leader's defeat to Trump in a bitterly contested election shattered her dream to become the first woman President of the United States.

Harris, 60, has known other firsts, though. She has been the district attorney for San Francisco — the first woman, first African-American and first Indian-origin person to be elected to the position.

As vice president, she is the first woman to hold the post. Also, she happens to be the first African-American or Indian-American person to make it there.

In an Op-ed published three days before the November 5 election, Harris recollected her frequent visit to India as a child and remembered her late mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a cancer researcher and civil rights activist.

"Growing up, my mother raised my sister and me to appreciate and honour our heritage. Nearly every other year, we would go to India for Diwali. We would spend time with our grandparents, our uncles, and our 'chithhis' (aunts)," Harris said in the article for The Juggernaut, an online South Asian publication. She said she believes Americans want a president who works for all American people. "And that has been the story of my entire career," she said.

Harris got her big chance when President Joe Biden abandoned his own bid for reelection in July following his poor performance in a nationally televised debate with Trump. Biden endorsed Harris as the party nominee in the election.

Her nomination fulfilled her presidential dreams, which she abandoned before the primaries in 2019 due to a lack of funds to continue her campaign.

Biden picked her as his running mate in 2016. She was just the third woman to be picked as the vice president nominee on a major party ticket.

And she was one of only three Asian Americans in the Senate and the first Indian-American ever to serve in the chamber.

She has been likened to Barack Obama, the country's first Black President. More than a decade ago, journalist Gwen Ifill called Harris "the female Barack Obama" on the "Late Show With David Letterman". Later, a small businessman from Willoughby, Tony Pinto, called her "a young, female version of the president".

She is considered close to Obama, who endorsed her in various elections, including that for the US Senate in 2016, Vice President in 2020 and the presidential election in 2024.

Harris was born to two immigrant parents: a Black father and an Indian mother. Her father, Donald Harris, is from Jamaica, and her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, migrated to the US from Chennai in 1958. She, however, defines herself simply as "American".

After her parents divorced, Harris was raised primarily by her Hindu mother. She says that her mother adopted Black culture and immersed her two daughters — Kamala and her younger sister Maya — in it. Harris grew up embracing her Indian culture but living a proudly African American life.



"My mother understood very well that she was raising two black daughters," she wrote in her autobiography "The Truths We Hold". "She knew that her adopted homeland would see Maya and me as black girls and she was determined to make sure we would grow into confident, proud black women."

Harris was born in Oakland and grew up in Berkeley. She spent her high school years living in French-speaking Canada — her mother was teaching at McGill University in Montreal.

"Harris was raised in a middle-class family by a working mother who taught her to believe in the promise of America. Her mother also taught her the value of hard work, bringing Kamala to her breast cancer research lab and showing her how to clean test tubes as a child," according to the Harris campaign website.

She attended college in the US, spending four years at Howard University, which she has described as among the most formative experiences of her life. After Howard, she went on to earn her law degree at the University of California, Hastings and began her career at the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. She became the top prosecutor for San Francisco in 2003 before being elected the first woman and the first Black person to serve as California's attorney general in 2010, the top lawyer in America's most populous state.

In her nearly two terms in office as attorney general, Harris gained a reputation as one of the rising stars of the Democratic Party. In 2017, she was sworn into the US Senate, where she championed legislation to fight hunger, provide rent relief, improve maternal health care, expand access to capital for small businesses, revitalize America's infrastructure, and combat the climate crisis.

Harris is married to Douglas Emhoff, a lawyer, for the past 10 years. She is the stepmother of two children, Ella and Cole, who are her "endless source of love and pure joy."

Her role as vice president was more than just symbolic. Unlike her predecessors, she wielded considerable power during Biden's presidency. As president of the Senate, she set a new record for the most tie-breaking votes cast by a Vice President in history — surpassing one that had stood for nearly 200 years. And her votes have been consequential.

World leaders hail Trump's 'historic' comeback

PTI ■ LONDON/JERUSALEM

Congratulatory messages poured in Wednesday from world leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his UK counterpart Keir Starmer, for Donald Trump after his "historic" comeback in the US presidential election.

Starmer was among the first world leaders to issue a congratulatory message soon after Trump addressed a rally in Florida to claim victory in the US presidential race.

He said the "special relationship" between the UK and the US would continue to prosper under the new American administration after Trump clinched crucial battleground states in the US overnight.

The 78-year-old Republican leader cleared the 270 electoral votes needed to clinch the presidency by securing a victory in the key battleground state of Wisconsin.

According to races called by the Associated Press up to 4 pm (IST), 277 electoral votes had gone to Republican candidate Trump and 224 to Democratic Party's Kamala Harris.

"Congratulations President-elect Trump on your historic election victory. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead," Starmer said in a statement released by 10 Downing Street in London.

"As the closest of allies, we stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of our shared values of freedom, democracy and enterprise. From growth and security to innovation and tech, I know that the UK-US special relationship will continue to prosper on both sides of the Atlantic for years to come," he said. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu congratulated Trump for his "historic

return to the White House".

Addressing Trump and his wife Melania Trump, Netanyahu in a post on X said, "Congratulations on history's greatest comeback! Your historic return to the White House offers a new beginning for America and a powerful recommitment to the great alliance between Israel and America. This is a huge victory!"

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese congratulated Trump on his "election victory".

"Australians and Americans are great friends and true allies. Working together, we can ensure the partnership between our nations and peoples remains strong into the future," he posted on X.

French President Emmanuel Macron in a post on X said, "Ready to work together as we were able to do during four years. With your convictions and mine. In respect and ambition. For more peace and prosperity."

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky congratulated Trump on his "impressive" election victory.

Recalling his "great meeting" with the Republican leader in September during which they discussed "the Ukraine-US strategic partnership, the Victory Plan, and ways to put an end to Russian aggression against Ukraine", Zelensky in a post on X said he appreciated Trump's commitment to the "peace through strength" approach in global affairs.

"This is exactly the principle that can practically bring just peace in Ukraine closer. I am hopeful that we will put it into action together. We look forward to an era of a strong United States of America under President Trump's decisive leadership. We rely on continued strong bipartisan support for Ukraine in the United States.

"We are interested in developing mutually beneficial political and economic cooperation that will benefit both of our nations. Ukraine, as one of Europe's strongest military powers, is committed to ensuring long-term peace and security in Europe and the Transatlantic community with the support of our allies," he said.

Zelensky said he is looking forward to personally congratulating Trump and discussing ways to strengthen Ukraine's strategic partnership with the US.

Congratulating Trump, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Italy and the US are "sister" nations, linked by an unshakable alliance, common values, and a historic friendship.

"It is a strategic bond, which I am sure we will now strengthen even further," she said in a post on X.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz congratulated Trump, saying, "For a long time, Germany and the US have been working together successfully promoting prosperity and freedom on both sides of the Atlantic. We will continue to do so for the wellbeing of our citizens."

European Union Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in a post on X congratulated Trump and underlined that the EU and the US are "more than just allies".

"We are bound by a true partnership between our people, uniting 800 million citizens. So let's work together on a strong transatlantic agenda that keeps delivering for them," she said. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Trump's win is the "biggest comeback" in US political history and is "a much-needed victory for the World".

No information on whether Putin will congratulate Trump

AP ■ MOSCOW

Ahead of the presidential race call, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said he had no information on whether Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to congratulate Donald Trump but emphasised that Moscow views the US as an "unfriendly" country. Peskov reaffirmed the Kremlin's claim that the US support for Ukraine amounted to its involvement in the conflict, telling reporters: "Let's not forget that we are talking about the unfriendly country that is both directly and indirectly involved in a war against our state."

Asked if Putin's failure to congratulate Trump could hurt ties, Peskov responded that Russia-US relations already are at the "lowest point in history", adding that it will be up to the new US leadership to change the situation. He noted Putin's statements about Moscow's readiness for a "constructive dialogue based on justice, equality and readiness to take mutual concerns into account".

Peskov noted Trump's campaign statements about his intention to end wars, saying that "those were important statements, but now after the victory, while getting ready to enter the Oval Office or entering the Oval Office, statements could sometimes change."

Republicans get Senate majority

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Republicans seized control of the US Senate late Tuesday after flipping Democratic held seats, holding onto GOP incumbents and wresting away the majority for the first time in four years.

The unexpected battleground of Nebraska pushed Republicans over the top. Incumbent GOP Sen Deb Fischer brushed back a surprisingly strong challenge from independent newcomer Dan Osborn.

Democrats watched their efforts to salvage their slim majority slip out of reach as tallies rolled in across a map that favoured Republicans.

Early in the night, Republicans flipped one seat in West Virginia, with the election of Jim Justice, who easily replaced retiring Sen Joe Manchin. Democratic efforts to oust firebrand Republicans Ted Cruz of Texas and Rick Scott of Florida collapsed.

While Texas hasn't elected a Democrat statewide in almost 30 years, Colin Allred, a Dallas-

area congressman and former NFL linebacker, positioned himself as a moderate and leaned into his support for reproductive rights amid Texas' abortion ban, which is one of the strictest in the nation.

Cruz's victory came after Democratic efforts to salvage their Senate majority evaporated when Democratic Sen Sherrod Brown in Ohio lost his reelection to Republican Bernie Moreno, a wealthy Trump-era newcomer.

Brown's loss to Moreno, an immigrant from Bogota, Colombia, who built a fortune as a luxury car dealer and blockchain entrepreneur, puts the Democrats on the edge of losing Senate control. A three-term senator, he is the first incumbent to lose reelection.

The Ohio race between Brown and Moreno, who was backed by Donald Trump, is the most expensive of the cycle, at some \$400 million.

With control of Congress at stake, the contests for the House and Senate will determine which party holds the majority

and the power to boost or block a president's agenda, or if the White House confronts a divided Capitol Hill.

The focus now turns to the Democratic "blue-wall" states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, where Democrats are fighting to protect seats in what's left of their slim hold on the Senate.

In the end, just a handful of seats, or as little as one, could tip the balance in either chamber. With a 50-50 Senate, the party in the White House determines the majority, since the vice president is a tie-breaker.

Already several states will send history-makers to the Senate. Voters elected two Black women to the Senate, Democrat Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware and Democrat Angela Alsobrooks of Maryland, in a historic first.

Blunt Rochester won the open seat in her state while Alsobrooks defeated Maryland's popular former governor, Larry Hogan. Just three Black women have served in the Senate, and never before have two served at

the same time. And in New Jersey, Andy Kim became the first Korean American elected to the Senate, defeating Republican businessman Curtis Bashaw. The seat opened when Bob Menendez resigned this year after his federal conviction on bribery charges.

Elsewhere, House candidate Sarah McBride, a Democratic state lawmaker from Delaware who is close to the Biden family, won her race, becoming the first openly transgender person elected to Congress.

The key contests are playing out alongside the first presidential election since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, but also in unexpected corners of the country after what has been one of the most chaotic congressional sessions in modern times.

Voters said the economy and immigration were the top issues facing the country, but the future of democracy was also a leading motivator for many Americans casting ballots in the presidential election.

Iran's currency at all-time low as Trump wins

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's currency fell on Wednesday to an all-time low as Donald Trump clinched the US presidency again, signalling new challenges ahead for Tehran as it remains locked in the wars raging in the Middle East.

The rial traded at 703,000 rials to the dollar, traders in Tehran said. The rate could still change throughout the day. Iran's Central Bank could flood the market with more hard currencies as an attempt to improve the rate, as it has done in the past.

"The slide comes as the rial already faces considerable woes over its sharp slide in value — and as the mood on the streets of Tehran among some darkened."

"One-hundred per cent he will intensify the sanctions," said Amir Aghaiean, a 22-year-old student. "Things that are not in our favour will be worse. Our economy and social situation will surely get worse."

He added: "I feel the country is going to blow up." In 2015, at the time of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, the rial was at 32,000 to USD 1. On July 30, the day that Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian was sworn in and started his term, the rate was 584,000 to USD 1.

Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord in 2018, sparking years of tensions between the countries that persist today.

Iran's economy has struggled for years under crippling international sanctions over its rapidly advancing nuclear program, which now enriches uranium at near weapons-grade levels.

Pezeshkian, elected after a helicopter crash killed hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi in May, came to power on a promise to reach a deal to ease Western sanctions.

However, Iran's government has for weeks been trying to downplay the effect on Tehran of whoever won Tuesday's election in the United States. That stance continued on Wednesday with a brief comment from Fatemeh Mohajerani, a spokeswoman for Pezeshkian's administration.

"The election of the US president doesn't have anything specifically to do with us," she said. "The major policies of America and the Islamic Republic are fixed, and they won't heavily change by people replacing others. We have already made necessary preparations in advance."

By midday Wednesday in the Middle East, Donald Trump was elected the 47th president of the United States in a remarkable political comeback. Tensions still remain high between the nations, 45 years after the 1979 US Embassy takeover and 444-day hostage crisis that followed.

Six Indian Americans taste success

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Six Indian Americans have won the elections to the House of Representatives, increasing their number from five in the current Congress. Indian-American lawyer Suhbas Subramanyam created history by becoming the first from the community to be elected from Virginia and the entire East Coast.

Subramanyam defeated Mike Clancy of the Republican Party. He is currently a Virginia State Senator. There is a possibility that the number of Indian Americans in the House of Representatives could increase to seven as Dr Amish Shah was leading by a slender margin against his Republican incumbent in the first Congressional District of Arizona.

"I am honoured and humbled that the people of Virginia's 10th District put their trust in me to take on the toughest fights and deliver results in Congress. This district is my home. I got married here, my wife Miranda and I are raising our daughters here, and the issues our community faces are personal to our family. It is an honour to continue serving this district in Washington," Subramanyam said. Subramanyam, who previously served as a White House Advisor to President Barack Obama, is a Hindu by faith and is popular among Indian Americans nationwide.

He joins the 'Samosa Caucus' in the Congress that currently comprises five Indian Americans — Ami Bera, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna, Pramila Jayapal and Shri Thanedar.

All the five existing Indian American members were re-elected to the House of

Representatives. Shri Thanedar was re-elected for the second consecutive term from the 13th Congressional District of Michigan. He won it for the first time in 2023. Raja Krishnamoorthi won the seventh Congressional District of Illinois for the fifth consecutive term. While the battles for control of the White House and Congress remain close, I am honoured that the people of Illinois' 8th District have extended my contract to represent them in Congress," Krishnamoorthi said. "My parents came to this country with little more than a dream for their family's future and the faith that they could achieve it here in America," Krishnamoorthi concluded. "Despite some hard times, we did." "My mission in Congress is to fight for all the other families that are pursuing their

dreams, no matter where they come from, how they worship, or the number of letters in their names... there are 29 in mine." So did Ro Khanna who represents the seventeenth Congressional District of California and Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, who represents the seventh Congressional District of Washington State.

A physician by profession, Dr Ami Bera is the senior-most Indian American Congressman representing the sixth Congressional District of California since 2013. He was re-elected for the seventh consecutive term. In Arizona, Shah from the Democratic Party was slightly ahead of his Republican Party's incumbent David Schweikert. He has 132,712 votes as against his rival's 128,606 votes when 63 per cent of the votes were counted.

Representatives. Shri Thanedar was re-elected for the second consecutive term from the 13th Congressional District of Michigan. He won it for the first time in 2023. Raja Krishnamoorthi won the seventh Congressional District of Illinois for the fifth consecutive term. While the battles for control of the White House and Congress remain close, I am honoured that the people of Illinois' 8th District have extended my contract to represent them in Congress," Krishnamoorthi said. "My parents came to this country with little more than a dream for their family's future and the faith that they could achieve it here in America," Krishnamoorthi concluded. "Despite some hard times, we did." "My mission in Congress is to fight for all the other families that are pursuing their



Supporters of Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump hold banners as they take part in Trump's Election Night Watch Party, at Palm Beach (Florida).

PTI

European leaders seek common future at summit but all eyes on Washington

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Dozens of European leaders will be gingerly seeking to chart a more common future during a one-day summit in Hungary's capital on Thursday. Yet despite myriad economic challenges and two wars in the neighborhood, all eyes will be glued on Washington to see whether the pivotal US election will cause a political rift throughout the continent.

The transatlantic relationship will doubtless change after the vote, leaders and experts have said. The impact of the US results could be felt for years to come, on issues including the war in Ukraine, the

European Union's trade relations with the rest of the world, migration, the Middle East conflict and climate change.

"All this is putting peace, stability and prosperity at risk in our region," said the invitation letter to the leaders of the European Political Community, which unites almost 50 nations in Europe and its near abroad, bar Russia and Belarus.

Among the leaders likely to attend on Thursday is Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is expected to make another plea for more aid as his country fends off Moscow's invasion. The timing is laden with significance as Trump

has vowed to end the war "within 24 hours" of being elected — something leaders in Kyiv interpret as an impending evaporation of U.S. support should Trump win.

Orbán makes plain his support for Trump. Not so long ago, such a meeting — which is also expected to include leaders from non-EU countries like Turkey, Serbia and the United Kingdom — would end with praise for European unity and a common political direction. Yet with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán as the host of the summit, friction is as good as assured. Orbán, who has openly thrown his weight behind

The impact of the US results could be felt for years to come, on issues including the war in Ukraine, the European Union's trade relations with the rest of the world, migration, the Middle East conflict and climate change.

Trump and argued the former president is a "man of peace," has predicted a Trump victory and suggested that civil and criminal cases against him were the result of a politically motivated Department of Justice — a common Trump refrain. Having played the obstructionist for years within the 27-nation EU, Orbán now holds the bloc's rotating presidency, giving him a more prominent platform and making him the host of Thursday's EPC summit, as well as another gathering of EU leaders on Friday. The presidency under Orbán caused turmoil from day one, when he declared "Make Europe Great Again" the motto of his six months in

charge. It was a strikingly clear reference to his affection for Trump, which he followed up with unannounced visits to Moscow and Beijing, angering EU leaders who said he was not acting on their behalf. In response to Orbán's self-styled "peace mission," many EU countries began boycotting presidency meetings in Budapest, or sending only lower-level bureaucrats rather than ministers. However, no boycotts are expected for this week's summits.

While Orbán has cast the result of US elections as determinative of Europe's future — he's even delayed passing Hungary's 2025 national budget until after a

new president is elected — not all EU leaders are comfortable with the bloc's fate being so tightly bound up with the movements of American politics. Donald Tusk, the center-right prime minister of Poland, said Europe must forge a more independent path that is less sensitive to changes across the Atlantic.

"Some claim that the future of Europe depends on the American elections, while it depends first and foremost on us, on the condition that Europe finally grows up and believes in its own strength," Tusk said in the days ahead of the summit. "Whatever the outcome, the era of geopolitical outsourcing is over."

Total vehicle retail sales in India in October sees 32 per cent Y-O-Y rise to 28,32,944 units: FADA

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The total vehicle retail sales in India witnessed a 32 per cent Y-O-Y rise to 28,32,944 units with all segments including two-wheelers and passenger vehicles registering strong growth, Federation of Automobile Dealers' Association (FADA) said on Wednesday.

The total vehicle retail sales in October 2023 stood at 21,43,929 units, as per FADA. The strong growth in October this year was largely driven by the rural market, especially boosting two-wheeler and passenger vehicles sales, supported by increased Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Rabi crops,



FADA said, Passenger vehicle sales grew 32.38 per cent to 4,83,159 units in 2024, from 3,64,991 units retailed in October 2023, it stated.

Two-wheeler sales for the previous month were recorded at 20,65,095 units, as compared to 15,14,634 units in October 2023, registering a growth of 36.35 per cent, while three-wheeler sales were up 11.45 per cent year-on-year to 1,22,846 in October 2024, it said.

Tractor sales, according to FADA, increased 3.08 per cent during October to 64,433 units, from 62,542 units a year ago.

The convergence of major festivals (Navratri and Diwali) in October significantly boosted consumer demand; attractive festive offers, new model launches, and improved stock availability led to a 36 per cent year-on-year and 71 per cent month-on-month growth in two-wheelers, according to FADA.

Besides, rural sentiments, favourable monsoon and good crop expectations, further contributed to the growth, it stated.

Moreover, the 32 per cent year-on-year and 75 per cent month-on-month rise in passenger vehicle sales was driven by festive demand, aggressive offers, and new model introductions, it said.

FADA remains optimistic about near-term growth of the overall automobile industry particularly with the wedding season ahead. However, potential challenges such as inventory overstock and economic headwinds may affect sales momentum towards the end of the year, it said.

Rubicon Research, Sai Life Sciences and two others get Sebi's nod to float IPOs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four companies, including pharmaceutical formulation firm Rubicon Research and TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences, have received Sebi's go-ahead to raise at least Rs 3,000 crore collectively through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), an update with the markets regulator showed on Wednesday.

The other two firms that obtained the regulator's clearance are yarn manufacturer Sanathan Textiles and auto components maker Metalman Auto.

Meanwhile, BMW Ventures, which filed its preliminary IPO papers in September, withdrew the documents on October 28.

The four companies - Rubicon Research, Sai Life Sciences, Sanathan Textiles and Metalman Auto -- which filed their draft IPO papers with Sebi during July and August, obtained the regulator's observations on October 31, the update showed.

In Sebi's parlance, obtaining observations means its go-ahead to float public issues.

The Rs 1,085-crore IPO of Rubicon Research is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 500 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of shares valued at Rs 585 crore by the promoter, General Atlantic Singapore RR Pte Limited, according to the



Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

At present, General Atlantic owns over 57 per cent stake in Rubicon Research.

The company proposes to utilise proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 310 crore for payment of debt. Also, funds will be used for supporting inorganic growth through unidentified acquisitions as well as other strategic initiatives and general corporate purposes.

Hyderabad-based Sai Life Sciences' proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an OFS of 6.15 crore shares by a promoter, investor shareholders and other shareholders, the DRHP showed.

Of the IPO proceeds, funds to the tune of Rs 600 crore will be used for debt payment and a portion will be used for corporate general purposes, the draft papers filed showed.

Sanathan Textiles' IPO is a mix of a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 500 crore and an OFS of up to Rs 300 crore by promoters and promoter group entities, it stated. Proceeds from the fresh issue of shares worth Rs 210 crore will be used for investment in the company's subsidiary - Sanathan Polycot Private Limited - for funding its long-term working capital requirements, Rs 175 crore for repayment of debt, besides general corporate purposes.

The proposed IPO of Metalman Auto is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 350 crore and an OFS of up to 1.26 crore shares by its promoters. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 25 crore will be used to part financing the capital expenditure towards procurement of plant and machinery at Pithampur manufacturing unit two in Madhya Pradesh.

FSSAI to hold CAC meet to discuss food safety issues on e-commerce platforms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will hold meeting of its Central Advisory Committee (CAC) on November 7-8 to discuss food safety issues on e-commerce platforms among others challenges.

The meeting, to be held under the chairmanship of FSSAI's CEO G Kamala Vardhana Rao, will see participation of food commissioners from all states/Union Territories or their representatives.

According to sources, the CAC meeting will be held on November 7 to November 8 to discuss the various issues, including how to strengthen the surveillance and testing of food products across all states to ensure food safety. The CAC will also discuss measures to be adopted to

ensure sale of quality food products on e-commerce platforms, they said.

The committee will discuss this issue amid reports of sale of food products nearing expiry on e-commerce platforms.

Sources said FSSAI is likely to call a meeting of big e-commerce players next week to ensure food safety.

As per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the food authority constitutes the CAC for close cooperation between the Authority and enforcement agencies/organisations operating in the field of food.

The committee generally meets three to four times a year and advises the Authority on various matters including prioritisation of work, identifying potential risks and the pooling of knowledge.

Thailand replaces Maldives to emerge as top honeymoon destination for Indian couples: MakeMyTrip

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Thailand has emerged as the favourite international honeymoon destination for Indian couples, replacing Maldives, as it recorded the highest share of honeymoon package bookings between October 2023 and September 2024 on MakeMyTrip, the travel booking platform said on Wednesday.

The Maldives saw a 16.2 per cent Year-on-Year decline in honeymoon package bookings while all other top five international destinations - Indonesia, Mauritius, and Vietnam - gained share this year, the travel booking platform stated.

MakeMyTrip's 'How India Travels for Honeymoon', analyses booking data from October 2023 to September 2024, compared to the same period in the preceding year.

Thailand increased its booking share by 5.2 per cent year-on-year, surpassing the Maldives, which led the rankings last year.

On the domestic front, the Andamans replaced Kerala as the most booked honeymoon destination, increasing its share of honeymoon package bookings by 6.9 per cent YoY.

Incoming data on GDP growth mixed but positives outweigh negatives: Reserve Bank Governor

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said the incoming data on economic growth is "mixed", but the positive factors outweigh the negative ones.

Speaking at Business Standard's annual BFSI event here, Das stressed that the underlying economic activity by and large remains strong.

"Data which is coming in is mixed but the positives outweigh the negatives and by and large underlying activities remain strong," Das said.

It can be noted that many analysts have been voicing concerns about growth, especially after official data showed growth slowing to a 15-quarter low of 6.7 per cent in the first quarter of FY25.

The RBI, however, has been holding onto its estimate of



7.2 per cent real GDP growth for FY25, even as some expect it to be lower than 7 per cent. Das said the RBI tracks over 70 high-speed indicators to arrive at its estimates and described both the positive factors pushing the number and the negatives pulling it down.

The industrial production or IIP data, and moderation in

and cement industry performance, Das said.

Amid the increased discussion on the auto sector prospects recently with concerns around rising inventory amid lower demand, Das said the sector has done exceedingly well in October with a 30 per cent growth which includes a 23 per cent rise in four-wheeler sales.

Additionally, the agriculture and services sectors are also doing well, Das said.

"I would not rush to declare that the economy is slowing down," the RBI governor said amid some analysts saying that the economy is in a cyclical growth slowdown.

When reminded of his animal analogies on inflation and asked to choose the animal which describes the Indian economy, Das said national animal "tiger" which is also

there in the RBI logo best describes the country.

He said the economy has got the strength of a tiger, while RBI provides the "agility", which is another key attribute of the tiger.

On inflation, Das said the October headline consumer price inflation number to be announced on November 12 will be higher than September's 5.5 per cent, but added that the central bank had already pencilled in the higher numbers for the two months.

The shift in stance of the monetary policy should not be seen as a precursor to a rate cut at the very next meeting of the rate-setting panel, Das said adding that the panel is under no pressure on the next course of action.

On the issue of regulatory and supervisory actions against four non-banks recently, Das reiterated that the RBI has acted against a very small number if one were to compare the overall number of NBFCs (non-banking financial companies), which is 9,400.

Asserting that the central bank actions are "calibrated, selective and measured", Das said such decisions are not abrupt and are preceded by months of bilateral engagement with an entity.

It is only when an entity refuses or delays RBI's suggestions that such actions are taken, Das said, adding that the number of entities marked out for the need to improve is far higher than the ones against whom actions are taken.

Detailed reasons on why an action has been taken are given to the entity, Das said, underlining that these actions are not "punitive" but "corrective" in nature wherein the RBI takes back the measures if it sees improvements sought.

The RBI has done a quick study to understand the use of borrowed funds being deployed to punt on the capital markets, Das said and added that this phenomenon does not pose a major risk to the banking sector or lead to "systemic instability".

He urged banks to look at the end use of funds even in unsecured loans, admitting that it is very difficult to monitor the same.

The RBI does not have a prescribed credit deposit ratio for the banks, Das said, adding that this ratio has improved to 80 per cent at the systemic level in the last few months.

However, there are a few entities which are the outliers on this, he admitted.

Quality of loan underwriting and the ability to sustain the loan growth are two important aspects that the central bank looks at while understanding loan growth, Das specified. He also made clear that the central bank does not have a view on credit growth.

The RBI endeavours to "smell around" constantly, and be preemptive in identifying and rectifying risks before they become into systemic trouble, he said.

Replying to a question on the future of central bank digital currency (CBDC), Das said the RBI is in no hurry to have a national launch of what is a pilot project at present and added that new use cases are emerging like Odisha's transfer of cash support to beneficiaries under a scheme or some corporates transferring lunch vouchers to employee wallets.

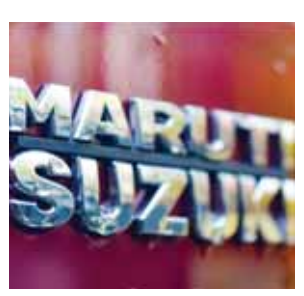
Maruti Suzuki seeking to enhance exports with upcoming new Dzire sedan

PTI ■ DABOLIM/GOA

Maruti Suzuki India is targeting markets like UAE, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Mexico and other Latin American countries with its upcoming new version of compact sedan Dzire to accelerate exports as it eyes over 3 lakh units of overseas shipments this fiscal, a senior company official said on Wednesday.

In the domestic market, the company hopes to enhance its share in the sedan market amid the passenger vehicles market shifting towards SUVs (Sports Utility Vehicles), with the new Dzire which is slated for launch next week.

"We have been growing (exports) at a rate of about 11.9 per cent in the first seven months of the financial year and we hope to continue on that momentum. So we hope to do more than about 3 lakh car exports within this financial year," Maruti Suzuki India Executive Director Corporate Affairs



Rahul Bharti told PTI here. In contrast, just about four years ago, the company's exports were below one lakh per year, he added.

"So, now we'll be doing about three times of that, and by the turn of the decade, we hope to multiply it another three times over to something like 8 lakh units a year," Bharti added.

Elaborating on the export strategy, Bharti said, "One of the biggest enablers of increasing export is more models in more geographies. So, we are adding the number of models, and we are adding the markets also." At the moment, he said, the

company is exporting to Latin America, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Further, he said, "At some point in time, we will re-enter Europe and Japan also (with upcoming electric SUV eVitaro)." With the upcoming new version of Dzire compact sedan, Bharti said, "We hope to increase our exports also because with the new sleek design, technologies, six airbags, as standard, it is being widely accepted in the market." He further said, "We have to increase the density in those (existing) markets. We will target markets like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Chile, Mexico, other countries in Latin America and maybe some markets in Southeast Asia also." The existing Dzire model was among the top three export models in October, he added.

On the domestic front, Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Partho Banerjee said the company hopes to

enhance its share in the sedan market with the new offering.

Last year, the outgoing version of Dzire clocked over 1.6 lakh units, he said, adding that with the new offering coming in the company expects more growth. "Every second car which is sold in the sedan segment (in the domestic market) happens to be from Maruti...We are, in fact, increasing our market share in the sedan segment," he asserted.

Banerjee acknowledged that with the SUVs growing faster, the sedan segment is shrinking but sedans will continue to have its market as SUV demand stabilises at some point in time. "Being the market leader we need to be present in all the segments. Our take is this, in each segment, we need to be present and offer products to the consumers. Let the consumer decide which form factor they want to go," Banerjee said.

Brand Street Integrated expands with new operations in Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Brand Street Integrated has announced the expansion of its Southern operations with the launch of its Kerala office. Following successful initiatives across Hyderabad and other Southern regions, the Kerala expansion is a significant step in their strategic journey to bring innovative and localised marketing solutions to brands across India.

Leading the new Kerala division are two of Brand Street Integrated's experts namely, Rajinikanth Manickam, bringing over five years of experience within the company, and Joe Matthew, both of whom possess a deep understanding of the local market and consumer behavior. Their expertise will be instrumental in offering

clients tailored, on-ground marketing solutions that resonate with the region's unique audience. "We are incredibly excited to strengthen our presence in the South by launching operations in Kerala," said Surendra Singh, CEO of Brand Street Integrated. "Kerala represents a vibrant market with a wealth of opportunity, and expanding here allows us to offer brands even more localised and impactful marketing solutions." Brand Street Integrated's Kerala operations will provide the full spectrum of experiential marketing services, including rural and digital marketing, OOH advertising, and merchandising solutions, all backed by a unique, data-driven approach to ensure optimal engagement.

INBRIEF

PSPCL AND GNDEC LUDHIANA SIGN MOU

LUDHIANA: Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) and Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College (GNDEC), Ludhiana, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the guidance of Power Minister of Punjab, Harbhajan Singh ETO.



ALL INDIA INTER-UNIVERSITY TAEKWONDO (MEN) CHAMPIONSHIP BEGINS

AMRITSAR: The All India Inter-University Taekwondo (Men) Championship started today and will continue until November 9, 2024. This exciting event is taking place at Multipurpose Hall of Guru Nanak Dev University.



CRICKET MATCH ORGANISED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AMRITSAR: Department of Education of Guru Nanak Dev University organized its first annual department cricket match to foster the sense of healthy competitions among the students of the department.



REAL MADRID, MANCHESTER CITY BOTH HUMILIATED IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AP ■ MILAN
European heavyweights Real Madrid and Manchester City both suffered big defeats in the Champions League. Defending champion Madrid was humbled 3-1 at home by AC Milan, while Erling Haaland missed a penalty and City squandered a fourth-minute lead as it lost 4-1 at Sporting Lisbon, whose coach will soon take charge of its crosstown rival.

Liverpool moved top of the league phase table with four wins from four games, followed by Sporting and Monaco, both on 10 points after three wins and a draw. Under the new 36-team format introduced by UEFA this season, the top eight teams advance directly to the next round, and those from ninth to 24th enter playoffs to reach it, while the bottom 12 are eliminated.



MADRID FALTERING: In Spain, Christian Pulisic sent in a corner for Malick Thiaw to head Milan into a 12th-minute lead, ensuring Madrid trailed in a third straight game in the Champions League this season. The 15-time champion had already lost to surprise team Lille in their second game. Vinicius Júnior equalized from the penalty spot in the 23rd after he'd been tripped, but Alvaro Morata pounced on the rebound after Andriy Lunin saved Rafael Leão's shot to restore the visitors' lead against his former club. Morata had already been given a hostile reception from the home fans, who evidently remember the goal he scored to take Juventus through to the 2015 final at their team's expense. Tijjani Reijnders scored Milan's third goal as the home fans made their frustrations known at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium. "The last two defeats are inexplicable. We have to analyze and react quickly," Lunin said, referring to Madrid's 4-0 loss to Barcelona in its previous Spanish league game. It's the first time since 2009 that Madrid has lost two successive

games at home with at least three goals conceded in each, according to Opta. "We have to get back on track," Lunin said. **OTHER RESULTS:** German forward Nicolas Kühn scored twice as Celtic defeated Leipzig 3-1 at home, and Juventus drew 1-1 at Lille. Lille midfielder Edon Zhegrovca eluded two defenders before playing a perfect pass for Jonathan David, who fired inside the far post, but Dušan Vlahovic equalized with a penalty for the Italian club. Donyell Malen scored late for Borussia Dortmund to beat Sturm Graz 1-0 at home, and Thilo Kehrer did likewise for Monaco to win at Bologna 1-0. United States midfielder Malik Tillman scored one goal and set up another as PSV Eindhoven beat Spanish team Girona 4-0. Dinamo Zagreb dealt Slovan Bratislava its fourth straight defeat in the competition as the winners came from behind to win 4-1 in Bratislava.

Cristiano Ronaldo scores as Al-Nassr beats defending champion Al-Ain 5-1

AP ■ RIYADH
Cristiano Ronaldo scored the second goal as Al-Nassr defeated defending champion Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates 5-1 in the AFC Champions League Elite to put Saudi Arabian teams in the top three places in the 12-team standings. Al-Nassr has 10 points from four games, two behind local rivals Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli who both have a perfect record with four wins.

Anderson Talisca opened the scoring in Riyadh after just five minutes with a shot into the bottom corner from the edge of the area. Ronaldo then netted his second goal of this season's competition from close range just after the half-hour mark after goalkeeper Khalid Eisa could only parry Sadio Mane's shot from outside the

goalkeeper Bento and into the net. Wesley and Talisca added late goals for Al-Nassr to cement the Saudi dominance of the western zone's group. The top eight from each of the two groups progress to the knockout stages. In the eastern zone, Vissel Kobe of Japan went top of the group with a 2-0 win over South Korea's Gwangju FC, the previous leader. Taisei Miyashiro scored with a penalty after 15 minutes and Daiju Sasaki sealed the victory after the break. Johor Darul Tazim of Malaysia went third with a 3-0 win over two-time champion Ulsan HD of South Korea. Just three days after lifting the Chinese Super League title, Shanghai Port lost 3-1 at Kawasaki Frontale of Japan. Australia's sole representative Central Coast Mariners picked up its first point with a 2-2 draw with Shanghai Shenhua.

Manas Dhamne can become Mr. Dependable of Indian tennis: Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Manas Dhamne could be the answer to Indian tennis' desperate search for 'Mr Dependable', reckons new Davis Cup coach Ashutosh Singh, who is mighty impressed with the teenager's diligent approach and workmanlike attitude. Ashutosh, who replaced Zeeshan Ali as coach, observed the youngster from Malegaon in Stockholm, where India competed in the Davis Cup Group I tie against Sweden. Dhamne, 16, did not get to play a match but was part of the squad that travelled to Stockholm along with another youngster, Aryan Shah.



searching for," remarked Ashutosh. "Of course it's miles to go but the road he's taken looks possible with his diligent approach. One has to keep in mind that Manas is only 16 and does need careful supervision in certain aspects of his workload management but it seems he's in experienced hands at his training base in Italy." India have just one player in top-100 in Sumit Nagal (83) and the next best is Ramkumar Ramanathan, way behind at number 309, followed by Sasi Kumar Mukund (365). All others are outside the top-500 bracket. Dhamne initially trained in Pune but left for Italy to train with renowned coach Riccardo Piatti at the Piatti Tennis Center in Bordighera. Dhamne made a quick impression when he won the singles titles at the ITF Asia-Oceania Junior (Under-18)

Gauff defeats Swiatek to reach the semifinals

AP ■ RIYADH
Coco Gauff earned her second victory over Iga Swiatek in 13 career matchups, winning 6-3, 6-4 at the WTA Finals to reach the semifinals of the season-ending tournament. The result means that Swiatek can't move up from No. 2 in the rankings this week, so Aryna Sabalenka will finish the year at No. 1 for the first time. It was Gauff's first victory over Swiatek since the 2023 Cincinnati Open, snapping a four-match losing skid head-to-head. Gauff, the 2023 U.S.

Open champion, also put an end to five-time Grand Slam champ Swiatek's six-match unbeaten run at the WTA Finals, an event the Polish star won a year ago.

The win moved Gauff to 2-0 in the Orange Group, while Swiatek fell to 1-1. Swiatek had rallied to beat Barbora Krejčíková in three sets on Sunday in her first match in two months. Krejčíková, the Wimbledon champion, kept her chances of advancing alive with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Jessica Pegula. That eliminated Pegula, who lost in straight sets to Gauff in their opening match in Saudi Arabia. Krejčíková was the last player to qualify for the event for the top eight players on the women's tennis tour, earning her berth thanks to her Grand Slam title at the All England Club in July. At No. 13, she became the lowest-ranked player to win a WTA Finals match since Magda Maleeva 22 years ago.

Southern rivals strive to strike back after recent defeats

PTI ■ KOCHI
Southern rivals Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC will seek a turnaround in their fortunes when they lock horns in the Indian Super League here on Thursday, having suffered reverses lately. Kerala Blasters FC and Hyderabad FC currently stand at the 10th and 11th spots in the points table -- coming into this match on the back of defeats to Mumbai City FC and Mohun Bagan Super Giant respectively. This match gives them a chance to fix things up and get their respective seasons back on track. The wind can be said to be swaying in the favour of the Kerala Blasters, as the Kochi-based outfit has won three out of their last four matches against Hyderabad FC. However, they have never won thrice in a row in front of the visitors, presenting this match as an unprecedented opportunity for them to do so.

Hyderabad FC will be eyeing points on the road to build upon one win and draw each that they have accumulated in ISL 2024-25. Kerala Blasters FC have found the back of the net in each of their previous 14 ISL matches at home. They have struck at least twice in eight of those games, and only Chennaiyin FC, Delhi Dynamos FC and Bengaluru FC (16 games each) have gone on longer such runs in the competition. With the power-packed attacking duo of Noah Sadaoui and Adrian Luna in their ranks, the Mikael Stahre-coached team is all set to delight the home fans further with their offensive firepower this term. Simultaneously, Kerala Blasters FC have not kept a clean sheet in their previous 18 consecutive matches in the league. This is the joint second-longest such sequence in the ISL, along with FC Goa and Hyderabad FC, with only NorthEast United FC having conceded

goals in a longer stretch of matches. It might prove out to be difficult for the team to climb up the league ladder unless they set their backline in order. Hyderabad FC had snapped their four-game-long losing streak on the road by triumphing over Mohammedan SC by 4-0 in their previous away match. That win must have infused greater belief in them to produce similar such performances in unfamiliar conditions, and the offensive cohesion displayed by Hyderabad FC will keep the Kerala Blasters FC defence in check as well. Hyderabad FC have ended up conceding at least a goal each in seven out of their last nine away fixtures. They have been defeated in all those games, and in fact won the two matches when they kept a clean sheet, drawing a clear parallel between defensive discipline and a greater possibility of them capturing the three points.



Standout boxing nation at Paris Olympics joins new body aiming to keep the sport at 2028 Games

AP ■ LAUSANNE
The most successful boxing nation at the Paris Olympics has joined the new governing body that aims to keep the sport in the 2028 Los Angeles Games after years of turmoil outside the ring. The boxing federation of Uzbekistan, whose fighters won five of the 13 gold medals in Paris this year, is among four new members of World Boxing, said the Switzerland-based body that is trying to win formal recognition by the International Olympic Committee. The IOC has set a deadline of "early 2025" to work with a new governing body replacing the Russian-led International Boxing Association, which was disbanded from the Olympic movement last year. In a years-long dispute with the IBA over finance and integrity concerns, the IOC has overseen boxing tournaments at the past two Olympics in Paris and Tokyo but does not want to organize for a third

time in Los Angeles. The dispute intensified in 2018 when boxing officials defied IOC warnings and elected Uzbek businessman Gafur Rahkimov as their leader. The IOC recently warned boxing federations that stay loyal to the IBA, now led by Russian Umar Kremlev, they will be cut off from funding and liaison with their national Olympic committee -- effectively blocking their path to the 2028 Summer Games. "The addition of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which are two of the world's leading boxing nations, is a major coup for World Boxing," the emerging governing body said, which also added Guatemala and Laos to a roster of 55 members. World Boxing president Boris van der Vorst said the recruits "recognize it is the only way to keep the Olympic dreams of their boxers alive." The new members joined at a meeting in Pueblo, Colorado which hosted World Boxing's first global championships, at under-19 level.

Sauber signs Brazilian driver Gabriel Bortoleto to partner Nico Hülkenberg in F1 for 2025

AP ■ HINWIL (SWITZERLAND)
Sauber has signed 20-year-old Brazilian driver Gabriel Bortoleto to make his debut in Formula 1 next year as Nico Hülkenberg's teammate. The decision means that Sauber's current drivers Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu are without an F1 seat for 2025. Neither has scored a point all season and Sauber's car has been largely uncompetitive. Signing Bortoleto, who leads the Formula 2 standings with two rounds to go, gives Sauber a blend of youth and experience alongside the 37-

year-old Hülkenberg. German automaker Audi is taking over Sauber, which will be rebranded as the Audi works team for 2026. "This is one of the most exciting projects in motorsport, if not in all of sports. Joining a team that combines the rich motorsport history of Sauber and Audi is a true honor," Bortoleto said in a statement. "Beyond simply being a member, I aim to grow with this ambitious project and reach the pinnacle of motorsport. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity given to me by the team and for the chance to work



alongside an experienced driver like Nico." Bortoleto, who won the F3 championship last season, began racing in karting as a kid before his family moved to Europe. He is the first full-time Brazilian driver in F1 since Felipe Massa retired in 2017. Pietro Fittipaldi did two races in 2020 as an injury replacement. Bortoleto joined the McLaren's driver program last year and the team said he will be released at the end of the 2024 season so he can pursue his F1 career. "All the best for the future," McLaren said. Bottas and Zhou had been

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with Sauber since 2022. "After open and constructive discussions with Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu, we mutually concluded that conditions to continue together could not be met so we agreed that it is time to part ways," Sauber said. "We would like to thank both for the contribution they have made to the team in the last three years. They have been the embodiment of professionalism, using their experience and enthusiasm to support our growth." Bottas, who had joined from Mercedes, could reportedly return to his former team in a reserve role.

Stokes missing as Draca, Netravalkar line up in long list for IPL mega auction

PTI ■ MUMBAI
England Test skipper Ben Stokes is missing from the list of 1,574 players while his former teammate James Anderson, Italian quick Thomas Draca and India-born USA medium pacer Saurabh Netravalkar have all registered for the IPL mega auction to be held in Jeddah on November 24 and 25.
The list, which will be shortened after the franchises provide their inputs, has all the marquee Indian players who were released from their teams including Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, R Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal. Each of these five cricketers have listed themselves at a base price of Rs 2 crore.
India quick Mohammed Shami, who has been sidelined from action due to various injuries since last November, was also released by his former team Gujarat Titans and has listed himself at Rs 2 crore and so has left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh. Among the other Indian players in the list with the maximum base price of Rs 2 crore are Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Venkatesh Iyer, Avesh Khan, Deepak Chahar, Ishan Kishan and Bhuvneshwar Kumar.
This list also includes Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Siraj, Devdutt Padikkal, Krunal Pandya, Harshal



Patel, Prasidh Krishna, T Natarajan, Washington Sundar and Umesh Yadav.
India batters Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw, who were unsold in the last IPL auction, have registered themselves at the base price of Rs 75 lakh each.
Stokes, who had decided to give the last season of the IPL a miss in order to manage his workload and

focus on his fitness, has opted out for the 2025 edition as well.
The 42-year-Anderson, who retired from Test cricket earlier this year, has registered for the IPL for the first time. The veteran pacer last played a T20 10 years ago in 2014. He has never competed in a global franchise T20 league. He has a base price of Rs 1.25 crore.
Netravalkar, who rose to prominence due to his stupendous performance for USA during the T20 World Cup earlier this year, has also lined up to go under the hammer in Jeddah. The software engineer in Oracle has a base price of Rs 30 lakh.
Ace Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon, who has gone unsold in previous auctions, has also entered the fray with the a base price of Rs

2 crore.
Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was the most expensive buy in the IPLs last auction at a price of Rs 24.50 crore, is back in the pool for this year's auction with a base price of Rs 2 crore.
England quick Jofra Archer, who last played in the 2023 edition, is also listed for the same base price.
DRACA BECOMES FIRST ITALIAN PLAYER TO REGISTER: Medium pacer Thomas Draca has become the first player from Italy to register for the IPL. The 24-year has played four T20 Internationals since making his debut for Italy in June this year. He impressed with his recent performance at the Global T20 Canada in August. Draca was the joint second-highest wicket-taker

of the tournament with 11 wickets to his name from six innings at an average of 10.63 and an economy of 6.88.
The Italian pacer was recently signed by the Mumbai Indians owned MI Emirates for the upcoming season of the ILT20 in the UAE.
Draca has registered himself at abse prices of Rs 30 lakh in the all-rounders' category.
With up to six players permitted to be retained ahead of the mega auction, IPL teams can build a squad of 25 players each and there will be 204 slots available after 46 players were retained by 10 teams put together.
Each team will have a total purse of Rs 120 crore as Punjab Kings have Rs 110.5 crore available with them, followed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru with Rs 83 crore, Delhi Capitals with Rs 73 crore and Gujarat Titans with Rs 69 crore.
Lucknow Super Giants will also have Rs 69 crore in their purse while five-time winners Chennai Super Kings will have Rs 55 crore. Last year's winners Kolkata Knight Riders will come into the auction with Rs 51 crore in purse while five-time champions Mumbai Indians will have Rs 45 crore, last year's runner-up Sunrisers Hyderabad will have Rs 45 crore and Rajasthan Royals will have Rs 41 crore.



Rishabh Pant climbs five places to sixth spot in ICC Test batters' rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI
Zealanders inside the top-10. England right-hander Joe Root maintained his healthy lead at the top of the list, with Williamson, Harry Brook (third), Jaiswal (fourth) and Steve Smith (fifth) his closest challengers.
India's Shubman Gill (up four places to 16th) also makes some ground on the list for Test batters following a score of 90 in the first innings against New Zealand in Mumbai, while player-of-the-series Will Young of New Zealand gained 29 spots to move to 44th overall.
Ravindra Jadeja climbed two spots to sixth in the Test bowler rankings after taking 10 wickets against New Zealand, placing him just behind top-ranked Kagiso Rabada. Australia's Josh Hazlewood occupied the second spot ahead of India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and Pat Cummins and Ravichandran Ashwin.
Teammate Washington Sundar jumped seven places to move to 46th on the same list for Test bowlers, while spin duo Ajaz Patel (up 12 places to 22nd) and Ish Sodhi (up three runs to equal 70th) are among the gainers from New Zealand.

Ponting predicts 3-1 win for Australia, says India will struggle without Shami

PTI ■ DUBAI
Former captain Ricky Ponting reckons Australia will clinch the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 against India as the visitors will find taking 20 wickets in a Test as their "biggest challenge" in absence of Mohammed Shami.
Australia are keen on ending their barren run in the Border-Gavaskar with India winning each of the four series since 2014-15, including the historic triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2020-21.
However, with India suffering the historic low of a first-ever whitewash by 0-3 against New Zealand, Ponting believes the hosts have a better chance of defeating India now. "Probably more so now (than before)," Ponting said about Australia's chances on the ICC Review Show.
Shami has been out of action since last November due to injuries and Ponting believes his absence leaves a big hole in India's bowling attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah,



run-scorers over the five Tests. "Leading run scorer, I'm going to go Steve Smith or Rishabh Pant," Ponting said.

he shouldn't have gone up to open in the first place," he added.
"...And that No 4 is his spot and where he should have probably been the whole time and where he probably finished his career now."
Pant, who was the highest run-getter during the series against New Zealand, appeared to be the only in-form batter heading to Australia.
"With Rishabh back in the side and probably coming into bat in the middle order when the ball's probably lost a bit of its shine and a bit of its hardness, and the form that he's in, I'll go for him as one of the leading run scorers as well," Ponting said.
The legendary Ponting picked Josh Hazlewood to get more wickets for Australia than his fast bowling partners Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins.
"I think Hazlewood out of the Australian quicks, is right at the moment, is probably at the peak of his powers more than the other guys. So I'll go with him for the leading wicket-taker," Ponting said.

India A players protested against replaced ball, claims report

PTI ■ SYDNEY
India A players expressed dissatisfaction over the condition of the replaced ball provided during the final day's play against Australia A in their first unofficial Test, a report has claimed, even as David Warner and Ed Cowan have called on Cricket Australia to clarify what transpired.
On the final day of the four-day game in Mackay last week, the umpires provided the Indian players with a different ball to use at the start of play.
The Indian players, particularly Ishan Kishan, were unhappy with the decision with the wicketkeeper-batter terming it "a very stupid decision."
A report in Sydney Morning Herald said on Wednesday that the argument from the Indian camp was not about the replacement of the ball but the condition of the ball which was provided as replacement.



Australia to clarify what transpired on the final day of the match at Mackay. Warner, whose years-long leadership ban has just been lifted by CA, has said the board "squashed" the matter "as quickly as possible" since the Indian senior men's team is bound for a five-Test series Down Under.

standing here answering those questions."
"I think the match referee should be coming out and addressing his own staff, who are the umpires, and if they're sticking by the umpire's decisions, then you've got to stand up for that. I think that's obviously a statement that CA probably need to release," he added.
Warner's former opening partner and current board director of the New South Wales Cowan said the reaction perhaps could've been different if the opposition team wasn't India.
"Part of me just thinks if this wasn't India there would be a totally different reaction," Cowan said.
"If that was Pakistan A, or England A, or choose any A team, or even a Shield game, the reaction would be totally different and for me, that's the wrong approach."
"To be fair, it's just us joining dots. These dots may be totally incorrect, we'd have imperfect information, but I do think it's on Cricket Australia to clarify this, and it's also probably imperative on the BCCI to clarify this," he said.
Hours after the game finished, CA issued a statement saying, "The ball used in the fourth innings of the match was changed due to deterioration. Both teams' captain and manager were informed of the decision prior to the start of play. No further action is being taken."
Under the laws of cricket, a five-run penalty is imposed if the umpires change the ball after determining it has been unfairly altered.
However, CA's playing conditions include an additional clause that allows the umpires to change the ball without applying penalty runs if it's unclear how the ball became damaged. Australia A were not awarded five penalty runs.

Warner named Sydney Thunder Captain, returns to leadership role in Australian cricket after six years

PTI ■ SYDNEY
David Warner was on Wednesday appointed as captain of Big Bash League side Sydney Thunder, returning to a leadership role in Australian cricket six years after being implicated in the ball-tampering scandal on a tour of South Africa.
His lifetime leadership ban was overturned by Cricket Australia last month, paving the way for his captaincy before he bids goodbye to competitive cricket.
He had retired from the international game after Australia's elimination from the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean in June.
Warner, 38, served a one-year ban from the game for his involvement in the Newlands

ball-tampering scandal in 2018 alongside Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft.
Returning to the leadership role is a huge moment for Warner and the significance was not lost on the swashbuckling opener who regaled everyone with his explosive batting.
"Captaining the Thunder again this season means a lot to me. I was part of the team from the start, and now to be back with that 'C' next to my name feels fantastic. I'm looking forward to leading from the



front and sharing my experience with the young talent coming through," Warner said in a statement on Wednesday.
The former Australian player replaced all-rounded Chris Green as Thunder's captain ahead of this year's campaign. The 2016 BBL winners finished at the bottom of the table in the last edition.
Despite CA imposed leadership ban, Warner has captained teams in franchise cricket around the world including Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Delhi Capitals (DC) in the IPL. Warner, who has played 110 T20 Internationals for Australia, has previously led Thunder back in 2011.
Warner became eligible for captaincy after Cricket Australia's Code of Conduct Commission revoked the ban citing it has "achieved its purpose", after the combative cricketer had appeared before the independent panel comprising three members.
BACKS MCSWEENEY TO OPEN AGAINST INDIA: Warner backed Australia A captain Nathan McSweeney to open for Australia in the upcoming five-match Test series against India.
Since Warner's retirement from the format in January, Australia has struggled to find a player good enough to fill the huge void at the top of the order. But Warner has picked McSweeney as the man for the challenge against India, terming him a "complete player."
"I think McSweeney's got the runs on the board, but I think