









# Nayab Singh Saini returns as Haryana CM for second time

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH

Senior BJP leader Nayab Singh Saini was sworn in as chief minister of Haryana for a second time on Thursday in a grand ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a galaxy of NDA leaders. Thousands of people packed into the Dussehra Ground to watch Governor Bandaru Dattatreya administer the oath of office to the low profile OBC leader and 13 others. For the BJP, the messaging was not just in its show of strength with a power packed dais seating its chief ministers, ministers and NDA partners but also in its choice of the day – Valmiki Jayanti. “For the third time with full majority, the BJP government will work with full energy for good governance, equality and welfare of the poor,” Saini said in a social media post after being sworn in for the second time as chief minister. Among those present were Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari and BJP president J P Nadda. Chief ministers of several BJP-ruled states, including Uttar Pradesh’s Yogi Adityanath, Assam’s Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chhattisgarh’s Vishnu Deo Sai, Gujarat’s Bhupendra Patel and Uttarakhand’s Pushkar Singh Dhami. NDA partner, TDP leader and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, was there too. The 54-year-old, who was the surprise pick to replace strongman M L Khattar as chief minister ahead of the assembly elections, proved his naysayers wrong by steering the BJP to a win in an election many thought would go to the Congress. Saini is heading the BJP’s third consecutive government in the state, a strategic victory after the Lok Sabha elections that many party leaders hope sets the pace for next month’s crucial assembly polls in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The BJP won 48 seats in the 90-member assembly. Three Independents, including



Hisar MLA Savitri Jindal, also extended support to the party. Haryana can have a maximum of 14 ministers, including the chief minister. The 13-member council of ministers includes the party’s most senior leader Anil Vij, Ahir leader Rao Narbir Singh and Jat leader Mahipal Dhandha. It also has two women – former Congress leader Shrutti Choudhary, daughter of Rajya Sabha MP Kiran Choudhary, and first time MLA Arti Singh, the daughter of Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh. Rajesh Nagar and Gaurav Gautam took oath as state ministers (independent charge).

But in 2019, the party did not give him a ticket. This time too, when there were talks of his ticket being cut, he announced to contest the elections. However, later he also met the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and got the ticket. Singh is one of the big leaders of the Ahirwal belt in Haryana. He is said to have a good hold in the Badshahpur area, which has the highest number of voters. He also has direct links with the high command. The biggest victory in the area is also registered in his name. In Haryana Assembly

## SWEARING IN CEREMONY

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

After Nayab Singh Saini, Rao Narbir Singh (55), MLA from Haryana’s largest assembly seat Badshahpur, also took the oath. Rao Narbir Singh has become the state minister for the fourth consecutive time. Rao Narbir has become MLA from Badshahpur for the second time. In the year 2014, he was the one who made the lotus bloom for the first time in Badshahpur. Singh represented Jatusana, Sohna and Badshahpur constituencies in Haryana in 1987, 1996 and 2014 respectively. Singh held several ministries, including Public Works, Public Health Engineering, Architecture and Forest in the first Manohar Lal Khattar government from 2014 to 2019. In the 2014 Haryana polls, Narbir Singh won the Badshahpur seat by defeating independent candidate Rakesh Daultabad. Rao Narbir has inherited politics. His father and grandfather have been MLAs in the past. After Rao Inderjit Singh, Rao Narbir is considered the biggest leader of Ahirwal. He was also a minister in the Manohar Lal Khattar government in 2014.



Elections 2024, Rao Narbir Singh Singh was the only leader who got a ticket directly from the BJP high command. Singh won the Badshahpur seat in the Haryana Assembly elections. Singh defeated Congress candidate Vardhan Yadav by a huge margin. Rao Narbir got a total of 1,45,503 votes in the election. He defeated Vardhan Yadav by 60,705 votes. As soon as the counting of votes for the assembly elections started, Rao Narbir Singh took the lead and then he kept increasing this margin and won.

## BJP top brass present during Nayab’s Oath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEWS DELHI

With the top brass of BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, descending, the oath-taking ceremony of Nayab Singh Saini assumed the air of a grand event. All roads leading to Dussehra ground were choc-o-block as thousands of BJP supporters from across Haryana made their way to the ceremony. Saini, 54, an OBC face of the party in the state, on Thursday, took oath as the chief minister of Haryana in Panchkula. A total of 13 ministers also swore beside him. While the BJP formed the government for a third time in a row, Saini became the chief minister of Haryana for the second time. Ahead of the BJP’s estimate of over 50,000 people turning up at the ‘Shaphat Grahana Samaroh’, arrangements were made on a grand scale. After Saini took his oath, his supporters chanted ‘Nayab Saini ko Jai Shri Ram’ and ‘Bharat Mata ki jai’. A huge multicolour ‘pandal’ was set up to accommodate VVIP guests, which included several Union ministers,

chief ministers, NDA partners and BJP workers. Outside the venue, artists clad in traditional attire played Haryanvi folk music, featuring ‘been’ (used by snake charmers), ‘chimta’, and ‘dhol’. Flex boards with welcome messages were set up all along the road leading to the venue in Panchkula. Besides Modi, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and J P Nadda attended the event amid heavy security. Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Chirag Paswan, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Goa CM Pramod Sawant, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio, Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai, Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma and Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Dhami were also present at the swearing-in. BJP leader Tarun Chugh termed the ceremony “historic”. Hari Ram, a Saini supporter, said he was excited at the BJP forming government for the third time.

## Need for new collective quantified goal on climate finance: UN Executive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

At the upcoming UN climate conference in Baku, countries must establish a new international climate finance goal that effectively addresses the needs of developing nations, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell said on Thursday. He emphasised that COP29 must be a “stand-and-deliver” conference, recognising the critical role of climate finance in protecting both the global economy and the livelihoods of billions affected by climate change. In a virtual event hosted by the Brookings Institution, Stiell stressed the necessity for a new goal that centers on public finance, with a



preference for grants or concessional funding to ensure accessibility for those in greatest need. During COP29, nations are expected to agree on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), which will

determine the annual amount developed countries need to mobilise starting in 2025 to support climate initiatives in developing nations. Historically, high-income countries have been responsible for providing

financial and technological support under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in 1992. These developed nations, which include the US, UK, Canada, and members of the EU, pledged in 2009 at COP15 to provide USD 100 billion annually by 2020 to assist developing countries. However, this commitment has not been fully realized. While a report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicated that developed countries surpassed the USD 100 billion target in 2022, with nearly 70% of funding coming in the form of loans, concerns remain about the adequacy and structure of this financial

support. Stiell pointed out that at COP29, nations will have the opportunity to decide on contributions, but he cautioned against renegotiating the Paris Agreement. Some developed nations propose broadening the list of contributors to include emerging economies like China and certain Gulf states, a move that developing countries argue undermines equity principles and shifts responsibility away from those historically responsible for emissions. “More work also has to be done to rapidly ramp up funding for adaptation and get international carbon markets working for everyone. We must fund a new generation of national climate plans,” he added.



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajya Sabha Dy. Chairperson Harivansh and Indian Parliamentary delegates on the sidelines of 149th Assembly of IPU in Geneva on Thursday.

## Omar Abdullah met fire victims families in Kistwar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday flew to the remote area of Marwah in Kishtwar district to meet those families whose houses were ravaged in a massive fire incident on Monday. According to initial reports, over 70 houses were gutted leaving numerous families homeless. Omar’s deputy Surinder Choudhary also accompanied him. Before taking off from Srinagar, Omar chaired the maiden cabinet meeting in the civil secretariat complex. On his arrival in Kishtwar, Omar took stock of the relief and rehabilitation efforts completed so far by

the district administration and other relief agencies working on the ground to help the devastated families. During his visit, Omar Abdullah directed officials to expedite the rehabilitation process, ensuring food, shelter, and other necessities are promptly delivered. Briefing media persons, Omar said the government will approach the union government to get compensation for the affected families from the Prime Minister’s relief fund. He assured all help from the state government to rebuild their lives and homes. Meanwhile, during the inaugural cabinet meeting, key administrative issues were discussed, and the government’s immediate priorities were outlined.



The newly formed cabinet reviewed significant governance challenges, focusing on streamlining processes, addressing public grievances, and promoting transparency within the bureaucracy. The team also evaluated the

progress of ongoing development projects. The new government’s top priorities include bolstering infrastructure, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir.

## Intelligence failure and planned conspiracy cited in Bahaich communal clash: Probe Report

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

A preliminary investigation into the recent communal violence in Bahaich, which resulted in one death and significant property damage, has pointed to intelligence failures and evidence of a planned conspiracy as key factors behind the unrest. The report, now under review at the DGP headquarters, highlights major lapses by the Local Intelligence Unit (LIU) and Mahsi Circle Officer Rupendra Kumar Gaur. As a result, Gaur has been temporarily relieved of his duties, with Ravi Khokhar appointed as the new Circle Officer of Mahsi.

Sources involved in the probe revealed that Gaur was initially unaware of the rising tensions when a group carrying idols for immersion arrived at Maharajganj market, sparking an altercation. By the time he reached the scene, the situation had already escalated into violence. The report further criticizes the Bahaich LIU for failing to anticipate the potential for unrest on both Sunday and Monday. A separate, detailed report on the LIU’s shortcomings has been submitted to the state intelligence headquarters. It points out that the LIU lacked connections with key local figures in the affected areas

and was unable to gauge the area’s sensitivity. A senior official noted that the rapid assembly of sticks, tridents, bricks, and stones indicated a coordinated effort to incite violence and disrupt communal harmony. CCTV footage reviewed so far has shown the presence of certain individuals at the immersion site who were later seen engaging in acts of arson and vandalism. Investigations are also underway into several social media accounts that spread misleading videos and audio clips during the violence, further escalating tensions. Post-mortem confirms gunshot wound: The police have confirmed

that Ramgopal’s death resulted from a gunshot wound. They emphasized that there is no evidence of him being electrocuted or attacked with a sword before or after being shot. Additionally, there is no indication that his toenails were pulled out or damaged. According to departmental sources, the post-mortem report reveals that Ramgopal Mishra’s body had 30 to 35 pellets embedded, with most found in his face, neck, and chest. This suggests that he was shot with at least three or more country-made cartridges. Additionally, a shot was fired below his shoulders to confirm his death.

## Taiwan inaugurates Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

Taiwan on Wednesday opened its third office in country in Mumbai after having been operated as Taipei Economic and Cultural Center (TECC) in New Delhi and Chennai. In his opening remarks TECC Representative Amb Baushuan Ger said this will be third mission in India-Taiwan relations. “In the 1995, Taiwan and India established representations, namely India Taipei Association in Taipei and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in New Delhi. The two offices have served as platforms for various collaborations between our



two countries, mainly on trade and investment, education and culture as well as science and technology,” Ger said. The opening of the third Mission of Taiwan in India

add momentum to cordial relations between two sides and will especially boost cooperation between Taiwan and Maharashtra and the neighboring states in west India in the years ahead.

In 2012, Taiwan set up its second mission in southern India TECC in Chennai to benefit Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh which attracted huge Taiwanese

investment, especially some key manufacturing industries to their shore. “More than 60 percent of Taiwanese investment has concentrated in these four southern States,” the Ambassador said. “Like President Lai Ching-te of Taiwan emphasized in his National Day Address on October 10th this year, Taiwan is a force for regional peace, stability and prosperity. Taiwan will more vigorously develop its five trusted sectors, namely semiconductors, AI, defense, security and surveillance and next generation communications and help expand their global presence,” added Baushuan Ger in an august presence of top dignitaries in Mumbai.

## Existing time limit for advance reservation will be reduced: Railway Board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Railway Board has reduced the advance reservation period of seats from existing 120 days to 60 days with effect from November 1, 2024. “It has been decided that from 01.11.2024, the existing time limit for advance reservation by trains will be reduced from 120 days to 60 days (excluding the date of journey),” a Railway Board’s circular, dated Oct 16, 2024, said. All bookings done up to October 31 under the ARP (Advance Reservation Period) of 120 days will remain intact, it added. The



circular did not cite any reason for the reduction in ARP. According to the Board, cancellation of the booking made beyond the ARP of 60 days will, however, be permitted. “There will be no change in the case of certain day time express trains like Taj Express, Gomti Express etc

where lower time limits for advance reservation are, at present in force,” the Board’s circular said. There will also be no change in the case of a limit of 365 days for foreign tourists, it said. On March 25, 2015, the Ministry of Railways had increased the ARP from 60 days to 120 days.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Jaishankar holds a mirror

At the SCO Summit, S Jaishankar urges regional powers to tackle terrorism, extremism and separatism

At the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit held in Islamabad, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took the opportunity to deliver a pointed message to China and Pakistan, highlighting the erosion of trust in the region. His address focused on the principles outlined in the SCO Charter, underscoring the need for genuine cooperation, respect for sovereignty and an uncompromising stance against the 'three evils' of terrorism, extremism and separatism. Jaishankar's remarks came at a time when India's relations with China and Pakistan have reached a nadir. The minister subtly pointed out the prevailing trust deficit, stating, "If trust is lacking or cooperation inadequate, if friendship has fallen short and good neighbourliness is missing somewhere, there are surely reasons to introspect and causes to address." His words alluded to China's unilateral border violations along the Line of Actual Control and Pakistan's use of cross-border terrorism as state policy. A central theme of Jaishankar's address was the urgent need to combat terrorism, extremism and separatism—the 'three evils' that, according to him, have plagued the region. He argued that these threats undermine peace and stability, which are prerequisites for development. Without addressing these issues, the prospects for economic growth, trade, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges remain bleak. Jaishankar's participation at the Islamabad summit marked a significant moment in India's diplomatic strategy.



Despite the strained relations, his address indicated India's willingness to engage in dialogue—provided that the foundational issues of trust and security are addressed. The summit showcased the growing rift between India's expectations for regional conduct and the policies pursued by some of its neighbours. It remains to be seen whether China and Pakistan will introspect on Jaishankar's remarks or continue to pursue policies that hinder regional integration. India's position remains clear: trust must be restored through actions that respect the sovereignty and security of all nations. The ball is now in the court of its neighbours to demonstrate a commitment to peace and stability. In his address, Jaishankar effectively used the SCO platform to hold a mirror up to China's border aggressions and Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism, laying bare the challenges to regional cooperation. His words served not just as a critique but as a call for renewed commitment to the principles of the SCO Charter, signalling India's firm stance on upholding peace and good neighbourliness. The question now is whether China's and Pakistan's leaders will see the reflection and act accordingly, or if the region will continue to grapple with a status quo marked by distrust and discord.

### PICTALK



A Royal Bengal tiger yawns at the National Zoological Park, in New Delhi

# AI: Redefining learning in the 21st Century



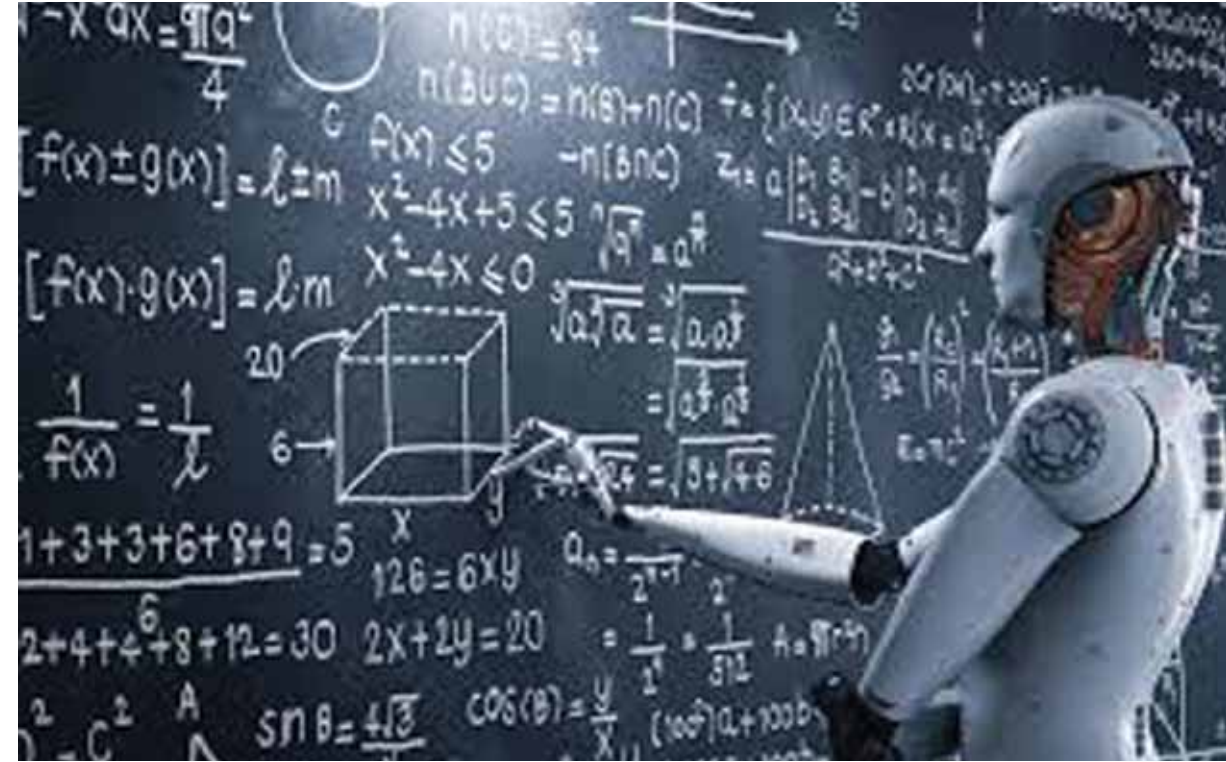
VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Teaching methods and workplace demands are evolving rapidly, pushing educational institutions to adopt new paradigms that keep pace with the changing times

It is now being increasingly recognised that artificial intelligence and technology use are going to alter the nature of learning, as few things have in the last 100 years. The fundamental nature of change and its pace is nothing new if one goes back over six or seven decades ago. The digitisation process altered the nature of learning numerals. The use of calculators rendered memorising multiplication tables substantially irrelevant. There was a sea change that has only increased its reach and depth with each passing decade. From calculators to the computerisation and successive upward scaling of computerisation competencies rendered not only the tables and the algorithms only marginally relevant, but even the log tables became a matter of history.

After some initial reluctance to allow a mechanical instrument into the classroom and the examination hall, the nature of learning was adjusted to the new realities. The machine-added reality became the new paradigm. The nature of learning changed slowly but surely from working through one's memory to getting used to machines and their algorithm. The orientation changed from falling back on mental collaborations to machine-led solutions. Changes in technology also needed learning but of a different order.

The dualism of specialisation was more in demand for staying current in the employment market. Indeed, machines started competing with each other in a manner of speaking and a classical example would be the different technology modes used in the manufacture of a jet plane (Ilyushin) in Russia and the technology used in a Boeing aircraft. The new realities required a new approach to what could be termed as 'new learning'. The nature of teaching arithmetic, mathematics, and more all underwent a change, and a revolution bigger than many had hit the classroom. The nature of this revolution was significant because it was a



continuing revolution, and today, it confronts the learner through various forms of artificial intelligence, also. The notions of mechanical search have not only revolutionised the search for information but even rendered encyclopedias decoration pieces in fancy drawing rooms.

They have now, perhaps, become a showcase of how learning used to be not so long ago. All this has implications not only for the classroom but also for the workplace. The exact manifestation of this is not clear, but the rumblings go on. Whereas earlier on, learning organisations used to pay equal focus on how to teach. Now the focus is equally on what and how to teach. The pressure in both the classroom and the workplace is equally intense, calling for a paradigm shift. The real challenge for learning organisations lies in embodying the paradigm shift. It will be useful to remind oneself that learning



TODAY, LEARNING REQUIRES THE COMPETENCE TO APPRECIATE THE NEW AND EMERGING PATTERNS OF TECHNOLOGY. NOT SO LONG AGO, LITERACY WAS IMPORTANT TO THE USE OF A MACHINE BECAUSE ONE HAD TO PUNCH THROUGH THE ALPHABET

organisations is nothing new. As a proposition, the need to keep reinventing oneself has been commonplace. Not so long ago, the focus was on keeping the mind open. Much of that has now metamorphosed into almost a new paradigm: keeping the mind growing. Enhancing of skills and competencies continues to be a defining trait of a learning organisation. It is simply not possible to confine oneself just to 'keeping the mind open'.

Today, learning requires the competence to appreciate the new and emerging patterns of technology. Not so long ago, literacy was important to the use of a machine because one had to punch through the alphabet. Now the situation has reached a context where even if one does not have the competence to punch into a machine and the machine will comply. At the moment, this process is at an early stage, but the problems that it means to tackle are

expanding every day. The change in the gamut of learning is important because if one can solve problems without being able to write, there indeed is a revolution in the entire paradigm of learning. The proposition, therefore, of a learning organisation is undergoing several fundamental reformulations.

There was a time in the 20th century when technology altered the nature of distance, and now there seems to be an emerging approach to technology that can alter the nature of time itself. Time present and time future are ready to merge into each other through technological interventions, allowing one to pass through a time machine, even if only temporarily. These are fundamental postulates and need rethinking far more deeply than what we have been able to do at present (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute; The views expressed are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### INDIA-CANADA TENSIONS RISE

Madam — The Indian government has once again officially denied the allegations of the murder of Khalistani supporter Hardeep Singh Nijar levelled by the Canadian government. Not only this, it has also taken diplomatic revenge by ordering the Canadian ambassador in India and other officials to leave the country. Have we reached the lowest point in diplomatic history in our relations with Canada? Is it possible that all diplomatic relations between India and Canada come to an end? In some circles of India, even senior journalists of international affairs believe that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is playing all these games to save his chair. Is it really true that the Canadian Prime Minister, due to his lust for power, is hell-bent on ending diplomatic, political and business relations with India? I think this story is not so simple that it will remain just a story of the chair. Because many Sikhs have been murdered in the same way all over the world, for which the governments there have blamed India. For example, in Lahore, Pakistan, on 6 May last year, Paramjeet Panjwar was shot dead, and the Indian government was also blamed for it. Okay, let's assume that Pakistan is our enemy, so it can make false allegations against us. But the United States of America is our friend. It has also made a similar allegation against us. It had alleged that an Indian citizen was involved in the conspiracy to murder Khalistani separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in New York. Therefore, the Canadian government should also present evidence if it has it in the International Court of Justice and not just raise the issue by holding press conferences.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

#### EMPOWERING INDIA'S YOUTH

Madam — The government in its Budget this year had proposed to launch a scheme to provide internship opportunities to 10 million youths in the top 500

### Tackle mental health challenges



The most admirable and analytical article 'The invisible battle for mental health in India' (October 16), encourages us to evaluate and recognise our mental wellness and seek counselling for physical illness. The worst part is that we are vitiating and spoiling our mental health despite warnings of being too much glued to our mobile phones, social media, late-night lifestyle, and orientation of ourselves, isolation and so many

other factors. Women suffer more from social and family pressures and they don't speak out. The major enemies are mobile phones and social media platforms, anxiety of getting too much in too little time, gaining public attention all the time, competition with the peers and us, working from home for longer hours, fear of failures, loss of family members, sensory issues and marital discord. The obvious symptoms are anxiety attacks, anger, depression, anger, misbehaviour and violence. However, many easily overcome these symptoms in public posture, delaying the solution and treatment. The work from home should be restricted to prescribed working hours only as scheduled. Yoga is the best option for mental wellness. Vacationing, holidaying, playing games, music, bhajans and romanticism with hobbies and passion are the self-healing methods to keep us happy and tranquil, cheerful and bubbly.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

companies over a span of five years. This helps youth to gain exposure to real-life business environments in different areas for a year. Internship schemes are as old as industrialisation as the means to perpetuate skill sets. With rapid mechanisation, it was losing impetus and formalisation.

A pilot for the scheme in 2024-25 was kicked off last week with internship opportunities in 24 sectors, including energy, hospitality, auto, and banking and financial services. Companies are expected to bear the cost of training and 10 per cent of internship costs from their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds. Major corporations over the years have been focusing on health, education and women empowerment. This new internship scheme hopefully should not affect their continued funding.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

#### PRIYANKA'S POLITICAL DEBUT

Madam — The bypoll for Wayanad has been announced by the Election Commission and the Congress leader

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is likely to make her debut for Lok Sabha. The seat went vacant when her brother Rahul Gandhi got elected to Lok Sabha also from Raebareilly in Uttar Pradesh in the general elections. When the elected members who hail from the same place have not used to visit their constituencies, where is the question of Priyanka serving the people of Wayanad once she gets elected? One should recall the promise of the Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi that he vowed that the Congress would construct 100 houses for those who lost their dwellings in the landslides at Chooralmala and Mundakkai during his visit on August 2, 2024. Winning elections matters most for the leaders and by consolidating the dynastic politics, the Congress can increase their numbers on the floor by wooing the voters but there is no justification to serve the people of the constituency in a real sense.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Pinarayi Vijayan: A tale of U-turns and controversies

CM Pinarayi's U-turn on sensitive data disclosures, coupled with the BJP's election triumph in Thrissur suggests a shifting balance of power

Man, woman and Child was a novel by best-selling author Erich Segal (1937-2010) which has been translated into many languages. It was made into a movie in English as well as in many languages. Our own Shekhar Kapur shot the movie *Masoom* based on the same novel. Well, Masoom, and "Man, Woman and Child" came to mind after seeing the plight of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan over the last fortnight. Vijayan, known for his determination, decisiveness and dictatorial tendencies, was a pale shadow of his old self during the last few weeks. Though he was seen laughing at flippant questions put to him by some of the journalists "studying to become Kerala's own Lutyens media", it was visible that Vijayan had lost most of his demeanour which in the past had silenced his detractors and rivals alike. The U-turn made by him viz-a-viz the data about the seizure of smuggled gold and hawala cash from Malappuram had shocked even his critics. Various Islamist organisations expressed their displeasure



over the quantity of gold and amount of illegal money seized from Malappuram which houses the Calicut International Airport. Though the Chief Minister had disclosed these figures in the 140-minute long press meet held on September 21 at Thiruvananthapuram, newspapers and TV channels did carry it in their reports. The present controversy in Kerala had its roots in the meetings held by M R Ajith Kumar, Additional Director General of Police with two senior RSS leaders in 2023 and the fiasco of the 2024 edition of Thrissur Pooram, Kerala's mega cultural extravaganza, the impressive victory scored by the BJP candidate Suresh Gopi in the Lok Sabha poll from Thrissur constituency and the unprecedented increase in gold smuggling and hawala dealings in Malappuram dis-

trict are much ado about nothing. The ADGP has every authority to meet the people of his choice as part of his policing job is known to one and all. Many IPS officers and intelligence officers with whom this issue was taken up were unanimous in their view that there was nothing wrong with the ADGP calling on RSS leaders.

One of the severe critics of the meeting between Ajith Kumar and RSS bosses is Binoy Viswam, the CPI Kerala secretary, who has been crying for the ADGP's blood for violating the Lakshman Rekha (or is it the Lenin Rekha?). But what is left unsaid is that Surya Binoy, daughter of Binoy Viswam, is a standing counsel of the BJP Government the Centre, yet another branch of the RSS! Binoy Viswam, who considers himself the global face of Communism and a stickler for propriety should openly admit that his criticism of RSS is with an eye on the minority vote bank. The Congress, CPI and the Muslim League allege that the CPI(M) had a tacit under-

standing with the Sangh Parivar to ensure the victory of Suresh Gopi in the Lok Sabha election. How is it possible for the CPI(M) to make Suresh Gopi emerge as a winner in a high pitch election which saw about 11 lakh voters turning out to cast their votes? The internal fights in Congress and the ire among the Christians over the CPI(M) bending backwards to placate the Muslims are seen as the factors that led to Gopi's win. What made Vijayan disown what he had said on September 21 press meet and which was used by the reporter of the Chennai-based daily on September 30 is yet another proof of the Islamists tightening their control over Kerala. P Jayarajan, a CPI(M) strongman, had told in a TV interview last month that the dreaded IS and Islamist extremists have made Kerala into a hub for recruiting jihadis to fight in Syria and Kashmir. This too was blacked out by the secular and liberal media in the State. Who is calling the kettle black? (The writer is South India bureau chief of the Pioneer; views are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN



## FIRST COLUMN

### UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE

By living according to dharma, we can strive for a higher quality of life



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

What is this Big Picture, that finds mention in spiritual talks? Simply stated, it means to know something in its totality. For example, we wish to know about ourselves in great detail, i.e. who we are; where have we come from; where are we going; and so forth. These and many more questions can be answered if we go to the source of everything, i.e. God, who is everything. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 7.19) We, souls, are His parts (15.15); we exist eternally; we are presently in material bodies. This happened because that is all we qualified for. There are superior planets like Heaven and, of course, the Vaikuntha – God’s planet (15.6). How are we judged? It is purely based on ‘karmas’ (our acts), both material and spiritual. Most of us are engaged mainly in material acts. We may have a slight percentage of spiritual acts like occasional visits to a temple, hearing a spiritual talk, etc. These count but are not enough to go to the highest planet, i.e. the Vaikuntha. We keep on getting born on the earth’s planet with an occasional visit to Heaven.

What is the role of God in all these? God is the creator of all that we see; He is its controller also. Logically, God must know the Big Picture. He does; God is omniscient. He knows past, present and future also. Just as our present is the result of our past, our future will be the result of our present. God is aware of how we will use our free will because that is influenced by our nature – part of our fate. As the Creation is to last for a very long time, control must be exercised to ensure its continuity. God does that. He uses the



Divine Authority to assist Him; it works under His superintendence. (9.10) They in turn reward and punish us based on our karma. There is nothing like chance, whatever happens to us is already preordained. In short, there are three levels of control. God is the head. Then comes the Divine Authority and, lastly, it is the material nature, which has been set in motion by God.

That is how we have seasons, rains, etc. We must live in synchronisation with it to have a healthy life. Our all acts must be ‘yukta’, i.e. appropriate according to the highest principles known as ‘dharma’. These rules have been formulated by God Himself. The Big Picture won’t be complete without a detailed description of our souls and how we can get help from God to improve our lives. We are many, eight billion plus on the earth planet itself. Surely, we are small and need help all the time, especially from God, who only knows the Big Picture. We are relocated after the present lifespan is over, which is preordained. Quality of life is all-important for all of us.

Unfortunately, we seek it from material objects, which are never satisfied. We must serve other souls to be served in turn by others. How can we improve the quality of our lives? We must begin by accepting the reality. This is where the Big Picture enters our lives, whatever we can know with our limitations.

This includes accepting the Cosmic Design, and having faith in God and His System. We should try to be good in whatever we do; we generally know what that is. We must be useful to others, otherwise the world would not have any use for us. We need to be tolerant, because the earth planet is no heaven, but is not a concentration camp either. One can have a reasonably good life.

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

# Empower urban local bodies for climate resilience



SONAL SINGH

Despite their economic importance, most urban areas are ill-prepared for the growing risks of climate change; these local bodies must be trained to fight climate changes



Cities are centres of economic growth, contributing around 63 per cent to India’s GDP while housing approximately 36 per cent of its population. This urban population is expected to reach 50 per cent by 2050, further intensifying the challenges cities face from extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts as recently witnessed in Wayanad, Chennai, New Delhi and other cities. According to a study by IIT Gandhinagar, the proportion of urban areas exposed to extreme weather events is set to increase significantly as global temperatures rise beyond 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. While the growing vulnerability is felt across rural and urban centres, the multiplier effect of damage caused to urban infrastructure, lives and livelihood on the larger socio-economic conditions as cities drive national GDP. Moreover, most of the cities are ill-equipped to tackle these climate risks. A lack of clearly mandated roles in climate response, insufficient financial allocations, and limited institutional capacities exacerbate this challenge. To enable transformative, city-led climate action, it is essential to align Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the specific needs and capacities of cities. This requires designing enabling frameworks to help urban areas build climate resilience. Without such frameworks, cities may struggle to cope with mounting climate risks. India has played a very proactive role in shaping policy and strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The country’s early adoption of environmental policies can be traced back to the Environmental Protection Act of 1986, a direct result of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in 1972. This laid the foundation for key initiatives such as the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in 2008 and the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) in 2015. India has also spearheaded international efforts, including the establishment of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for



MOST OF THE CITIES ARE ILL-EQUIPPED TO TACKLE THESE CLIMATE RISKS. A LACK OF CLEARLY MANDATED ROLES IN CLIMATE RESPONSE, INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS, AND LIMITED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES EXACERBATE THIS CHALLENGE

Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

At the sub-national level, 34 States and Union Territories have prepared State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) to address state-specific vulnerabilities in line with the NAPCC framework. Although the concept of city-level Climate Action Plans (CAPs) is relatively new in India, cities are developing these plans to address local risks such as heatwaves, water scarcity, and flooding for example, Mumbai, Coimbatore, Rajkot, Siliguri, and Udaipur.

These climate action plans are often in collaboration with international networks like C40 cities supported by global donor agencies. However, a major limitation remains: Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) do not have a clear mandate to respond to climate challenges. While the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 assigns ULBs certain responsibilities, such as urban forestry and environmental protection, “climate change” is not explicitly mentioned among the 18 functions designated to ULBs. This creates a significant governance gap at the local level. Although the National Mission for Sustainable Habitat (NMSH) 2.0 encourages ULBs to design action plans as one of the key strategies, it falls short of providing concrete guidelines, financial assistance, or incentives to assist city governments in these efforts.

The absence of a designated decision-making authority at the city level further compounds the problem.

While the SAPCC guidelines call for establishing climate cells at the state level, there is no similar provision for cities. Even when ULBs do develop climate action strategies, their implementation is hampered by overlapping mandates across multiple agencies and

parastatals, with no centralised body to oversee or coordinate these efforts.

Additionally, national climate policies such as the Net Zero by 2070 target and NDCs do not mandate the collection of city-level greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data, limiting the ability to undertake data-driven climate actions. As India transitions towards a more urban future, with 50 per cent of the population estimated to live in cities by 2050, amid rising climate risks, the devolution of powers to ULBs for climate governance becomes crucial. Empowering local governments through the principle of “climate subsidiarity”—which ensures that climate action is undertaken at the most appropriate level by adequately resourced and empowered agencies—can be a key step toward achieving climate resilience and national climate goals. One such long-term measure often suggested by experts involves amending the Constitution to include “climate action” as one of the functions of ULBs.

While constitutional amendments may be a long-term goal, an immediate step could involve making a comprehensive central law on climate mitigation and adaptation with the city as a unit of governance. Also, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) could update NMSH 2.0 with detailed guidelines for city-level Climate Action Plans. Such guidelines would ensure a standardised approach across cities while allowing for localized strategies aligned with national goals. Additionally, providing financial incentives—such as climate finance or additional transfers from the State Finance Commission (SFC) or Central Finance Commission (CFC)—would encourage ULBs to initiate climate risk assessments, imple-

ment green mobility projects, and undertake other climate-resilient initiatives.

Institutionalising climate governance at the local level is only the first step. Local governments must also be given clear and measurable targets, necessitating the localisation of NDCs and SDGs. Incorporating cities into future updates of the NAPCC and SAPCC would allow for a more bottom-up approach to planning adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Furthermore, establishing a centralised decision-making body at the city level would facilitate better collaboration among city agencies, ensuring a more coordinated response to climate risks.

As global and national conversations on climate action gain momentum, it is imperative to build a similar focus at the sub-national level to ensure tangible results. The dynamism seen at the national level must be replicated in cities, towns, and districts, which are at the frontline of climate impacts. This will require a realignment of governance structures and a re-evaluation of climate strategies to bring the focus to the smallest units of governance—cities and ULBs.

A blend of long-term strategies and short-term action plans must be developed with sub-national governments to ensure accountability and cohesion in how cities perceive and address climate change. By empowering ULBs with the necessary resources, mandates, and institutional support, India can ensure that its urban centres are not just engines of economic growth but also pillars of climate resilience. This is essential if the country is to meet its ambitious goal of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070.

(The writer is Research Associate, TERI; views are personal)

# Aurangzeb: A contested legacy shaping India’s political discourse

The portrayal of Aurangzeb as a ruthless oppressor reflects a blend of folk tales and myth rather than a verified account of his reign

The figure of Aurangzeb remains deeply embedded in India’s contemporary political and cultural landscape, reflecting a blend of historical memory, myth and modern political rhetoric. His name frequently surfaces in electoral campaigns and public debates, evoking emotions and controversies centuries after his reign.

When leaders criticise each other with references to Aurangzeb, it signifies how his legacy continues to shape national politics. In the modern narrative, Aurangzeb is often depicted as a ruthless tyrant—a figure equated with notorious symbols of intolerance, such as Hitler or extremist ideologies. This perception paints him as someone who dedicated his life to eradicat-



NIHARIKA DWIVEDI

ing Hinduism and oppressing Hindus. Consequently, there’s a prevalent notion that contemporary Indian Muslims are somehow connected, either by ancestry or ideology, to the Mughal emperor’s legacy, which is accused of inflicting harm on India’s cultural and religious heritage.

This view draws heavily on VS Naipaul’s concept of India as a “wounded civilisation,” enduring centuries of subjugation by

foreign invaders, including Muslim rulers who allegedly dismantled the country’s glorious past. Yet, the belief in deliberate, systematic destruction by Muslim conquerors is not a continuous historical memory nor entirely grounded in verified historical records. Instead, it reflects deep emotional and cultural wounds, often fueled by present-day anti-Muslim sentiments.

Historically, Aurangzeb was the last significant Mughal ruler, governing much of the Indian subcontinent for nearly five decades. His reign is marked by controversies, such as imprisoning his father, Shah Jahan, his perceived orthodox, and the inability to consolidate the Deccan region into the Mughal Empire.

Central to the debates on Aurangzeb is the question of his motivations and policies. Some historians, such as Sir Jadunath Sarkar, argue that his primary aim was to establish an Islamic state in India by enforcing Sharia law and converting the population. Pakistani historian Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi asserts that Aurangzeb’s policies were intended to preserve Muslim dominance and to maintain the empire’s unity. This included discouraging religious pluralism that could undermine Muslim hegemony in a state where they were responsible for defence and administration. However, Aurangzeb’s actions were not always consistent with the idea of enforcing an Islamic state. For example, while he did



destroy certain Hindu temples, including the Vishwanath temple in Banaras, there is little evidence supporting the claim of a widespread, systematic campaign of temple destruction. Many temples, like those in Vrindavan, continued to receive royal patronage. The destruction of some temples appeared more politically motivated than religiously driven, often tied to punitive

actions against local rebellions or defiant rulers. Aurangzeb’s revival of the jizya tax in 1679, a levy on non-Muslims, further complicates the interpretation of his policies. While some scholars, like Sarkar, view this as an attempt to pressure Hindus into conversion, others argue that the tax was intended more as a political tool to rally support from conservative Muslim factions. Its reinstatement after two decades of the rule suggests it was not a priority-driven solely by religious zeal but rather a measure aimed at consolidating power during times of conflict, particularly against the Rajputs and Marathas.

Qureshi contends that Aurangzeb sought to reverse the damages caused by Akbar’s more liberal policies, which

had integrated Hindus into administrative roles. Ironically, the number of Hindus in government service increased during Aurangzeb’s reign, reaching 33 per cent by 1689, despite the emperor’s reputation for religious intolerance. Dr RP Tripathi view Aurangzeb’s actions as primarily politically motivated, aimed at consolidating power in a diverse and vast empire. His policies, while sometimes harsh, were not necessarily born from a deep-seated animosity toward Hindus. Instead, they reflected the complexities of ruling an expansive and multi-ethnic empire where shifting political, social, and military factors required adaptable strategies. Modern scholarship increasingly emphasises the need to

view Aurangzeb beyond simplistic labels of heroism or villainy. His reign is better understood within the broader context of socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics of the time. While his orthodox leanings and authoritarian tendencies shaped some of his policies, his actions also mirrored the challenges of ruling a fragmented and turbulent subcontinent. Aurangzeb’s legacy, thus, remains a complex and contested chapter in Indian history. It serves as a reminder of the intricate interplay between history and politics, and how the past is continuously invoked to influence the present.

(The author is a freelance writer and a documentary filmmaker; views are personal)







# India's logistics cost will come down to single-digit in two years: Nitin Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said India's logistics cost will come down to single-digit within the next two years. Addressing an event organised by NITI Aayog, Gadkari said the ministry is constructing several highways and expressways, which will help reduce India's logistics cost. "Within two years, we are going to reduce our logistics cost to 9 per cent," he added. According to quick estimates of the economic think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), logistics costs in

India ranged between 7.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent of GDP for the fiscal 2021-22. Gadkari said there is huge potential for India to export alternative fuels and biofuels. He also pointed out that low-quality coal is useful for making methanol. The minister added that India is making significant strides in the biofuel sector, especially in methanol. Further, Gadkari said he aimed to make the Indian automobile industry number one in the world. Last year, India had overtaken Japan to become the third-largest automobile market in the world, only behind the US and China, he said.



The size of India's automobile industry rose from Rs 7.5 lakh crore in 2014 to Rs 18 lakh crore in 2024 and this industry is creating a maximum number of jobs, Gadkari added. Gadkari highlighted that materials like recycled tyre powder and plastic are being utilised in road construction, which helps in the reduction of bitumen import. He also emphasised how the

initiative of using crop waste is helping to increase the incomes of farmers across the country. Gadkari spoke about the stubble-burning problem in Punjab and Haryana. He said that right now, "we can process one-fifth of the Parali, but with better planning, we can reduce the seasonal air pollution from stubble-burning by using parali as raw material for alternative fuels." The minister said that India needs to move ahead with a policy which is cost-effective, indigenous, import substitute and employment-generating to address the major issues of rising pollution and fossil fuel imports.

# Hyundai Motor India records ₹27,870 cr fully subscribed IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The initial public offer of Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the Indian arm of South Korean automaker Hyundai, got fully subscribed on the third day of the bidding on Thursday. The Rs 27,870 crore initial share sale got bids for 14,07,68,187 shares against 9,97,69,810 shares on offer, translating into 1.41 times subscription, as per NSE data till 13:21 hours. The quota for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got 3.88 times subscription while the portion meant for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) received 44 per cent subscription. The non-institutional investors part fetched 39 per cent subscription. Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) on Monday raised Rs



8,315 crore from anchor investors. This is the largest IPO in the country, surpassing LIC's initial share sale of Rs 21,000 crore. The IPO has a price band of Rs 1,865-1,960 per share. The IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of 14,21,94,700 equity shares by promoter Hyundai Motor Company (HMC), with no fresh issue component. This is the first initial share sale by an automaker in over two decades, following Japanese carmaker Maruti Suzuki's listing in 2003. Since the public issue is

completely an OFS, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the second largest carmaker in India after Maruti Suzuki, will not receive any proceeds from the IPO. HMIL stated that it expects that the listing of the equity shares will enhance its visibility and brand image, and provide liquidity and a public market for the shares. At the upper end of the price band, the IPO size has been pegged at Rs 27,870 crore (USD 3.3 billion), and the company's market valuation at around Rs 1.6 lakh crore (about USD 19 billion) post-issue. HMIL commenced operations in India in 1996 and currently, sells 13 models across segments. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, Citigroup Global Markets India Private Ltd, HSBC Securities and Capital Markets (India) Private Ltd, J P Morgan India Private.

# Andhra eyes Rs 10 lakh cr investment in clean energy, net zero by 2047

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh is eyeing Rs 10 lakh crore investment in the clean energy sector in the state as it unveiled a new policy that incentivises investments across solar, wind and round-the-clock renewable energy projects to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2047. Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu unveiled the AP Integrated Clean Energy (ICE) Policy that envisages incentives ranging from hassle-free land acquisition at reasonable price to power subsidy to certain sectors. The ICE Policy will involve a proposed investment outlay of Rs 10 lakh crore, creating direct and indirect employment for 7,50,000 workers, the policy document said.



The policy looks to leverage the state's vast renewable energy potential across wind, solar and hybrid sources, storage capabilities through pumped storage projects, a long coastline, six operational ports (with four under development) and skilled manpower availability as it pivots energy transition. The Andhra Pradesh government is committed to promoting generation from renewables by creating a more conducive policy and investment framework to spur competition and private participation in the sector while maintaining a balance in the interests of all stakeholders, it said. The policy will aid in setting up of projects that generate electricity from abundant sunlight and wind energy as well from pump-storage projects on water bodies. Andhra Pradesh is targeting 78.5 gigawatts of solar capacity, 35 GW of wind energy, 22 GW of pumped storage and 1.5 million tonnes per annum of green hydrogen manufacturing capacity. It is also looking to set up 25 GWh of battery energy storage as well as projects to manufacture ethanol and biogas from biomass and 5,000 EV charging stations. It is also looking at 25-30 GW of cleantech manufacturing

# DGCA releases 2024 domestic winter flight schedule

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday released Domestic Winter Schedule 2024, in which Indian carriers will operate 25,007 flights every week to and from 124 airports in the winter schedule starting October 27, higher by three per cent, than the flights operated during summer period this year. In comparison to the winter schedule 2023, the number of flights has increased by 5.37 per cent. As per Winter Schedule 2024 (effective from 27th October 2024 till 29th March 2025) of the scheduled domestic airlines has been finalized after the slot conference meeting held in September 2024. "Out of these 124 airports, Pondicherry airport is proposed by the scheduled airlines whereas operations



from Pakyong and Tezpur airport were suspended in the winter schedule 2024," the DGCA said in a release. More than half of the total 25,007 domestic departures per week during the winter schedule will be handled by IndiGo. The Gurugram-headquartered airline will see

13,691 departures per week, up 4.91 per cent from 13,050 departures per week in the on-going summer schedule. Also, Tata Group, which currently has three airlines -- Air India, its subsidiary Air India Express and, its JV airline with SIA Vistara -- will have a total of 7,611 departures per week during

this winter, as per the DGCA. Of this, Air India will handle 2,586 departures per week, 13.52 per cent more compared to 2,278 departures per week in the summer schedule of this year, while Air India Express (which saw the merger of AIX connect with it this month) will see 2,832 departures per week

during the winter schedule, up 16.21 per cent from 2,437 departures per week in the summer schedule of 2024. Vistara, however, will see 5.64 per cent less departures per week at 2,193 from 2,324 departures per week in the summer of this year, it said. Budget carrier SpiceJet will also handle less number of departures at 1,297 per week from 1,657 departures per week in the summer schedule of this year, a drop of 21.73 per cent, according to the DGCA. Akasa Air, as per the DGCA, has filed for 989 departures per week for the winter schedule of 2024, which would be an increase of 9.52 per cent compared to the summer schedule. Out of these 124 airports, Pondicherry airport is proposed by the scheduled airlines whereas operations from Pakyong and Tezpur airport were suspended in the Winter Schedule 2024.

# Nestle India Q2 profit dips on high costs, soft demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

FMCG major Nestle India Ltd on Thursday reported a marginal decline of 0.94 per cent in its net profit at Rs 899.49 crore for the second quarter that ended September 2024 as some of its key brands faced softer consumer demand and high commodity prices. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 908.08 crore in the July-September period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Nestle India. However, Nestle India's revenue from the sale of products was up 1.3 per cent to Rs 5,074.76 crore in the September quarter. It was at Rs 5,009.52 crore in the corresponding period of last fiscal. Commenting on the results Chairman and Managing Director Suresh Narayanan said, "Despite a challenging external environment with muted consumer demand and high commodity prices, especially for coffee and cocoa, we remained resilient in our pursuit to deliver growth."

"This quarter, 5 of our top 12 brands grew at double-digit. However, some key brands witnessed pressure due to softer consumer demand and we focus on them and have in place robust action plans," he said. Nestle India's domestic sales were up 1.23 per cent to Rs 4,883.14 crore, as against Rs 4,823.72 crore in the corresponding July-September period. In the domestic market, Nestle India delivered growth in organised trade, which includes retail chains, hypermarkets etc "spurred by noodles, beverages and overall premiumisation," according to an earning statement by the company, which owns brands like Maggi, Nescafe, KitKat and Milkmaid etc. Similarly in the Out of Home (OOH) segment, Nestle India has a "robust growth" helped by portfolio transformation, premiumisation, new customer acquisition and driving reach beyond metros. "Our Out-of-Home business continues to be one of our fastest growing businesses with strong double-digit growth," said Nestle India



adding that while in e-commerce, Nestle India has accelerated growth by almost 38 per cent. This was "primarily driven by Quick Commerce and fueled by brands such as Kitkat, Nescafe, Maggi and Milkmaid." "E-commerce delivered high double-digit growth, which was the highest in the last seven quarters contributing to 8.3 per cent of domestic sales," it said. Growth on this new age channel was also supported by premiumisation, new user acquisition, festive participation and targeted digital communications. Its petcare business Purina

also witnessed a strong e-commerce momentum, it added. "Felix and Friskies cat food continued to receive positive feedback from trade and cat parents. Building on the superpremium pillar, Pro Plan dog food witnessed strong growth," said Nestle India. Its revenue from exports was also up 3.13 per cent to Rs 191.62 crore in the September quarter. Its export business "continued to expand its footprint by introducing new SKUs across categories to Canada, Middle East, Maldives and Papua New Guinea," it said.

# Infosys Q2 net profit rises 4.7 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Infosys Ltd on Thursday reported a 4.7 per cent rise in the September quarter net profit and raised revenue guidance after broadbased growth. Net profit of Rs 6,506 crore in July-September was up 4.7 per cent when compared to Rs 6,212 crore earnings in the same period last year. It was 2.2 per cent higher quarter-on-year, according to a company statement. Revenue was up 4.2 per cent at Rs 40,986 crore. Infosys for the second consecutive quarter raised the 2024-25 fiscal year revenue guidance. It now anticipates a growth of 3.75 to 4.50 per cent in revenue in the fiscal year April 2024 to March 2025, up from 3-4 per cent band it had given in the previous quarter. The company had in July raised the revenue guidance for the fiscal from 1-3 per cent anticipated previously.

# Sarla Aviation, Bengaluru airport launch electric flying taxis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport is set to be a key hub for cutting-edge urban air mobility solutions with Sarla Aviation joining hands with the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) to launch electric flying taxis. Last month, the two entities signed a statement of collaboration to explore sustainable air mobility, specifically electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. This initiative, developed in Karnataka, aims to revolutionise air travel by introducing seven-seater electric flying taxis, which promise faster, cleaner, and more efficient transportation. While operations may still be two to three years away, Sarla



Aviation's electric taxis promise a cleaner, quieter, and more cost-effective alternative to traditional helicopter services previously offered in Bengaluru. The Bengaluru-based company, co-founded by Adrian Schmidt, Rakesh Gaonkar and Shivram Chauhan, is at the forefront of this transformation. Sarla Aviation plans to focus on four of India's most congested cities-Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, and Pune -- bringing affordable electric aerial taxis to the public. The

company's proposed taxi from Bengaluru Airport to Electronics City would take just 19 minutes, compared to the 152 minutes required by road, with a fare of Rs 1,700. "We aim to redefine urban air transport with operational efficiency, reduced carbon emissions, and scalable infrastructure. Our electric flying taxis will set new benchmarks in reliability and performance, aligning with global standards for sustainable aviation," said Schmidt, Sarla Aviation co-founder and CEO.

# Collective responsibility to improve corporate governance, follow global standards: NFRA Chief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) Chairperson Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey on Thursday underscored the need for improving corporate governance and aligning Indian auditing with global standards to attract investors. Observing that there is a need to continue to take cognizance of corporate governance reforms, he said company management, independent directors and audit committee, statutory auditors, shareholders, and regulators constitute five lines of defence to improve corporate governance. "It is our collective responsibility...We should continue to create trust. Improve the corporate governance, and we should work in that direction," he



said, addressing an event organised by industry chamber ASSOCHAM here. Adopting global auditing standards would improve the trust of global investors in the Indian economy, which is on its way to becoming the third largest from the present fifth position, he said. Making a pitch to align Indian audit practices with the global standards, Pandey said it is in the interest of corporates. Adopting global audit norms

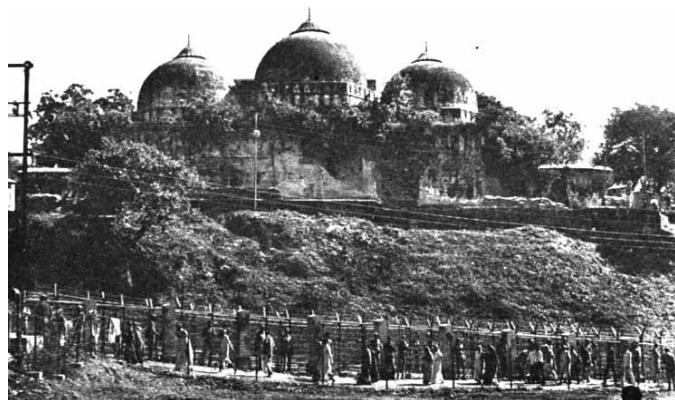
is easier as "we have global precedents", he said. "We cannot have Indian accounting standards in isolation while not adhering to global standards...Some big corporate failures have been due to related party transactions and subsidiaries siphoning off funds...We must take corrective action like new Standard of Quality Management, changes in the auditing standard SA 600 to reduce the probability of frauds via subsidiaries," he said. These will lead to early detection of frauds, he said, emphasising that India cannot be a developed economy by 2047 without audit reforms. He expressed confidence that Indian accountants and CAs can dominate the world with adherence to global standards.

# INBRIEF

**TATA AUTOCOMP SYSTEMS ACHIEVES DOUBLE DEMING RECOGNITION**  
NEW DELHI: A leading automotive components conglomerate serving Indian and global OEMs, announced today that two of its entities— Tata AutoComp Composites Division & Tata Ficos—have been awarded the prestigious Deming Prize for 2024.

**GNU A-ZONE YOUTH FESTIVAL INAUGURATED**  
AMRITSAR: The A-Zone (Amritsar District Colleges) Youth Festival of Guru Nanak Dev University was inaugurated here today in the Dasmesh Auditorium of the University/Monday to Saturday, 8 AM to 2 PM.

**POWERGRID ACQUIRES THREE ISTS PROJECTS**  
HARYANA: -- a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power has on 15th October 2024 acquired three (03) Project Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) to execute Inter-State Transmission Projects related to transmission of renewable energy.



# A PHOTO JOURNALIST'S JOURNEY LIFE BEHIND THE LENS

In 'Viewfinder' by veteran photojournalist *Jagdish Yadav*, readers are taken through the life of a photojournalist, uncovering the challenges and achievements that shaped his career. The book offers an extensive look into the power and ethics of photojournalism in capturing the truth behind the headlines, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In today's society, where we are constantly bombarded with photographs and visuals, the deeper meaning and impact of photography can sometimes be lost or overlooked. With the fast-paced nature of digital media, where images are produced and consumed at lightning speed, it's easy for the essence of what a photograph conveys to fade into the background.

In contrast, *Viewfinder* by *Jagdish Yadav* offers a thoughtful examination of photojournalism, urging readers to consider how powerful storytelling can be when captured through photography. It highlights the importance of understanding not just the technical aspects of taking a photo, but also the stories and emotions behind the images. Essentially, it positions photography as a vital medium for narrative and expression in a visually saturated world.

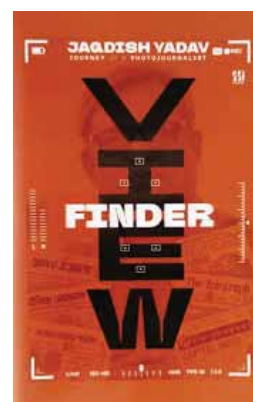
*Yadav* begins with a compelling analogy, describing photojournalism as the "writing of stories through light." This powerful concept resonates throughout the book, drawing readers into the essence of photography as a universal language capable of going beyond barriers. His unique perspective highlights the intricate relationship between light, structure and narrative, an often-overlooked aspect that enriches the understanding of both seasoned photographers

and novices. By establishing this foundation, *Yadav* encourages a deeper appreciation for the medium that conveys emotions and narratives that words alone cannot capture.

The personal narrative work with professional insights makes *Viewfinder* particularly impactful. *Yadav* candidly recounts his rural upbringing in Uttar Pradesh, revealing the stark contrast between his humble beginnings and his eventual success in journalism. He details the struggles he faced, including language barriers and educational hurdles, creating a relatable picture for readers who may have encountered similar challenges. His resilience in the face of adversity serves as a source of inspiration, proving that determination can lead to remarkable outcomes.

The author also provides a timely commentary on the evolution of journalism, particularly the impact of digital media. He argues that, in today's fast-paced world, where attention spans are fleeting, the importance of powerful imagery has never been greater. A striking photograph, he asserts, can convey emotions and narratives that text alone fails to articulate. This reflection on contemporary relevance makes *Viewfinder* not only a recounting of the past but a significant contribution to discussions about the future of photojournalism.

A standout point *Yadav* makes is how



**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
Book: VIEWFINDER  
by JAGDISH YADAV  
Publication: IIP ACADEMY  
in association with  
MANAK Publication  
₹1200.00

a gateway for readers to dive deeper into the article, establishing a connection that pure text might struggle to create.

The book explores the technical and ethical responsibilities of photojournalists. *Yadav* highlights the importance of collaboration between reporters and photographers to ensure that images not only match the narrative but also enhance it. The photojournalist, he argues, must make real-time decisions about how to frame a story visually, often needing to act independently of the editorial team. *Yadav* offers a technical breakdown of how photo composition, whether horizontal or vertical, parallels the structure of a well-crafted article, ensuring that the image tells a complete and coherent story.

Through a mix of anecdotal experiences and professional insight, *Yadav* stresses the need for photojournalists to remain vigilant, especially in today's fast-paced media environment where the public's attention span has shrunk. In this context, a well-timed, well-composed photograph can convey the news in a fraction of the time required to read an article.

*Viewfinder* is a thoughtful reflection on the role of photography in journalism. *Yadav* shows how photojournalists not only document events but also interpret them, offering the public a lens through which to see the

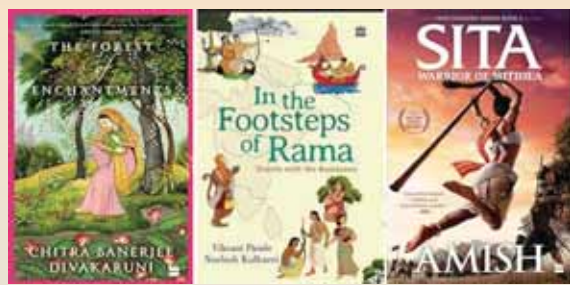
unfiltered reality. His accounts, often humorous and always candid, bring to light the challenges and triumphs of a profession that is crucial but often overlooked.

*Jagdish Yadav's Viewfinder* is a must-read for anyone interested in the power of images in media. For those interested in photojournalism or seeking an inspiring life story, this book offers a window into the experiences of someone who has spent decades capturing the world through their lens. *Yadav's* reflections on the evolving landscape of photography create a compelling narrative that resonates long after the final page is turned.



## Festive Reads!

HarperCollins Picks for Your Festive Reads!



### The Forest of Enchantments

By CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI (PRICE: ₹799, PAGES: 372)

In *The Forest of Enchantments*, *Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni* offers a captivating retelling of the Ramayana, centering the narrative around Sita and other often-overlooked women of the epic, such as Kaikeyi, Surpanakha, and Mandodari. This powerful novel explores themes of duty, betrayal and the quest for autonomy in a patriarchal society. Through Sita's eyes, *Divakaruni* poses vital questions about women's rights and treatment in relationships, transforming an ancient story into a contemporary tale of resilience and empowerment.

### In The Footsteps Of Rama: Travels with the Ramayana

By VIKRANT PANDE and NEELESH KULKARNI (Price: ₹599, Pages: 272)

In *In The Footsteps Of Rama*, *Vikrant Pande* and *Neelesh Kulkarni* embark on an enlightening journey to retrace Rama's travels during his exile. Beginning with their quest to locate Chitrakoot, they explore significant sites mentioned in the Ramayana, traveling from Ayodhya through the Dandakaranya forest, Panchavati, Kishkindhya, Rameshwaram, and even Sri Lanka. Along their adventure, they uncover the deep connections between the epic's narrative and local folklore, revealing how the stories of the Ramayana continue to resonate with the people of the land. This book is a delightful read for both armchair travelers and enthusiasts of epic tales.

### Sita: Warrior of Mithila (Ram Chandra Series Book 2)

By AMISH TRIPATHI (PRICE: ₹399, PAGES: 376)

In *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*, set in 3400 BCE India, chaos reigns as the nation grapples with division, resentment, and corruption. The demon king Raavan of Lanka grows ever more powerful, exploiting the vulnerabilities of the Sapt Sindhu. In this tumultuous time, two tribes seek a savior and discover an abandoned baby, protected by a vulture from a pack of wolves. Adopted by the ruler of Mithila, this seemingly ordinary child is destined for greatness. This thrilling sequel in the Ram Chandra Series chronicles the rise of Sita, an orphan who evolves into a prime minister and ultimately becomes a goddess.

## Faith and Morals of Hinduism

# A Clear Path for the Curious Mind

In 'Quintessence of Hinduism' by *Girdhari Lal Chaturvedi* explores the core beliefs and moral principles of Hinduism, providing an insightful guide for young readers to rediscover and understand their faith.

ABHISHEK SONKAR

The Book offers a concise, comprehensive and insightful exploration of the core beliefs and moral principles that define Hinduism. The book, authored by *Girdhari Lal Chaturvedi*, is divided into 14 chapters, beginning with a historical overview of Hinduism and delving into the significance of the Bhagavad Gita as a philosophical text on faith. The author's aim is to create a guide for Hindu youth, who are often misinformed about their own faith, while also making the book a valuable resource for beginners and those familiar with Hinduism who wish to deepen their understanding.

However, the book struggles to fully achieve its purpose. The author emphasises that Hinduism, unlike many other religions, does not have a single founder or a rigid doctrinal structure. Instead, he describes it as a "bipolar faith." This term is problematic, as it can be misinterpreted to suggest conflicting or mutually exclusive aspects within Hinduism. In reality, Hinduism is a pluralistic tradition that has evolved through diverse paths and perspectives. Describing it as bipolar oversimplifies its inherently multifaceted nature.

The book extensively addresses critics of Hinduism, particularly from other religious backgrounds, who present Hinduism as a religion lacking in moral values. Yet, Hinduism is unique in that it has a long history of self-reflection and reform, with many philosophers and movements challenging established norms. This quality of self-critique is one of the aspects that sets Hinduism apart from other world religions.

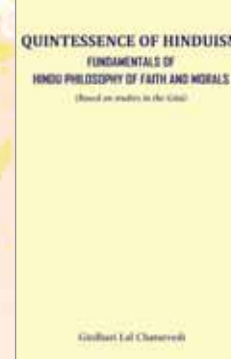
*Chaturvedi* provides readers with a deeper understanding of the fundamental aspects of Hindu philosophy, including faith, morality and spirituality, and explains how these elements shape the daily lives of Hindus. The book also explores central texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, Vedas and Upanishads, offering summaries and interpretations of these works. The author does an admirable job of breaking down complex Sanskrit verses and ideas from the Bhagavad Gita into simple, relatable language without diluting their essence. This is one of the book's major strengths.

The author also discusses key Hindu concepts such as dharma (moral duty), karma (the law of cause and effect), and the nature of the atma (soul) and Brahman (universal consciousness), illustrating how these concepts are interconnected and central to Hindu philosophy. One of the book's main strengths is its ability to explain complex philosophical ideas in

an accessible manner while retaining their depth and significance. The clear and well-researched writing style makes the book a valuable resource for readers with little prior knowledge of Hinduism.

*Chaturvedi* highlights the accommodating nature of Hinduism, which encompasses a wide variety of beliefs, practices, and paths to spiritual realisation. Whether one follows a path of devotion (bhakti), knowledge (jnana), or selfless service (karma), all are considered valid approaches within the Hindu framework. However, there are limitations. Readers without prior knowledge of Sanskrit may find some sections challenging and those seeking a more detailed and nuanced exploration of specific texts or schools of thought may not find the depth they are looking for. These aspects could be viewed as potential shortcomings of the book.

'Quintessence of Hinduism' provides a useful introduction to Hindu philosophy and its moral framework. While it may not satisfy those looking for an in-depth scholarly analysis, it serves as a helpful starting point for anyone interested in exploring Hindu philosophy and is particularly recommended for readers who already have some familiarity with Hinduism.



### ABOUT THE BOOK

Book: Quintessence of Hinduism: Fundamentals of Hindu Philosophy of Faith and Morals  
by GIRDHARI LAL CHATURVEDI  
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HINDUISM, UNLIKE MANY OTHER RELIGIONS, DOES NOT HAVE A SINGLE FOUNDER OR A RIGID DOCTRINAL STRUCTURE. INSTEAD, HE DESCRIBES IT AS A "BIPOLAR FAITH"

