

After protests, BJP leader withdraws slur on Sharad

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After vociferous protests and severe flak from various quarters, a chastened BJP MLC Sadabhau Khot on Thursday expressed regret and withdrew his scurrilous remarks against NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar.



demanding an unconditional apology from him. Coming down heavily on Khot for his remarks against the NCP (SP) chief, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut dubbed the BJP MLC as a 'poodle of Fadnavis'.

Raut said. Taking serious exception to Khot's statement, State NCP chief Jayant Patil said that the BJP MLC's remarks reflected the 'crooked mentality' of the BJP-MahaYuti leaders.

Ajitdada, as Ajit Pawar is known in the state political circles, called up Khot and gave him his peace of mind. He warned Khot to be careful about the choice of his words and not to indulge in "below-the-belt" criticism against anyone.

RG Kar: Doctors expected more from SC, CBI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal junior doctors fighting for justice in the Kolkata lady doctor rape and murder case betrayed dejection following Supreme Court's refusal on Thursday to transfer the trial out of Bengal as also the regular long gaps between hearings.



is not efficient ... we expected stronger directions from the Courts if there was any doubt of the Agency being pulled from behind from doing its duty."

the prison van. Earlier after going through the status report of investigation submitted by the Central Bureau of Investigation the Supreme Court directed the central agency to carry on its work and submit the seventh status report after four weeks.

Chandrachud said the trial court had sufficient powers to order another investigation upon feeling it necessary after examining the evidence.

Poll manifesto: Shiv Sena (UBT) promises to scrap Dharavi redevelopment, Barsu refinery projects

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a development that has put the BJP-led ruling MahaYuti in a spot of bother, the Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) on Thursday

promised to scrap two major projects -- the Dharavi redevelopment project in Mumbai and Barsu super-refinery project in Ratnagiri district, if the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) come to power in the

state. Making an announcement to this effect at a function organised to release his party's manifesto, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said: "We will scrap the existing tender for the Dharavi redevelopment project

in Mumbai. We will also scrap the super-refinery project at Barsu." The scrapping of Dharavi and Barsu are two of the promises made in the manifesto of the Shiv Shiv Sena(UBT). "We will

give houses to Dharavikars in Dharavi and they would also be able to do business there," Uddhav said.

gents, stabilising prices of essential items, construction of temples of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in each of the 36 districts of the state and scrapping of cluster development of Koliwad and Gaothans.

The release of the manifesto a day after the Congress released its five Assembly poll guarantees to the people of the state, at a joint rally of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

Apart from its welfare measures, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has laid emphasis on the scrapping of Dharavi redevelopment project in Mumbai and Barsu super-refinery project in Ratnagiri district.

National counter-terrorism policy soon: HM

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He said due to the joint efforts of State and Central Governments, violence has been controlled to a great extent in Jammu and Kashmir, Naxal-affected areas and the northeastern states in the last 10 years.

utilises UAPA in all terror cases and as a result so far out of 632 cases registered by it, charge sheet has been filed in 498 cases, conviction in almost 95 per cent. He asked the police chiefs of the States to establish a synergy down to the level of police stations and set up a strong ecosystem against terrorism.

cyber security, narco terror and emerging radical hotspots, which has led to success in preventing many crimes before they happen.

Summer breaks rechristened 'partial court working days': SC

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"People who criticise, don't understand that we don't have holidays on Saturdays and Sundays. There are other assignments, conferences," remarked Justice Gavai.

Shah Rukh Khan gets death threat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI/RAIPUR

Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan has received a death threat, and a demand for Rs 50 lakh, Mumbai police said on Thursday, adding an extortion case has been filed in this connection.

and had filed a police complaint, the official said. The threat to Shah Rukh Khan follows a series of threats issued to fellow actor Salman Khan, allegedly from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang.



Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the caller who threatened Shah Rukh Khan, the official said.

police on reports that the call was made from Chhattisgarh, a Raipur police official said their counterparts from the Maharashtra capital on Thursday served a notice to a man from the city in connection with it.

Environment ministry doubles stubble...

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The ministry notified the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (Imposition, Collection and Utilisation of Environmental Compensation for Stubble Burning) Amendment Rules, 2024, for doubling of environmental compensation imposed against stubble burning.

and Imposition of Penalty) Rules, 2024. It laid down the process of filing complaints with pollution control boards, the Commission for Air Quality Management, and offices of the Union environment ministry.

Two Village Defence men shot...

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The VDG members act as force multipliers in the far-flung areas of the Jammu region assisting ground forces during search operations and maintaining a tight vigil in and around their villages.

Another gangrape in the National Capital

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The victim is a dedicated researcher, facilitator, and community leader, the police disclosed. "She holds a Master's degree in Social Work from Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar, she has actively contributed to various developmental organisations.

year-old Mohammad Shamsul who is a physically handicapped beggar, and also an alcoholic arrived at the scene. Both accused persons conspired to sexually assault the girl, assuming she was 'mentally unsound' and an easy target.

Nearly a month after she was brutally raped, the victim is still undergoing treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi. After her initial statement, the victim could not cooperate further with the investigation or hospital staff due to her fragile mental condition.

get some important details from the victim, the involvement of an unknown autorickshaw driver who allegedly dumped her after the rape and two other persons, one of who had a physical handicap.

were also identified and arrested on November 2 and November 4, respectively," the officer said.

Ruckus continues in J and K Assembly

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The Assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution asking the Centre to work out a Constitutional mechanism for restoring special status to Jammu and Kashmir that was revoked on August 5, 2019.

"Article 370 is history now. The Supreme Court has said that there is nothing like special status. It is as simple as that. This assembly which is a statute under the Reorganisation Act cannot question Parliament and the Supreme Court. There is no question of that," he said.

that he was the speaker of the NC and not of the House. The House was turned into a fish market," Sunil Sharma said.

out from here and killed," he said. "What has happened on August 5, 2019, is now history. Special status cannot be repeated (restored) now," the LoP added.

Abdul Rahim Rather. "The members do not have the right to bring such posters inside the assembly. We wanted to know how the speaker allowed that. Where was the security check? The situation in J-K is such today that if there is any doubt on any member, then he should be searched, he can bring anything inside."

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday rejected the BJP demand for either rolling back the special status resolution passed by the House or stepping down, and said if the party does not have faith in him it should bring a no-confidence motion.

He also rebuked the party for its "cheap sloganeering" and said he cannot tolerate members entering into the Well of the House and stomping over the national emblem placed on the Assembly Secretary's chair.

"They (BJP) are asking the Speaker to take back the resolution. The Speaker does not have the powers. Anything passed by the House can only be undone by the House itself. Speakers cannot do it. The Speaker has limited powers in these issues... he has to preside, count and give decisions based on the facts before him," Rather said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A turning point

While the US-India relationship is poised to deepen in defence and trade, there will also be hurdles in some areas

Donald Trump's return to the presidency brings a new chapter in US foreign policy that holds considerable implications for India. The outgoing Biden administration though not averse to India had reservations about the way domestic politics was shaping in India. But with Trump at the helm of affairs that reservation may quietly go and the Trump administration may go an extra mile to accommodate New Delhi. Trump's victory could reshape strategic alliances, redefine trade relations and impact key regional dynamics that matter to New Delhi. The US-India defence relationship saw considerable progress during Trump's previous tenure. He promoted India as a key strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific to counterbalance China's rising influence, leading to initiatives such as increased military sales and the signing of defence agreements, including BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement). Trump's victory may reinforce these policies, as he is likely to continue focusing on Indo-Pacific security. A renewed push for defence cooperation, joint military exercises, and arms deals could bolster India's military capabilities in the region.



However, not all his policies may be to India's liking. In his earlier tenure, Trump prioritised American industry, his trade policies often led to increased tariffs and renegotiations that impacted India. His 'America First' approach pressured India into trade reforms to reduce the US trade deficit. This time, India might face similar pressures, particularly in the technology and pharmaceutical sectors, but could also see openings to negotiate more favourable terms, especially if Trump seeks to reduce dependency on Chinese goods. There is potential for renewed trade deals, but both sides will likely need to balance protectionism with mutual growth. Trump's previous immigration policies, which included tighter visa regulations, impacted the Indian IT workforce, particularly regarding H-1B visas. If his administration continues down this path, it could further restrict Indian tech talent. However, there may be room for negotiation to secure beneficial terms for skilled Indian workers, especially if Trump seeks closer ties with India on other fronts. Both Trump and India share a common concern over China's assertive actions in Asia. Trump's firm stance against China aligns with India's interests, especially in light of the India-China border standoff. Trump's support for a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' and his scepticism towards Chinese trade practices resonate well with India's own strategic goals. Under Trump, the US could be a more vocal supporter of India's position on regional issues, potentially even playing a bigger role in multilateral forums like the QUAD. Trump's stance on energy independence for the US could be beneficial for India's energy security goals. Trump's victory offers both opportunities and challenges for India. For India, the priority will likely be to build on common ground, particularly in areas where interests align, and work diplomatically to address any points of contention.

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A trader with his camel at the annual Camel Fair at Pushkar, in Ajmer. PTI

Gen Z: Hyper-connected yet shallow relations

In an age where friendships are as easy as a "follow" or a "like," Gen Z finds itself paradoxically more isolated than ever

In a world where friendships are just a tap away, Gen Z is paradoxically more connected and yet more alone than ever. With countless social media networks, endless group chats, and online "friends," you'd think they'd feel fulfilled. But under the endless likes, comments, and selfies, there's a haunting emptiness. I often meet young people who, despite their vast online networks, feel utterly isolated. They are connected to everyone, yet truly close to no one. Take Rhea, a 22-year-old with a picture-perfect online life. Her feed is filled with smiling photos, exotic vacations, and witty captions. But behind this flawless facade lies a young woman scarred by painful experiences. She lost her father at five, faced years of abuse, and carries a deep, invisible wound. Rhea carefully hides this pain, crafting an online persona that feels safe and acceptable. "I keep thinking if I post the right picture, maybe I'll finally feel like I belong," she admitted once, her voice breaking. Yet the emptiness doesn't fade. Her online "friends" see



the bright exterior, but none see the broken girl within. Another story is of Arjun, a young man shaped by a chaotic home and constant content bombardment. Now 20, he spends hours scrolling through his feed, comparing himself to others who appear effortlessly perfect. "Everyone seems so complete," he said, "but I feel like I'm failing." In a crisis, Arjun realises he has no one to truly rely on. His friendships, based on memes and brief exchanges, feel hollow when life gets tough. The endless scrolling only deepens his loneliness, as he sees everyone's best moments while silently suffering through his worst. Rhea and Arjun's stories echo a painful truth for many in Gen Z. Friendships today are often shallow, based on convenience rather than commitment. They form and dissolve easily, leaving young people adrift in a sea of acquaintances who vanish when things get real. This generation's friendships are filtered through screens, built on quick likes and superficial messages. The traditional bonds of trust and time are slipping away, leaving behind connections that feel fleeting and, ultimately, empty.

What's missing here is depth — the kind of friendship that stands the test of hardship, that offers warmth and understanding beyond a screen. For Rhea, there's a wounded inner child who craves a friend who will listen and care beyond the "perfect" image she shows online. For Arjun, there's a desperate need to find a friend who sees his struggles, not just his shared posts. As a society, we need to understand that true friendship isn't about quick exchanges or temporary validation. It's about sharing real moments, both joyful and painful. It's about listening, being there, and caring without conditions. Perhaps, as Felice Buscaglia once said, "It's not enough to have lived." True living means creating joy, sharing love, and holding each other through life's storms. Until Gen Z learns to build friendships beyond the screen, they'll remain in search of bonds that can truly make them feel seen, safe, and understood. (The writer is a psychologist and mindset coach; views are personal)



KAVITA KABIRA

Donald Trump's historic comeback

With a Republican majority in the Senate, Trump re-enters the White House with renewed authority, poised to reshape both American politics and global dynamics



KALYANI SHANKAR



The much-awaited US presidential election ended on November 5, and former President 78-year-old Donald Trump triumphed by winning the White House. This would be his second inning and an extraordinary comeback for Trump. He will be the 47th president of the US. Reactions to Trump's election performance started coming in even before the final votes were counted in the US some leaders, like Israel's, showed enthusiasm as they dealt with an ongoing multi-front war. Others like Ukraine President Zelenskyy expressed anxiety. In contrast, some of America's long-standing European allies expressed anxiety about the election results. It was a nail-biting wait. Vice President Kamala Harris and Donald Trump were virtually tied in the polls, adding to the suspense. The odds that the race comes down to a few swing states are high, further prolonging the anticipation. Trump vowed to remove Democrats from the White House by defeating Kamala Harris. Kamala lost to Trump, just like Hillary Clinton lost in 2016. Clinton was the first woman nominated for president by her party. Trump built

a diverse group of voters, more than any Republican nominee in the last 20 years, even though he ran a campaign that was racially charged and attacked immigrants. Trump's election is not just a national event, but a global one. Its impact will be felt not only in American politics but also in global affairs, particularly in the ongoing Middle East and Ukrainian conflicts. The historic polls have denied a chance for a woman to preside over the White House. Vice President-elect JD Vance has an Indian connection as his wife, Usha, is an Indian. In the last 20 years, the most recent Republican presidential candidate to win the nationwide popular vote was George W Bush in 2004. This historical context is crucial as it underscores the unique nature of the US election process. In 2000, he won the Electoral College and the presidency but lost the popular vote to Al Gore. Donald Trump became president in 2016 by securing more than 270 votes in the Electoral College, a system where each state is assigned a certain number of votes based on its population. Despite losing the popular

vote to Hillary Clinton by more than 2.8 million votes, Trump's victory in key states gave him the necessary Electoral College votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by over 7 million. The final results of the 2020 election hinged on the meticulous absentee ballot procedures in four crucial swing states — Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. These procedures, which can take days to conclude, hold the key to the outcome as they determine the validity of votes cast by mail. It was these battleground states and their absentee ballots that ultimately decided Trump's win. Donald Trump won the presidency in 2016 by getting more than 270 votes in the Electoral College. However, he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by over 2.8 million votes. In 2020, Trump lost the Electoral College and the popular vote to Joe Biden by more than 7 million votes. With Trump's victory, the fears of potential violence have been allayed. The predicted disturbances during the oath-taking ceremony of President Biden in

January 2021 are less likely to occur. The power transition is expected to be peaceful, bringing a sense of reassurance to the nation. Trump was not willing for a smooth transition in 2021 claiming the results were not correct and he was cheated by becoming the victim. Trump's victory can be attributed to the diverse issues he addressed, such as immigration and the economy. In this election, Trump not only secured the White votes but also a diverse group of voters, a testament to the complexity and diversity of the American electorate. Exit polls show that nearly 20 per cent of Trump voters were people of colour. In his first election in 2016, only about 13 per cent of his voters were people of colour. Simultaneously, Republicans have snatched control of the Senate, propelled by wins in West Virginia and Ohio. Democrats previously held a narrow majority in the Senate. It will make Trump's job easy. (The writer is a popular columnist currently travelling the US; views are personal)



ITS IMPACT WILL BE FELT NOT ONLY IN AMERICAN POLITICS BUT ALSO IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ONGOING MIDDLE EAST AND UKRAINIAN CONFLICTS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUMP WINS AGAIN

Madam — It's Trump again in America and the Americans cast their votes for reclaiming the presidency for Trump over Kamala Harris, and probably the voters were colourblind by giving an edge over to Trump to lead again. The last few weeks were certainly a grinding one for Trump and Harris and it was an evenly poised battle till the end. When Biden opted himself to bring in Kamala Harris into the fray, it was appreciable on the part of Harris to put up a brave fight to win over the hearts of voters in a closely contested election in America. The voters' keenness was visible even on election day while the voters continued to queue, adding to the record-breaking 84 million early ballots already submitted. Though the economy, immigration, and the preservation of democracy were among the pressing issues driving the voters to the polls, Trump gained momentum in his campaign after the attempt of assassination and was probably lucky enough to escape for a rebirth as the President again by winning the Presidency. By his victory, the Americans may have to wait for some more time to elect their first female president, which has been eluding the country for a long time. A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

ARTICLE 370 CONTROVERSY

Madam—The present NC-Congress Govt in J and K is posing a grave danger to the parliamentary democracy and the constitution and thus be sacked forthwith for taking up and passing a resolution for restoration of Article 370, which was abrogated by the Parliament of Bharat. As everybody knows the problems it created in the way of integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of Bharat and ultimate elimination of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley with continuing Jihadi Terror till date. The Supreme Court unnecessarily interrupted into the matter and forced premature election in the state,

Canada must take action



Propos to "Cowardly attack" published on November 6. The violence at Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton is reprehensible, and it has once again exposed Canada's inept handling of a sensitive situation. The

Trudeau government has been burning bridges with India after Nijjar's murder last year. On one side, he says that every Canadian has the right to practice his or her faith freely, but sadly, he cannot protect them and provide safety. When the Canadian government can appoint India-designate terrorists like Pannun, Sandeep Singh Sidhu, and Sgt Harinder Sohi in the government or government agencies, then nothing better can be expected out of the Trudeau government. Canada, which otherwise proudly claims to be a peace-loving nation, has to deal strictly with all those elements who are destroying communal harmony and public order. Trudeau cannot allow to spew venom against India in the name of freedom, and he will have to salvage India-Canada ties before it is too late. Bal Govind | Noida

which was limping back to normal steadily under the central rule. Muslims in the valley are still against Bharat and Hindus while expecting everything to be free from the state and are still intolerant against the return of Pandits in the valley. The regiment that supports the restoration of Art. 370 cannot be allowed to run the affairs of the state. The Supreme Court should be told in no uncertain terms not to interrupt J&K affairs any more. Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

Olympiad. India's top sports administrators, including IOA President PT Usha, were at the Paris Olympics earlier in the year to lobby for the country's selection. There have been reports that India would push for the inclusion of indigenous disciplines like yoga, kho kho and kabaddi if the bid is successful. IOC President Thomas Bach had also supported India's case, claiming that there was a "strong case" for India to host the Olympic Games. In the process, India joined nine other countries that have expressed interest in hosting the 2036 Games. The 10 countries that have shown initial interest in hosting the 2036 Games include Mexico (Mexico City, Guadalajara-Monterrey-Tijuana), Indonesia (Nusantara), Turkey (Istanbul), India (Ahmedabad), Poland (Warsaw, Krakow), Egypt (New Administrative Capital), and South Korea (Seoul Incheon). Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

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FIRST COLUMN

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF GOD

Aligning our actions with divine wisdom can only steer us through life's hardships



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We want to live a nice life, but we do not know how. Individually, we all try but come up short except for a few, who seriously take shelter of God. Because God only can make a difference. A big percentage of us, if not all humans, are aware of God but are unable to become serious about making a proper attempt to link with God – the Creator. I will try in this article to get you interested in getting started in this noble act. I am using similes and contrasts – the usual ways to compare. And I have chosen an example of a businessman for this purpose. God is the Creator; we are aware of this fact. A businessman is a prime mover for a business venture. God creates the entire solar system. In the case of a businessman, he starts small and tries to grow it into a vast business empire.

A businessman is intrinsically small, i.e., will always remain small, no matter how big his business empire may become. God is incomprehensibly big and will always be. Our problem is to think of God to be a person like us, just as He incarnates to teach us what is proper for us. Our ignorance is not limited to this fact only but extends to what we know. A businessman falsely assumes that what he knows about a business is sufficient.

What happens? Many businesses fail. What he could have done? He could have prayed to God for guidance. God would have given him instructions through mediums, those around him. And the business would have succeeded, because God is omniscient, i.e., He



knows past, present and future also; God always knows what will work. God is also omnipresent, i.e. present everywhere all the time. A businessman tries to replicate and over-stress himself frequently. God can help if one remains in His shelter. Then, it becomes God's business, literally so. The businessman will get a partner, who owns everything in the first place.

All businesses face challenges of many kinds because this earth's planet is a place of misery. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 8.15) Smooth sailing is out of the question. When God – the Controller gets involved, then, success is guaranteed, no matter what challenges come. The Omnipotent God takes care of them. A businessman is limited to what his 'karmaphalas' (fruits of past 'karmas') ordain. We can understand this by the fact that the extent of success of a business is widely varied. All work hard but destiny rules. With God in the picture, He becomes the 'Karta' (doer). My business survived even in the extreme conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. We even paid bonuses to our employees in this period, because God is involved. Where do many businesses falter?

They don't follow 'dharma' (the highest religious/moral principles). And God is all for upholding dharma. So there is no help from God. You cross 'maryada' (acceptable limits) and face the music. Failed businessmen blame their luck for it. It is true because that was ordained. Bad luck could have been nullified if one had pleased God by staying within the dharma.

The conclusion is to start with accepting that God is one and incomprehensibly big, and we are small parts of Him. We should take shelter from God and remain there. Then, we will be best served in whatever proper, i.e. according to dharma we do. God will guide help, and even micromanage our lives.

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

Trump 2.0: What lies ahead in his second term



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

For ardent supporters, it's a long-anticipated victory, a "Make America Great Again" revival, while critics recoil at the reality of his return



He's back. Brace yourselves: Donald Trump is set to reclaim the White House as the 47th President of the United States. He would become the first president since Grover Cleveland in 1892 to serve two terms that were not consecutive. Love him or loathe him, this moment is nothing short of historic. For his supporters, it's a long-awaited reckoning; for his critics, it's a nightmare realised. Hollywood elites—George Clooney, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Oprah Winfrey among them—are likely stewing in disbelief, unable to reconcile with the stark message that America is prepared to usher in another Trump era. Meanwhile, personalities like Megyn Kelly and Tucker Carlson bask in the triumph of what they perceive as the return of their "Messiah," the man who vowed to Make America Great Again. This is democracy in action, like it or not. In his first victory speech, Trump wasted no time hammering home his agenda: "I will not let my supporters down," he declared. "America's future will be bigger, better, bolder, richer, safer, and stronger than it has ever been." Bold words, indeed. Yet the question hangs—what will the cost of 'greatness' be in a nation this divided? This time, he returns stronger, fortified by allies like Elon Musk, while other titans—Jeff Bezos, for one—strive to remain neutral.

Yet the fallout is profound. Influential voices such as Robert Kagan, a staunch advocate of liberal internationalism and husband of the American diplomat Victoria Nuland, have resigned, signalling that the ground is shifting. For mainstream media—outlets like The New York Times, NBC, and CNN—the election results are a rebuke they cannot ignore. These media powerhouses, which for years wielded narratives against Trump, now face a public that feels increasingly alienated from the polished, elitist stories they've been fed. The trust gap widens as citizens see the chasm



THIS IS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION, LIKE IT OR NOT. IN HIS FIRST VICTORY SPEECH, TRUMP WASTED NO TIME HAMMERING HOME HIS AGENDA: "I WILL NOT LET MY SUPPORTERS DOWN," HE DECLARED

between elite narratives and their lived realities. Trump's second term will likely turn a blind eye to the domestic affairs of other nations, signalling potential cuts in funding to so-called civil society organisations and other international interests maintained by the US State Department and its clandestine bodies. Immigration policy, too, could see a harsher edge, as tensions over border security and the influx of immigrants under Biden intensify. This stricter stance could stoke the fires of domestic unrest as Americans grapple with yet another transformation of national priorities. The war in Ukraine may come to an end sooner rather than later, potentially through a bitter compromise with Russia, as many countries in Europe may not align with Trump as they did under the Biden administration.

However, if Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has a different understanding of the situation, it may be time for him to seriously consider pursuing the Chinese peace proposal. Meanwhile, the conflict in West Asia is likely to pause, but tensions could rise, possibly leading to new forms of attacks on Iran. The relationship between Iran and the Trump administration will be crucial in determining the future scenario in West Asia, as decisions made in this context could significantly alter the region's geopolitical dynamics. One should not forget that it was during Trump's first administration that Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian military officer who served in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, was assassinated in Baghdad, Iraq, using a reaper drone (Predator B).

Soleimani was a key enabler of Iranian actions, and even now, he is widely regarded as a major influence in Iran and its alliances. On the home front, the controversial Project 2025 blueprint stands as a bold bid to remodel US government institutions in line with a nationalist, ultra-conservative vision. Critics warn of an authoritarian slide. Trump himself claimed he had "no hand in the policy," even as his campaign speeches echoed its themes. Dismantling regulatory agencies, installing ideologically driven personnel, and consolidating executive power—such moves could test the very checks and balances that underpin the American system.

The potential cost? A dramatic weakening of civil liberties, environmental protections, and democratic norms, is likely to spark deep political divisions and civil unrest. If realised, this vision would also redefine America's role on the global stage. The "America First" doctrine, which shaped Trump's prior foreign policy, may once again destabilise multilateral efforts on urgent issues like climate change, nuclear disarmament, and trade. Trump's rhetoric could erode US alliances, and as Washington retreats from the mantle of democracy promotion, a vacuum forms—one that China, no doubt, is eager to fill. Worth noting is Trump's first note during his visit to the CIA headquarters, right after becoming the 45th president. Mainstream narratives often painted him as dismissive of the intelligence apparatus, but Trump's note challenged that view, acknowledging the agency's

importance. Now, as political winds shift, Trump is rumoured to be eyeing Kash Patel, an Indian-American with roots in counterterrorism and intelligence reform, as his new CIA head. Patel's controversial stance on challenging the so-called "deep state" marks a radical shift in US intelligence policy—likely a step towards Trump's broader agenda of power consolidation within the federal government.

Patel, known for his book Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy, is expected to tackle intelligence reform head-on, aligning with Trump's vision of shaking up entrenched power structures. A second Trump administration would also stoke tensions with China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, where US-China rivalry is reaching new heights. Trump's hawkish stance on Taiwan and the South China Sea could signal increased military presence, arms deals, and strengthened alliances with Japan, South Korea and India.

The administration is likely to challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative and impose sanctions on Chinese firms, aiming to limit Beijing's influence. Smaller nations in the region, meanwhile, could find themselves stuck in a high-stakes dilemma—aligning with the US risks Beijing's wrath while leaning towards China risks Washington's ire. With Trump redefining US foreign policy, these nations may face an impossible choice in a tightening geopolitical vice.

(The writer is a journalist and author; Views are personal)

PM-Vidyalaxmi: A yet another 'Modi Kee Guarantee' for learners

The Government has initiated this financial aid programme to harness the potential of the youth from the weaker sections

India has the largest number of millennials and Gen Zs in the world. This population constitutes a critical mass for increasing GER in higher education from the current 28 per cent to 50 per cent by 2035 as envisaged in NEP-2020. Moreover, India's working population in the age bracket of 15-64 is nearly 68 per cent. The current demographic dividend will not be available for a longer period as the youth population will turn old and thus will become non-productive. Precisely for this reason, PM Modi called the current time window in the lifespan of Bharat the 'Amrit Kaal' and has given a clarion call for making it 'Viksit' by 2047 through self-reliant measures. Skilled youth are in high



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

demand the world over and this trend will always remain as skilling, upskilling and reskilling will always be required to cope with ever-evolving job profiles in the workplace. However, owing to the economic transformation that the nation has witnessed over the last decade, living standards have greatly improved leading to an enhanced cost of living. And, education is no exception.

The Central Government has taken several initiatives to ensure hassle-free access to quality higher education, especially regarding NEP-2020 implementation. These include multidisciplinary and learning outcome-based curriculum for holistic learning; innovative pedagogy (experiential learning, internship, field immersion, etc); evaluation to test the learning outcomes; Academic Bank of Credits; Multiple Entry-Exit; Dual degree, joint degree and twin degree programmes; emphasis on Indian Knowledge System and Universal Human Values, etc. The latest edition to the long list is the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme to provide collateral-free, guarantor-free financial loans to needy meritorious stu-

dents covering all categories to ease them from financial constraints for pursuing quality higher education. Approved by the Cabinet on November 5, 2024, as a Deepawali Gift to the nation, PM-Vidyalaxmi is a mission mode, simple, transparent, student-friendly and fully digital mechanism to facilitate easy access to loans to meritorious students admitted in, to begin with, top 860 quality higher education institutions. This initiative provides a single-window integrated platform for students seeking educational loans to apply for it and to track their applications. PM Vidyalaxmi will add to the scope and reach of earlier initiatives of the current government for maximising access to quality higher education for socially deprived sec-



tions of society. Under this scheme, students will be eligible to obtain collateral-free, guarantor-free loans from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses to be incurred for pursuing academic programs. Under PM Vidyalaxmi, the government will also provide a 75 per cent credit guarantee of outstanding default for loan amounts up to? 7.5 lakhs to support banks to

expand coverage. The scheme will also provide for 3 per cent interest subvention on loans up to Rs 10 lakh during the moratorium period for those students having an annual family income of Rs 8.00 lakhs and are not covered under any government scholarship of interest subvention. This will be in addition to full interest subvention already offered to students with up to Rs 4.5 lakhs annual family income. Interest subvention will be paid through E-vouchers and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallets. An outlay of Rs 3,600 Crore has been made available for the period from 2024-25 to 2030-31, and 7 lakh fresh students are expected to get the benefit of this interest subvention during the above timeslot. PM-Vidyalaxmi will supple-

ment the two components of the scheme of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan (PM-USP), namely, the Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme (CGFS) for education loans, already offered by the Ministry of Education. Under the PM-USP-CSIS, students pursuing technical/professional courses from approved institutions. PM Vidyalaxmi, in a nutshell, is an entirely new scheme launched for empowering youth, especially of the middle class, with necessary financial support for pursuing the education of their choice. The scheme will operate in tandem with PM-USP to provide financial support to all deserving students to pursue quality higher education and techni-

cal/professional education in select quality Higher Education Institutions in India. The newly launched scheme, apart from making quality higher education available to meritorious students, will ease the impounding stress of students opting for loans and will enable them to fully concentrate on learning. Kudos to PM Narendra Modi and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for launching a new learner-centric scheme for spearheading the implementation of NEP-2020. PM Vidyalaxmi is in fact, a confluence of Vidya, the Goddess of Knowledge, and Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth! (The writer is Vice Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; views are personal)

European agency says this will likely be hottest year on record — again

AP CHICAGO For the second year in a row, Earth will almost certainly be the hottest it's ever been.

record-breaking temperatures without the constant increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere driving global warming.

normal will be about a decade from now," said Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist with the nonprofit Berkeley Earth.

thus avoid continued warming. Buontempo pointed out that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) threshold of warming for a single year is different than the goal adopted in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

degrees Fahrenheit) or 1.2 degrees (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit). That's of concern because the U.N. says the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals of the world's nations still aren't nearly ambitious enough to keep the 1.5 degree Celsius target on track.

Going over that number in 2024 doesn't mean the overall trend line of global warming has, but "in the absence of concerted action, it soon will," said University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann.

Copernicus, but emphasized that people should remember climate is a global issue beyond their local experiences with changing weather.

weather stations around the world. He said that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) benchmark this year is "psychologically important" as nations make decisions internally and approach negotiations at the annual U.N. climate change summit Nov. 11-22 in Azerbaijan.

Australia plans social media ban for children under 16

AP MELBOURNE The Australian government announced on Thursday what it described as world-leading legislation that would institute an age limit of 16 years for children to start using social media, and hold platforms responsible for ensuring compliance.

The proposal comes as governments around the world are wrestling with how to supervise young people's use of technologies like smartphones and social media.

She added that stronger tools in app stores and operating systems for parents to control what apps their children can use would be a "simple and effective solution."

risks effectively." Jackie Hallan, a director at the youth mental health service ReachOut, opposed the ban.

Albanese said there would be exclusions and exemptions in circumstances such as a need to continue access to educational services.

SCBA seeks comprehensive immigration reform in US

PTI WASHINGTON Observing that this election cycle was a divisive one, filled with uncertainty and anxiety about the future of the nation and democracy, the South Asian Bar Association (SCBA) has pushed for a comprehensive immigration reform, including improving the H-1B programme.

America and Mona Shah, its executive director, said. SABA North America said it is committed to working with president-elect Donald Trump and his administration to ensure that the voices of its members are heard on a broad range of policy issues impacting the South Asian community, from racial justice and immigration to religious discrimination, reproductive rights, and the rule of law.

December 2023 when it submitted its comments to USCIS's proposal for improving the H-1B programme and registration process under the Biden-Harris Administration.



In this photo provided by Ukraine's 24th Mechanised Brigade press service, servicemen of the 24th Mechanised Brigade improve their tactical skills at the training field in Donetsk region, Ukraine.

Large airstrikes hit Beirut suburbs as Israel expands Gaza operations

AP BEIRUT Several large airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs early Thursday, including one on a site adjacent to Lebanon's only international airport.

Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, in solidarity with the Hamas militant group in the Gaza Strip. Since the conflict erupted, more than 3,000 people have been killed and some 13,600 wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reported.

by the U.S. government earlier this year. Deliveries will begin in 2031, and there's an option for the purchase of an additional 25 aircraft.

news network says the Israeli military has extended the order shutting down its bureau in the occupied West Bank.

Indian consulate in Canada cancels consular camps due over security issues

PTI TORONTO The Consulate General of India in Toronto on Thursday said it is cancelling some of its scheduled consular camps after the Canadian security authorities conveyed their inability to provide minimum security protection to its organisers.

Brampton and the Indian Consulate. "In view of the security agencies conveying their inability to provide minimum security protection to the community camp organisers, the Consulate has decided to cancel some of the scheduled consular camps," the Consulate General of India said in a post on X.

ners in support of Khalistan. The protesters clashed with people and disrupted the consular event. The incident was condemned by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who said every Canadian has the right to practise their faith freely and safely.

Canada. The relations between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in Khalistan extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing.

Scholz fires his finance minister, coalition collapses

AP BERLIN Germany's centre-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced Wednesday he was firing Finance Minister Christian Lindner, signalling the collapse of the ruling three-party coalition that relied on Lindner's pro-business party.

to prevent damage to our country. We need an effective government that has the strength to make the necessary decisions for our country," Scholz said.

new economic awakening in our country. He has played down the economic concerns of the citizens.

He accused Lindner of publicly calling for a fundamentally different economic policy, including what Scholz said would be tax cuts worth billions for a few top earners while at the same time cutting pensions for all pensioners.

Canada orders TikTok's business to be dissolved, won't block app

AP TORONTO Canada announced Wednesday it is ordering the dissolution of TikTok's Canadian business after a national security review of the Chinese company behind the social media app but said it won't block access.

Beijing could use it to collect data on Western users or push pro-China narratives and misinformation. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020.

LOST & FOUND

My name is Muhib Ahmed S/o Mohd Hanif resident of Muradnagar, I have got my passport number F5489202 from the Passport Office Ghaziabad.

CORRIGENDUM NO. 01 & 02 AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO. : CE/CON/2024/OCT/03,

Dated : 21-10-2024 Corrigendum-01 & 02 for Tender No. CE-CON-DK-PW-2024-05 has been published. For details please visit www.ireps.gov.in.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Sh. Sanjay S/o Late Sh. Babbar Singh owner of Residential house no. 121 MG's Colony 10 no. K/2/47/18 area measuring 100 sq. yards, having covered area 900 sq. ft. comprising of Khewal/Khalla no.714/661, Khatoli no. 304 Rikhsra no.567, Situated in the Residential Colony known as Village: Khansar, Tehsil: Sadipur District: Gurgaon Haryana through Registered Reinvestment Deed Dated 16.09.2024 executed by (1) Sh. Deshpak, (2) Smt. Saroj, (3) Smt. Manjua & (4) Smt. Geeta in favour of Sh. Sanjay S/o Late Sh. Babbar Singh vide Reg. no.8357, at SR Gurgaon the above mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Federal Financial Services Limited. If any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned: Adv. Vishal Mehra, E-713, Park Road Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Suresh Kumar S/o Suraj Pal and his wife Saroj H/o No 80 Block 20, JJ Colony Dakshinpur, New Delhi- 62 got fed up with the wrong behavior of their Son Rakesh and Daughter-in-law Madhu Mehraula and dispossessed all their movable and immovable property and severed the relationship. My client will not be responsible for any of their dealings. S.P Pandey (Adv)



I, SHELLY, SHELLY BANSAL, SHAILY BANSAL, W/O JALAJ GUPTA, D/O SANDEEP KUMAR BANSAL, R/O B-347, THIRD FLOOR, STREET NO 04, MAJLIS PARK, ADARSH NAGAR, DELHI-110033 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHAILY GUPTA FOR ALL PURPOSES. PD(898)/C I, RAJESH KUMAR, S/O RAMJI LAL, R/O D- 1830/31, JAHANGIRPURI DELHI 33. I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM RAJESH BANSIWAL TO RAJESH KUMAR, FOR ALL PURPOSES. PD(899)/C

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client Sh. Gaurav Kumar, R/o.24/105, Durga Road, Near Metro Station, Sector 10, Gurgaon, Haryana through Registered Reinvestment Deed Dated 16.09.2024 executed by (1) Sh. Deshpak, (2) Smt. Saroj, (3) Smt. Manjua & (4) Smt. Geeta in favour of Sh. Sanjay S/o Late Sh. Babbar Singh vide Reg. no.8357, at SR Gurgaon the above mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Federal Financial Services Limited. If any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned: Adv. Vishal Mehra, E-713, Park Road Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of RAVI SINGHAL who is purchasing the HOUSE NO. R-7/119, AREA MEASURING 200 SQ. YDS., SECTOR-7, RESIDENTIAL COLONY, KNOWN AS RAJ NAGAR, TEHSIL AND DISTRICT-GHAZIABAD U.P. FROM SARVENDRA KUMAR TYAGI who had purchased the same by virtue of Sale Deed dated 13.02.2023 bearing Document no.1388, Book no.1, Volume no.9744, and pages 293-318, Dated 13.02.2023 from Mr. Amit Tyagi, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim (right/title)/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. Lucern Legal LLP Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-40046316.

Supreme Court orders liquidation of grounded Jet Airways' assets



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday exercised its extraordinary constitutional powers and ordered the liquidation of grounded air carrier Jet Airways' assets. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra set aside the National

Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) decision upholding the resolution plan of Jet Airways, which approved the transfer of its ownership to Jalan Kalrock Consortium (JKC). Pronouncing the judgement for the bench, Justice Pardiwala allowed the plea of the State Bank of India (SBI) and other creditors against the NCLAT decision that

upheld the resolution plan of Jet Airways in favour of JKC. It said the liquidation of the air carrier was in the interest of creditors, workers and other stakeholders. The bench came down on the NCLAT, which the SC held disregarded the court's 2023 ruling. "We have no doubt that the NCLAT acted contrary to settled legal principles...

NCLAT incorrectly interpreted our order," the court noted in the judgment. The fundamental concern is not only to do substantial justice but also to bring speedy disposal of dispute, it further noted.

The court used its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution which gives it the power to make orders and decrees to ensure complete justice in any matter or cause pending before it.

The NCLAT on March 12 upheld the resolution plan of the grounded air carrier and approved the transfer of its ownership to JKC. The SBI, Punjab National Bank (PNB) and JC Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited had challenged the NCLAT verdict.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) N Venkataraman appeared for the SBI—the lead lender of Jet Airways, while Senior Advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Gopal Sankaranarayanan represented the Successful Resolution Applicant (SRA) Jalan Kalrock Consortium (JKC). In the past, Jet was the second largest carrier in India.

Markets snap rally ahead of Fed interest rate decision



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Thursday after a two-day rally as investors remained on the sidelines ahead of the US Federal Reserve interest rate decision and unabated foreign fund outflows. The BSE Sensex tanked 836.34 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,541.79. During the day, it slumped 958.79 points or 1.19 per cent to 79,419.34. The NSE Nifty dropped 284.70 points or 1.16 per cent to finish at 24,199.35. From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, JSW Steel, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, IndusInd Bank and ICICI Bank were the major losers.

State Bank of India emerged as the only gainer from the pack. Meanwhile, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,445.59 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher while Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. Wall Street ended significantly higher on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.33 per cent to USD 74.67 a barrel. The BSE benchmark jumped 901.50 points or 1.13 per cent to settle at 80,378.13 on Wednesday. The Nifty soared 270.75 points or 1.12 per cent to 24,484.05.

Q3 rural consumption volume outgrows urban markets by two times: NielsenIQ report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Urban and rural markets have shown a sequential recovery in consumer demand and rural areas continue to surpass urban areas in volume growth across most regions of India, according to a report from data analytics firm NielsenIQ. According to the latest NielsenIQ's FMCG Quarterly snapshot, the Indian Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry witnessed a 5.7 per cent value-based growth and 4.1 per cent volume growth on a 1.5 per cent price growth in the July-September quarter. "Urban consumption growth in Q3 24 was 2.8 per cent, while rural growth increased to 6 per cent from 5.2 per cent in the previous quarter, 2X faster growth than urban," the report said. Small and medium FMCG companies had a rebound after facing a decline in some quarters. They had faster growth helped by the food segment in comparison to large FMCG giants in terms of value and volume. In the September quarter results leading FMCG companies including HUL, Nestle, Dabur, and Tata Consumer Products have reported a softness in the demand from the

urban market, mainly on account of high food inflation. According to industry observers, the urban market contributes to around 62 to 65 per cent of FMCG sales and the rest is from the rural market, which is largely dominated by food products and small offerings. Moreover, in the September quarter, the FMCG industry also had "slight improvement" on the volume front sequentially, the report said. "Food consumption growth increased to 3.4 per cent in Q3'24 compared to 2.1 per cent in Q2'24," it said. This uptick in volume growth is largely attributed to staple categories such as edible oils, packaged atta, and spices despite price growth. "In Home & Personal Care (HPC) categories, the consumption growth stabilised at 6 per cent in Q3' compared to Q2'23 at 6.7 per cent," it added. This stabilisation in consumer demand for HPC categories, which includes categories such as skin cleansers, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel, toothpaste, laundry detergents etc, was observed in both urban and rural markets. Small manufacturers recovered from the decline of the last three quarters and grew faster than big companies, helped by a sharp recovery in volume growth.

HDFC raises lending rate on select maturity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank on Thursday raised the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) by 5 basis points (0.05 percentage points) on select maturity. The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans like auto and personal, has been retained at 9.45 per cent, according to the bank website. The overnight MCLR has risen to 9.15 per cent from 9.10 per cent, while the one-month rate has been increased by 5 basis points to 9.20 per cent. Rates on other buckets have been left unchanged.

Vedanta, Oil India bag critical mineral blocks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta Group has won four blocks while state-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) bagged one in the fourth round of critical mineral blocks auction, the government said on Thursday. While Vedanta bagged vanadium and graphite mine in Arunachal Pradesh, cobalt, manganese and iron (polymetal) mine in Karnataka, Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) -- a subsidiary of Vedanta -- won tungsten and associated minerals block in Andhra Pradesh and a tungsten mine in Tamil Nadu. Oil India Ltd has bagged graphite and vanadium block in Arunachal Pradesh, the government said. The Vedanta Ltd had earlier bagged two critical mineral blocks in Karnataka and Bihar in the second and third



auction rounds. Mamco Mining Pvt Ltd and Orissa Metaliks Pvt Ltd are the other two companies that have bagged blocks in this round of auction. "The Ministry of Mines has successfully concluded the auction of eight critical mineral blocks, launched under tranche IV of the auction of critical and strategic mineral blocks," an official statement said. Following the issuance of the

Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for 21 mineral blocks on June 24, the auction attracted strong interest from industry stakeholders. "After the evaluation of technical bids, 10 mineral blocks advanced to the second round of e-auction, which included three first attempt blocks and seven second attempt blocks," the mines ministry said. These blocks contain deposits of strategic minerals such as

phosphorite, graphite, and vanadium, essential for high-tech and green energy applications. Auction process for the eight blocks have successfully concluded and for the remaining two blocks the process will be completed by December 2. With the auction of these critical mineral blocks, the total number of successfully auctioned critical and strategic mineral blocks has reached 22. The fourth round of auction has marked a beginning for the Northeast into India's mineral auction landscape, with four maiden blocks successfully auctioned. Significantly, this tranche features the first successful auction of a tungsten and two cobalt blocks. These minerals are essential for high-tech, defence, and energy storage applications.

JK Lakshmi Cement reports revenue drop

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JK Lakshmi Cement has reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 19.24 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2024 on account of drop in sales realisation. The company had posted a profit of Rs 95.87 crore in the July-September period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd (JKCL), a flagship company of JK Organisation. Its revenue from operations was down 2.16 per cent at Rs 1,234.29 crore in the September quarter. It was at Rs 1,574.53 crore in the year-ago period.



Total expenses of JKCL were at Rs 1,263.01 crore, down 1.27 per cent in the September quarter of FY25. JKCL's total income, which includes other income, was also down 2.17 per cent to Rs 1,242.67 crore. During the quarter, JKCL's sales volume declined 1.40 per cent to 18.66 lakh tonnes. "The profitability of the company for the quarter has been impacted due to a sharp drop in sales realisation in our primary markets," Vinita Singhania, chairperson &

managing director said. The cement industry has witnessed a decline in sales realisation due to falling cement prices on an year-on-year basis. The company, however, remained bullish in its outlook for the sector based on the government's spending on infrastructure projects. "Given government's focus on infrastructure development and higher budgetary allocation and various other Initiatives for housing and road development, the outlook for the cement sector is positive in the coming year," it said. Shares of JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd on Thursday were trading at Rs 772 per scrip on BSE.

Nissan cuts jobs as sales tank

AP ■ TOKYO

Nissan reported Thursday a loss for the latest fiscal quarter as its vehicle sales sank while costs and inventory ballooned, prompting the Japanese automaker to slash 9,000 jobs. Chief Executive Makoto Uchida said he was taking a 50 per cent pay cut to take responsibility for the dismal results, while promising that a turnaround was coming. Nissan Motor Corp announced a global workforce reduction of 9,000 people, or about 6 per cent of its more than 1,33,000 employees, as well as a plan to slash global production capacity by 20 per cent. Uchida declined to say which regions will be affected by the cuts or give specifics. For the latest quarter through September, Nissan racked up a 9.3 billion Yen (USD 60 million) loss, a reversal from the 190.7 billion Yen profit recorded the same quarter a



year ago. Quarterly sales fell to 2.9 trillion Yen (USD 19 billion) from 3.1 trillion Yen. Uchida acknowledged Nissan didn't respond quickly or flexibly enough to global changes, including market tastes and soaring raw material costs. "I take this situation very seriously," he told reporters. "Nissan will restructure its

business to become leaner and more resilient." Nissan models did not sell well in the US, one of the most lucrative auto markets in the world that's recently been dominated by Ford, Toyota and Tesla. All aspects of Nissan's operations and plans will be under review, Uchida said. Nissan, based in the port city of Yokohama, reported fiscal first half sales revenue of 5.98 trillion Yen (USD 39 billion), edging down 1 per cent from the more than 6 trillion Yen the same period last year. Its April to September profit totaled 19.2 billion Yen (USD 124 million), declining sharply from the 296.2 billion Yen earned over the six months last year. Nissan lowered its sales revenue forecast for the fiscal year through March 2025 to 12.7 trillion Yen (USD 82 billion) from an earlier projection for 14 trillion Yen (USD 91 billion).

It did not give a net profit forecast, citing uncertainty. It promised to give a profit forecast as soon as possible. Earlier, Nissan was forecasting an annual profit of 300 billion Yen (USD 1.9 billion). The company misread the trend on hybrid and electric vehicles, Uchida further added. "We did start to understand this trend towards the end of last fiscal year," he said, adding that making some changes to core models didn't go as smoothly as planned. Nissan now expects to sell 3.4 million vehicles around the world in the fiscal year ending in March 2025, down from an earlier projected 3.65 million vehicles. The new number is about the same that Nissan sold last fiscal year. Nissan said it's appointing a chief performance officer tasked with turnaround decision-making, who will begin his job next month.

ED searches premises of Amazon, Flipkart vendors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Thursday conducted searches against some of the "main vendors" operating on platforms of e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart as part of a foreign investment "violation" investigation, official sources said. A total of 19 premises of these "preferred" vendors located in Delhi, Gurugram and Panchkula (Haryana), Hyderabad (Telangana) and Bengaluru (Karnataka) were covered as part of the action, the sources said. It is learnt that the ED inspected documents and took copies of some from the premises of about six such vendors who were not named. The sources said a probe has been initiated by the federal agency under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) after it received several complaints against the



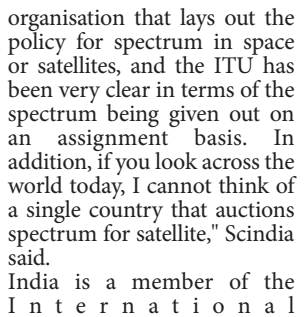
two large e-commerce companies where it is alleged that they were "violating India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules by directly or indirectly influencing the sale price of goods or services and not providing level playing field for all the vendors". There was no immediate response from the two e-commerce companies. Meanwhile, the

Competition Commission of India (CCI) had also issued "penalty notices" to Amazon and Flipkart, and their "preferred" sellers, for "engaging" in anti-competitive practices that have adversely affected small traders and 'kirana' (grocery) stores. The CAIT and mainline mobile retailers' association AIMRA had also petitioned the CCI sometime back seeking immediate suspension of operations of Flipkart and Amazon as they alleged that the companies engaged in predatory pricing and were burning cash to offer heavy discounts on products. These practices, in turn, are creating a grey market of mobile phones, causing losses to the exchequer "as players in the grey market evade taxes", they had said. The CCI is already looking into the practices of e-commerce companies.

Scindia rules out spectrum auction pitch by Ambani, Mittal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has said the spectrum for satellite broadband will be allocated and not auctioned as sought by Indian billionaires Mukesh Ambani and Sunil Mittal. The statement is being seen as a potential win for Elon Musk's Starlink. The satellite broadband spectrum will however be not given free and sector regulator TRAI will fix a price for the resource, he told PTI in a text and video interview. "Every country has to follow the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which is the



organisation that lays out the policy for spectrum in space or satellites, and the ITU has been very clear in terms of the spectrum being given out on an assignment basis. In addition, if you look across the world today, I cannot think of a single country that auctions spectrum for satellite," Scindia said. India is a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN agency for digital technology. Musk's Starlink and global peers like Amazon's Project Kuiper back an administrative allocation. While Ambani's Reliance Jio has been vocal

about the need to allocate such spectrum through an auction to provide a level playing field to legacy operators who buy airwaves and set up infrastructure like telecom towers. Mittal, last month at an industry event, where Prime

Minister Narendra Modi was also present, articulated the need to use bidding for such allocation. Jio and Bharti Airtel - India's largest and second-largest operators, respectively - feel that giving away the satellite broadband airwaves at a pre-decided price by the government will create an uneven playing field since they had to compete in an auction to get spectrum for their terrestrial wireless phone networks. The two are vying for a piece of the satellite broadband segment as well. Musk-led Starlink is demanding administrative

allotment of licences in line with the global trend as it looks to tap into the world's fastest-growing mobile telephony and internet market. Scindia said the Telecom Act of 2023 passed in December has put the matter in 'Schedule 1', which means that the Satcom spectrum will be allocated administratively. Such an allocation will be at a government-decided price, and allow foreign firms like Starlink to offer voice and data services. If the spectrum were to be auctioned, it would have made it costlier for Starlink to roll out services. Starlink has applied for a

licence to start operations in the country. Scindia, however, offered no clues on the fate of his application. The minister said that the regulatory process is very clear and transparent. The new Telecom Act has been passed, and the Satellite spectrum is very clearly a part of that in schedule one, he pointed out. "We are open to looking at the application of any entity that wants to invest in India at this point in time. I think only one or two licenses have been given out. And whoever else wants to participate, India is surely going to welcome that," the minister said.

INBRIEF

VIT-AP UNIVERSITY HOSTS IHEF 2024
AMRAVATI: VIT-AP University today hosted its first-ever International Higher Education Fair (IHEF) 2024, bringing together prestigious educational institutions from abroad to showcase graduate, research, and professional study programs.

POWERGRID POSTS PAT
Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has announced the Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30 th September 2024. At the end of Q2FY25, the total transmission assets of POWERGRID and its subsidiaries stood at 1,78,195 ckm of transmission lines, 279 substations strategically placed across the country.



THE RAMAYANA

A CONTEMPORARY REVIVAL

Dushyanth Sridhar's Ramayanam is a contemporary translation that makes the ancient epic accessible to modern readers, preserving its themes of love, duty, and human relationships

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

My first-ever foreign tour was to Indonesia in 2011 as an Indian delegate to attend an international workshop on the Tsunami Early Warning System. I was put up at Hotel Borobudur in Jakarta by the hosts, the UNDP.

While the workshop was from 8 am to 6 pm (with an hour-long lunch break and two high-tea sessions each of 15 minutes' duration), the delegates were free after the day's engagements. What caught my attention was the Ramayana Ballet staged daily in the ballroom of the hotel. Since admission was restricted by tickets, I had to collect the details from the hotel staff about the show.

A hotel staff member told me that Ramayana Ballet was a daily event not only in this star hotel but in most of the islands in the archipelago. "The story is the same as that played out in India. Maybe the dance and music associated with the Ramayana are different from what they are in your country," he said.

Lord Anjaneya (Hanuman) was the mascot of the 1997 edition of the South East Asian Games held in Jakarta. This shows the kind of reverence with which the commander of the Monkey Brigade is held in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world.

Nicholaz Kazanas, director, OMILOS Meleton Cultural Institute, Greece, in his 2011 lecture held at Madras University, said that the Rig Veda is the oldest published literature of science and culture in the world and the Ramayana and Mahabharata are not mere epics but chronicles of events.

We Indians are still to accord the due status to these works. But for Ramanand Sagar and B. R. Chopra, who took the initiatives in making television series about the Ramayana and Mahabharata

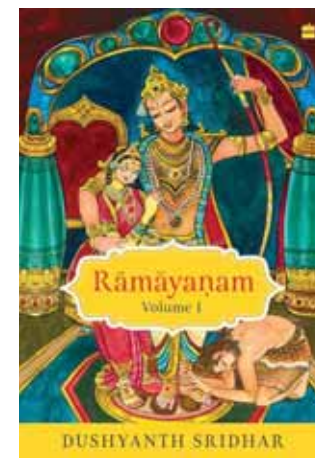


which were telecast through Doordarshan, these epics would have been forgotten long ago. I can still remember the cynicism on the faces of the Left Liberals when these works were aired by Doordarshan. Our contempt for our own culture and tradition inspired Wendy Doniger, the modern-day Lucille Ball (of I Love Lucy fame), to write *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. She had to meekly surrender and withdraw the book following a suit filed by Dinanath Batra under Section 295A of the IPC. The lady had to withdraw the book lest she would have to undergo imprisonment and pay a hefty

amount for offending sentiments of religious communities. The Sanatanis do not react to the insults meted out to them by self-styled intellectuals who publish all kinds of nonsense against the culture, literature, and great epics of India. Many "scholars" have tried to tarnish Indian culture. The name that comes to mind is that of A. K. Ramanujan, who authored an essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas; Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation". Ramanujan, known as a poet and scholar of Indian literature and linguistics, portrayed Lord Rama and Sita as siblings and

this upset the believers. Batra himself approached the court and dragged the essay by Ramanujan to the court demanding it be withdrawn from the undergraduate curricula of Delhi University, and the academic council removed the same from the syllabus. The move by the University antagonised the Left intellectuals who described Batra's action as Fascist. It is in this background that *Dushyanth Sridhar*, a young Vedic scholar, chose to translate the Ramayanam by Valmiki into English. *Sridhar* is familiar to people in South India as a leading Harikatha artist (an art

form of telling stories from the Puranas and that too with eloquence). The dying art of Harikatha Kalakshepam got a new lease of life thanks to scholars like Sridhar. His latest work *Ramayanam Translation* proves that his achievements in the field of Vedic literature are not a flash in the pan and Sridhar is here to stay for many decades. Volume one of the book has Ayodhyakhanda (Ayodhya Canto) and concludes with Lord Rama mourning the passing of his father, King Dasaratha. The information about Dasaratha's death was conveyed to him by Bharata and his entourage who went to the



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forest pleading with Rama to return to Ayodhya and take over the reins of the kingdom. The remaining volumes are expected shortly, and it is worth waiting to read how *Sridhar* has portrayed Lord Anjaneya and other characters. What is unique about the Ramayana is the theme Mata, Pita, Guru, Deivam (Mother, Father, Teacher and God) – a statement that makes it unambiguously clear that it is through the first three named that one is led to spirituality and truth, the two terms that encompass God. The Indian system of knowledge makes it clear that the Guru is as

important as mother and father. For Rama, Sage Vasishtha was the God incarnation because he had his education under him. A student organisation in Kerala has put flex boards in all college campuses and schools stating that "Teachers are not Gods. Students are not slaves!" This is what information technology and artificial intelligence of the modern day propagate.

Sridhar, having directed a Sanskrit movie *Sakuntalam*, displays his prowess in movie making in the book. The intercuts between what happened after Rama's return to Ayodhya from the Vana Vasa and spurning his royal consort in the jungles as the beginning of the story is intriguing. But more than that, what stands out is Dasaratha's consultation with other Kings about who should be the future emperor of Ayodhya. It is not a namesake discussion but a serious exchange of views. The Kings wanted Rama to be coronated as the next emperor, and they had their own reasons for their stance. It is not like the meetings of the working committees and political affairs committees summoned to sign on the dotted line choosing the son/daughter handpicked by the family patriarch as his heir apparent.

We learn new and newer things each time we read the Ramayana. *Sridhar's* mission is to take the Ramayana to the new age youth who may not be well-versed in Sanskrit. He has edited 24,000 shlokas from Valmiki's Ramayana and made it easy for the modern-day youth to comprehend the great epic. People do not just read the Ramayana; they comprehend the work and learn new things each time they go through the work.

What adds to the beauty of the book is the caricatures by Keshav, formerly working with a newspaper known as the English edition of *Deshabhimani*, the CPI(M) mouthpiece. Now over to you, dear readers.

NEW ARRIVALS

NOVEMBER MUST-READ

Publisher: Niyogi Books



Citizen Charles

By MUSTANSIR DALVI

(PRICE: ₹299, PAGES: 204)

Citizen Charles is the first biography of architect Charles Correa (1930–2015), exploring his profound impact on Indian modernism. The book traces his journey from Art Deco Bombay to his advocacy for urban equity in post-independence India, highlighting his commitment to ensuring decent housing and public spaces for all citizens. Through triumphs and challenges, this monograph reflects on Correa's legacy as a pioneering architect who merged contemporary design with Indian culture.

Shyam Benegal: Film-maker of the Real India

By ARJUN SENGUPTA

(Price: ₹299, Pages: 248)

Shyam Benegal: Film-maker of the Real India delves into the life and career of one of India's most acclaimed filmmakers. With a career spanning five decades, Benegal has been a pioneer of alternative cinema, using film to expose societal inequalities and injustices. This book examines his evolution as a filmmaker, exploring his choice of subjects, cinematic techniques, and philosophical perspectives. It also features a chapter dedicated to his work in television and an exclusive interview discussing his craft. Accessible and insightful, this monograph offers a valuable analysis of Benegal's contributions to Indian cinema and cultural history.

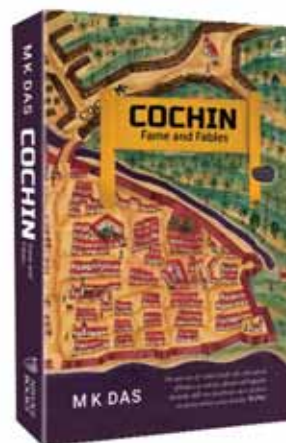
From Port to Cultural Gem

Cochin, once a small fishing village, is now a vibrant city rich in culture and history. In 'Cochin: Fame and Fables', M.K. Das shares the stories of its people and the events that shaped its identity, showing how this city has embraced change while holding onto its roots, writes SAKSHI PRIYA



Welcome to Cochin, a city alive with stories. Set along Kerala's stunning coastline, this vibrant place has witnessed countless changes over the centuries. Once a small fishing village, it grew into a bustling port that attracted traders from around the globe. *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* by M.K. Das takes readers on a journey through this remarkable city, revealing the rich history and diverse cultures that have shaped it. In his book, M.K. Das captures Cochin's spirit, sharing stories of its people and the challenges they faced. Through his words, we discover how the city has transformed while staying true to its roots. *Das* examines Cochin's role in the spice trade, which made it a major trading hub. Known as "black gold," pepper attracted traders from Rome, Arabia, China and eventually Europe. In the chapter "Birth of a City," *Das* explains how Cochin's location along the Malabar Coast turned it into a gateway for both commerce and culture. The spice trade brought prosperity but also made the city a target for foreign powers, with pepper trade playing a role in diplomacy and negotiations. A major theme in *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* is the impact of colonisation. The Portuguese, Dutch and British each

sought control over Cochin's valuable trade routes and resources. *Das* describes how these foreign powers altered the city's governance, trade, and architecture. Despite the disruptions, Cochin's people adapted and resisted, maintaining a distinct cultural identity while navigating these political shifts. This theme of resilience underscores the book, as *Das* shows how the city's people absorb outside influences while preserving their roots. The author paints a vivid portrait of the Maharajas of Cochin, modest rulers who focused on the well-being of their people. Unlike the luxuries typically associated with Indian royalty, the Maharajas of Cochin emphasised unity and harmony, providing a peaceful coexistence among the city's diverse communities. Another focus of *Das's* research is the broader impact of global trade. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route expanded Cochin merchants' access to international markets, allowing the city's economy to flourish beyond traditional trade routes. These shifts reinforced Cochin's position in international trade. Cochin's religious and cultural diversity stands out as well. Known for inclusivity, the city has welcomed people of various



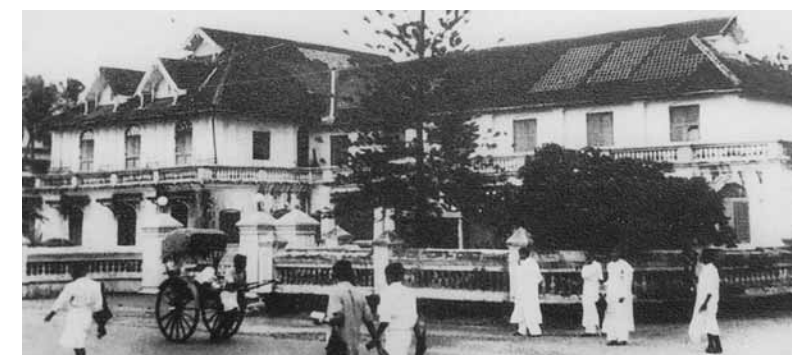
ABOUT THE BOOK

Book : COCHIN : Fame and Fables by M K DAS

Publisher : Niyogi Books

₹795.00

Pages : 300



faiths for centuries. *Das* describes the coexistence of Hindu temples, Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, highlighting a long history of religious tolerance and diversity that has given Cochin a unique character. *Das* also explores Cochin's architectural heritage, a blend of traditional and colonial influences. The city's architecture serves as a visible record of its history, with ancient structures standing alongside colonial buildings, illustrating its journey and adaptation over time. In the book's final chapters, *Das* reflects on Cochin's modern identity, connecting its historical legacy with its current role as a cultural and economic

hub. He argues that Cochin's resilience and openness to new influences continue to define it today, suggesting that understanding the city's past is essential for appreciating its present. *'Cochin: Fame and Fables'* is a well-researched account that captures the essence of a city with a rich and complex history. *Das* braids together themes of trade, culture and resilience, offering readers an insightful look into Cochin's evolution. For those interested in Indian history, colonialism or cultural exchange, this book provides a comprehensive view of a city that has retained its identity while embracing change.

