

Use of Ringer Lactate in Karnataka government hospitals stopped

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Amid concerns that recent maternal deaths in Ballari district could be linked to sub-standard intravenous fluids solution, the use of Ringer Lactate has been suspended in all government hospitals as a precautionary measure, Dinesh Gundu Rao, health minister announced on Saturday. Officials said that Ringer Lactate solution is "typically administered intravenously to restore hydration and maintain fluid balance in patients." The health department revealed on Friday that the solution was procured by Karnataka State Medical Supplies Corporation Ltd from Paschim Banga Pharmaceutical Ltd. Health department officials reported a sudden increase in

maternal deaths at the Ballari district hospital between November 9 and 11, following caesarean operations. Out of 34 caesarean procedures conducted during this period, seven patients experienced complications, including acute kidney injury requiring dialysis and multi-organ dysfunction, the health department statement said. According to the statement, four of the affected patients died, while two have been discharged, and one is currently recovering at Vijayanagar Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) in Ballari. Addressing reporters, Minister Rao stated that it has not yet been officially confirmed whether the Ringer Lactate solution was responsible for the deaths. However, due to suspicions, samples have been sent for testing.

The minister noted that previous concerns about the solution had also led to sample testing, with some results showing no issues. "Samples were even sent to the Central Drug Laboratory in Kolkata, which approved its use," he added. Rao said that a technical committee was later formed to reassess the samples. Following re-tests, only the batches meeting standard quality criteria were cleared for use. He stressed the need to verify the quality of the current batch in question. "Samples have been sent for testing, including anaerobic tests, which showed no issues. However, an additional test is pending, and it may take eight to nine days for the results. Once the report is available, the situation will be clarified," he said. Rao stated that after the inci-

dents in Ballari, a team of specialists was dispatched to investigate the situation. "The specialists conducted thorough checks and found no fault on the part of the doctors, who did everything possible to save the patients," he said. He added, "The specialists' report also raised suspicions about the Ringer Lactate solution. Sharing similar concerns, we have sent the samples for testing. Once the results are available, we will make a decision accordingly." Rao reiterated that the use of the Ringer Lactate solution was stopped across the state as a precautionary measure. "Every life is valuable, and we cannot risk preventable deaths. Until the test results are clear, the solution will not be used. Future steps will be decided based on the findings," he added.

Chandrachud's observations have opened pandora's box: Jairam Ramesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday said the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 is in the news these days because of certain oral observations made in 2022 by then Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud that have since opened a pandora's box. The Congress general secretary in-charge communications recalled a speech delivered in 1991 by distinguished author Rajmohan Gandhi, who was then a Janata Dal MP representing Uttar Pradesh, during a debate in the Rajya Sabha on the Bill that subsequently became the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. This is in the news very much these days because of oral observations made by the just-retired Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on May 20, 2022 that has since opened a Pandora's Box," Ramesh said in a post on X. During that parliamentary debate, perhaps one of the greatest speeches in the Rajya Sabha's history was made by

Gandhi, he said. "It was a masterclass in Indian culture, traditions, history, and politics as well. His brilliant speech, with that lovely excerpt from the Mahabharata, has continuing relevance," Ramesh said. The Congress leader also posted screenshots of Gandhi's speech, in which he said "those who have opposed this Bill have spoken about what they call necessary to right the wrongs of history". "Not long ago, we all saw the Mahabharata serial. One great point in the Mahabharata serial is the end of the Kurukshetra war. One of our distinguished members, Mr RK Narayan, in his book on the Mahabharata has said that at the end of the Kurukshetra war, the stage is a blank," Gandhi had said in the Rajya Sabha. "The ringing lesson of the Mahabharata down the centuries is 'those who seek to right the wrongs of history with an attitude of revenge will only produce destruction and more destruction and more destruction'," Gandhi had said. Amid a row over claims on a mosque in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's shrine in Rajasthan's Ajmer, the Congress on Friday reiterated



its "firmest commitment" to the letter and spirit of the Places of Worship Act, which it said is being "violated brazenly" by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The opposition party made the assertion in a resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee during its over-four-hour-long meeting at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters here. "After reiterating its firmest commitment to the letter and spirit of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which is being violated brazenly by the BJP, the CWC discussed the challenges faced by the Indian National Congress following the results of the four Vidhan Sabha elections," the resolution read. The party's commitment to the Places of Worship (Special

Provisions) Act assumes significance as it comes days after a violent protest against a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque in Sambhal claimed four lives. Also, a court in Ajmer, known the world over as the home of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's dargah visited by thousands of devotees cutting across religious divides every day, has issued notices to the dargah committee, the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on a plea seeking to declare the shrine a temple. The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act prohibits changing the character of religious places from how they existed on August 15, 1947. However, the Supreme Court had noted that it had earlier dealt with the Act in its 2019 Ayodhya verdict and one of the law's provisions -- section 3 - did not expressly bar ascertaining the religious character of a place of worship. On May 20, 2022, the top court made oral observations while hearing a dispute involving the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and said ascertaining the religious character of a place of worship was not barred under the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act.

MahaYuti ally raises doubts on Electronic Voting Machines

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Rashtriya Samaj Paksha (RSP), a former ally of the BJP-led Mahayuti, on Saturday joined the opposition parties in raising doubts about the electronic voting machines (EVMs) in the recently held Maharashtra elections. RSP chief Mahadev Jankar alleged that his party's votes were transferred to Mahayuti candidates during the November 20 polls, which saw the ruling alliance record a landslide victory. The Mahayuti, comprising the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP, won 230 out of 288 seats, while the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) bagged 46 seats. Following the poll drubbing, the opposition parties have alleged irregularities in the functioning of EVMs and called for the use of ballot papers. Talking to PTI, Jankar said, "EVMs can be hacked. I am also an engineer. If democracy has to be kept alive, we need to switch to paper ballots." He also alleged that the RSP votes got transferred to Mahayuti candidates.

Committed to fostering the industrial expansion: MP CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHOPAL/NEW DELHI

Describing Madhya Pradesh as a strategic hub for connectivity, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday said his government was committed to fostering the industrial expansion of the state. He said that the strategic positioning of Madhya Pradesh had led the Stuttgart-based LAP Group to choose the state as its second destination, after Bengaluru, for expansion outside Germany. Yadav made these remarks during his visit to the LAP Group's factory in Stuttgart on the second day of his tour of Germany, where he also addressed a roundtable meeting on investment opportunities in Madhya Pradesh. Yadav emphasised that the state government is making every effort to encourage industrial expansion and investment promotion. The Regional Industry Conclaves (RICs) held across the state have helped create a favourable environment for setting up industries. As a result, not only national but also global investors are expanding their operations in Madhya Pradesh, said Yadav while assuring a promising future for prospective investments. Yadav said that the geographical positioning of



the state provides excellent prospects for industrial and business growth. The Chief Minister pointed out that there are many avenues to further strengthen industrial and business ties between Madhya Pradesh and Germany, including private investments, technological collaboration, and partnerships. Yadav extended a warm invitation to industry leaders and investors to participate in the Global Investors Summit, scheduled to be held in February 2025 in Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh. He highlighted the growing significance of Madhya Pradesh's partnership with Germany, emphasising that Germany's technical expertise, combined with the state's proactive investment initiatives, creates a strong foundation for mutual growth in trade and business. Madhya Pradesh offers abundant natural and mineral

resources, world-class infrastructure, a skilled workforce, industry-friendly policies, and a proactive administration committed to fostering innovation. The state government is also open to revising and refining its policies to further facilitate and encourage investments. Yadav also highlighted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is advancing toward economic prosperity and consolidation. He praised Germany's capabilities, noting that despite challenging times, the country managed to find a path to establish a strong global presence. Yadav pointed out the historical connection between Germany and India, with German scholars like Max Müller translating Indian Vedic texts, and German archaeology and cultural studies further linking the two nations.

Hurriyat asks J and K to reinstate employees fired over 'terror links'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SRINAGAR

Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Saturday asked the elected government in Jammu and Kashmir to take measures to stop the "injustice" of dismissing employees over alleged terror links and reinstate all those who have been terminated so far. His remark came a day after two government employees were dismissed from service by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for alleged terror links. "Two more government employees terminated by the stroke of a pen without any legal recourse! Families rendered destitute before the onset of harsh winters. Punishment and fear is the hallmark of an authoritarian mindset that has been ruling us here," Farooq said in a post on X. He also called upon the elected government headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the Union territory to reinstate all



the employees who have been terminated "in an unjust manner". "The elected administration should take immediate measures to stop this injustice and reinstate all the terminated in this unjust manner even without a hearing," the separatist leader added. The two government employees dismissed from service were identified as Abdul Rehman Naika, a pharmacist in the

health department, and Zahir Abbas, a teacher in the school education department. The lieutenant governor invoked Article 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution to terminate the employees after investigations by law enforcement and intelligence agencies "clearly established their terror links". Under the Article, Since has ordered the termination of several government employees over the past few years.

Minister vows action against drug peddlers in Karnataka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Saturday stressed the importance of stringent action against drug peddlers, assuring officers of full support. He also warned that Inspectors, Deputy Superintendents, and Commissioners of Police would be held accountable if drug-related activities persisted in their respective jurisdictions. Speaking at the inauguration of new police quarters and police station buildings, he reaffirmed Karnataka's commitment to its "war against drugs". Highlighting the significant sensitisation efforts and seizures, Parameshwara noted, "Drugs worth Rs 250 crore have been seized and destroyed in Bengaluru over the past year.

Policemen held by CBI for bribery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested three Delhi Police personnel for allegedly receiving a bribe of Rs 1 lakh to allow an illegal betting racket (satta) to operate, officials said on Saturday. All the involved policemen were posted at the Raghubir Nagar police chowki in the Khayala police station and demanded Rs 2.5 lakh from the complainant for letting her continue betting.

Winter in Kashmir: Security forces...

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In the Jammu region, the joint teams of security forces are already conducting massive search operations in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch to track down the footprints of the foreign terrorists hiding inside the natural caves in the higher reaches. On Thursday, a terrorist hideout was busted during a combing operation by the Army in the Chajla area of Mendhar in Poonch. A huge cache of explosives and ammunition was recovered from the hideout, which was located under a bridge in upper Chajla in Mendhar. The Border Security Force (BSF) is likely to activate its Winter border management strategy to prevent any major infiltration bid from across the International border. Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi also reviewed the current security situation in the Kathua district of Jammu region in the first half of November.

Social activist ends fast against EVMs

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ninety-six year-old social activist Dr. Babasaheb Pandurang Adhav alias Baba Adhav broke his three-day fast undertaken to oppose the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) after NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray appealed to him to end his agitation, on Saturday evening. On a day when State NCP (SP) President Jayant R. Patil, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut and NCP (AP) chief Ajit Pawar also met him and enquired about his health, Dr Baba Adhav drank a glass of water given by Uddhav and ended his fast at 5 pm. Earlier, talking to media persons, Baba Adhav had said the voting figures were manipulated to give advantage to the BJP-led MahaYuti which won a landslide victory over the

Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the recent Maharashtra Assembly polls. "The Assembly poll verdict is an assault on democracy... There were huge discrepancies in the voter turnout figures declared by the Election Commission of India (ECI). The vote-counting process was manipulated to give undue advantage to the outgoing MahaYuti,"

Lauding Baba Adhav for undertaking a fast against EVMs at such an advanced age, Uddhav said that the veteran social activist's agitation had inspired the Opposition parties as well the people across the state. Alleging that large-scale manipulations were carried out to ensure the victory of the MahaYuti, Uddhav said: "No one --- neither the winners nor the losers -- believes the outcome of the State Assembly polls. We are stunned how we lost, while the ruling alliance

leaders are shocked at how they won. The reason is clear. 'Satyameva Jayate' was killed, but now you (Dr. Baba Adha) have revived it and we are fully with him".

The SS (UBT) ex-CM said this agitation was like a spark but it would ignite into a huge blaze, and lauded Dr. Baba Adhav for carrying out the agitation at his advanced age and "inspiring all of us" to continue the fight. "We have also seen and heard how money power was brutally used in the polls... All have watched the videos of (Bharatiya Janata Party) leader Vinod Tawde (in Palghar, on Nov 19). We have seen the shower of schemes. But what the MahaYuti did was to give anesthesia to all its projects to complete its 'power operation' quickly," said Thackeray without mincing words.

Uddhav also urged leaders of the MBA -- comprising (SP)-SS (UBT)-Congress top leaders to follow in 'Dr. Baba Adhav's

footsteps, and continue agitation against EVMs. Lamenting that the information on elections was not available under RTI, Uddhav said how people's rights were being flouted "While the EVM-VVPAT receipt is visible, counting of the same is not allowed. This is preventing the e people and candidates from knowing whether their vote got registered properly or not, leading to many doubts. Dwelling upon the delay in the government formation in the state, Uddhav said: "Even after getting a brute majority, the chief minister has gone to his farm land, instead of going to Raj Bhavan... There is something that is definitely wrong". "When the MVA government was due to be formed in November 2019, the President's rule was imposed... Now, in 20-24, the term of the legislature has expired. We would like to know why the President's rule has not been imposed now.

Six held in Rajasthan's Bundi for witch hunting, torturing woman for two days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOTA

The police in Rajasthan's Bundi district on Saturday arrested a self-proclaimed exorcist, his aide, and four women for allegedly torturing a 50-year-old woman for two days after labelling her a "dayen" (witch), officials said. The accused allegedly tied Nandubai Meena, the victim, to a tree, chopped her hair, and tortured her with a hot iron rod for two days to "cure" her stomach ache caused by some "evil spirit" at the place of worship of a local deity near Gudagokulpura village in the Hindoli police station area, they added. The victim woman was referred to Jaipur for treatment on Saturday after her condition worsened, police said. The arrested accused have been identified as Babulal (31), the self-proclaimed exorcist, his



aide Tarachand (31), Mohanibai (48), Tonibai (28), Gorabai (28) and Sonabai (30), all residents Gudagokulpura, officials said. Bundi Superintendent of Police (SP) Rajendra Kumar Meena visited the Hindoli police station on Saturday and directed ASP Uma Sharma leading the probe to speed up the investigation. A resident Shahapura district, Nandubai Meena was allegedly subjected to barbaric torture in which she sustained burn

injuries, posing danger to her life," SP Meena said. The matter was reported to the police on Friday evening after which the police rescued the woman and sent her for medical examination, he added. Based on the woman's statement, the police have registered a case against the accused persons under the relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Rajasthan Prevention of Witch-hunting Act, 2015, the officer said. The SP also urged people not to fall prey to superstition and seek medical assistance for any health complications. Sources said Babulal performed similar rituals every Sunday to "cure" people of their ailments, pretending to be under the spell of the local deity. The victim woman was subjected to torture after she approached Babulal along with her son with complaints of stomach ache, police said.

Outsiders barred from Sambhal till December 10

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Pandey further claimed that innocent individuals were being framed for the violence. "Even those who were not present at the site of the clashes have been named in the FIRs. This is a blatant misuse of power," he said. SP state president Shyam Lal Pal said that the delegation's primary aim was to prepare a comprehensive report on the violence for party chief Akhilesh Yadav. The delegation included prominent leaders such as Lal Bihari Yadav, MPs Ziaur Rahman Barq, Harendra Malik, and Ruchi Veera, along with MLAs Kamal

Akhtar and Ravidas Mehrotra. Adding to the political tensions, Congress state president Ajay Rai announced that a delegation from his party would visit Sambhal on December 2 to meet victims and assess the ground situation. "We will ensure the voices of the affected families are heard," Rai said. The current unrest in Sambhal traces its origins to a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid on November 19. The petitioner alleged that the mosque was built over an ancient Harihar temple, a claim that has reignited communal

sensitivities in the region. Protests erupted during the survey and culminated in violent clashes on November 24. Protesters reportedly gathered near the mosque, pelting stones and setting vehicles ablaze. The situation spiraled into chaos, with police and civilians sustaining injuries. While authorities have denied opening fire on the protesters, the violence claimed four lives, deepening the divide in the already tense atmosphere. In the wake of the violence, the district administration has imposed Section 144 of the CrPC, banning public gatherings and rallies across

Sambhal. Security has been tightened, with additional police forces stationed in sensitive areas to prevent further disturbances. The Samajwadi Party has pledged financial assistance of Rs 5 Lakh each to the families of those killed in the recent violence in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh. MP Ruchi Veera stated that the party stands in solidarity with the bereaved families. Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has announced the aid, which will be disbursed to the families soon. The Samajwadi Party has also demanded that the State government provide a compensation of Rs 1 Crore to each victim's family.

Cyclonic storm Fengal begins...

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Earlier in the day, when the airport was operational, at least 12 flights were delayed. The Chennai airport in a post on 'X' said that a team of senior officials was closely monitoring the situation to facilitate the earliest resumption of operations as meteorological conditions improve. "A WebEx meeting was conducted on 30th November 2024 at 1630 hrs, involving all stakeholders and officials from the India Meteorological Department (IMD). During the meeting, IMD provided updates indicating that the landfall is expected around 2030 hrs, with prevailing

weather conditions likely to persist until 2330 hrs. Following consultations with AAI Headquarters and considering feedback from stakeholders, it has been decided to extend the closure of operations through a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) until 0400 IST on 1st December 2024. We recommend passengers check with their respective airlines regarding their flights," it said in a post on 'X'. The complete disruption of services left the passengers in a lurch and according to ballpark estimates from official sources, over 10,000 people could have been affected due to cancellations and diversions. While the

services were hit, nearly 1,000 passengers continued to stay back inside the airport premises to take the first available flight from here to their respective destinations. As many as 20 flights were cancelled in Hyderabad as well which were services to and from Chennai and Tirupati. Initially, expecting an earlier landfall of the cyclone, airport authorities had declared suspension of operations till 7 pm starting from 12.30 pm. The cyclonic storm is expected to make a landfall tonight, close to Puducherry. Chennai airport said IndiGo Airlines temporarily suspended flight operations, which will resume once the weather improves.

High drama ensues as man throws liquid at Kejriwal during padyatra

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

High drama ensued in Delhi's Greater Kailash area on Saturday as a man allegedly threw a liquid at former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal during his padyatra on Saturday evening. The man was detained by security personnel present at the spot, identified as Ashok Jha, a bus marshal posted at the Khanpur Bus Depot. The incident took place around 5.50 pm when Kejriwal, with Greater Kailash MLA and Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, was walking in a narrow lane, greeting people as part of his campaign to strengthen his party's presence and connect with voters in the region following which the security personnel swiftly overpowered him. The visuals show stains in his blue sweater and scarves. Kejriwal was seen wiping his face after the liquid was thrown at him. In a video of the incident, Kejriwal can be seen walking in front, Bharadwaj a few

steps behind him. Security personnel are also inside the cordon created using the rope. As he moves forward, the man reaches out and throws a liquid on Kejriwal. The liquid also falls on two security personnel. According to the police, the AAP Chief was shaking hands with the public when a person namely Ashok Jha attempted to throw "water" on Arvind Kejriwal, but he was immediately caught as the police staff was nearby along with ropes. In a statement, Delhi police said that the padyatra was organised by the AAP party members without permission. The said padyatra started from the chopal Savitri Nagar and ended at Meghna motors in the same area in which Arvind Kejriwal was the chief guest. "In view of this a proper police deployment both in plain clothes and in uniform along with rope to control the crowd was made. The said attempt was foiled and Sub Inspector Sandeep from Malviya Nagar police station caught hold of Jha, the cops remarked. Further examination of the person is



in progress to find out the reasons behind this act, the police said. Soon after the incident, a blame game has started between AAP and BJP. While AAP has claimed that the attack was done at the behest of BJP, the BJP leaders have claimed that it was a drama by Arvind

Kejriwal. Reacting to the development, AAP said, "If a former chief minister is not safe in the national capital, where will the common man go?" AAP lashed out at the BJP-led Centre for the incident. "Delhi is facing a complete breakdown of law and order under BJP's rule,"

it said. Delhi Chief Minister Atishi said that BJP's dirty politics stooped too low by attacking Kejriwal as it is afraid of being defeated for the third time in the upcoming Delhi assembly elections. She warned that the people of Delhi will teach a lesson to BJP. "BJP people: Delhi

people will take revenge for such cheap acts. Last time they got 8 seats, this time Delhi people will give zero seats to BJP," she said in a post on X. Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj blamed the Modi government for the law and order situation in the national capital. He said,

"BJP leaders carry our rallies in all states, they are never attacked... There are continuous attacks on Arvind Kejriwal... BJP attacked him in Nangloi. He was attacked in Chhatrapur... The law and order in Delhi have collapsed and the central government and the Home Minister are not doing anything..." Several other leaders including, Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha and party MLA Naresh Balyan also condemned the attack and traded barbs at BJP. The BJP was quick to hit back, accusing Kejriwal of staging the incident. BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor dismissed the attack as a political ploy. "Every political strategy of Kejriwal has failed. Now, he's returning to his old tricks like being slapped or ink being thrown at him. He should clarify what new game he has started today," Kapoor said. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said that locals in the area confronted Kejriwal about issues like polluted water, and denied BJP's link to the

incident. He also accused AAP of exaggerating the incident. This attempted attack comes amid Kejriwal's continued efforts to engage with the public ahead of the upcoming elections, and it highlights the challenges faced by political leaders in maintaining security while interacting with constituents. This latest incident follows a similar attack in October, when AAP claimed that Kejriwal was targeted during a rally in Delhi. This is not the first time Kejriwal has been targeted. In 2016, the AAP leader was attacked with ink during a visit to Bikaner, Rajasthan, where he had attended a condolence meeting for a local AAP leader. Since his political debut in 2013, Kejriwal has been the victim of several such attacks. Kejriwal is currently leading a padyatra to connect with the public and promote the AAP's agenda ahead of the 2025 Delhi elections. The padyatra is a key component of his campaign strategy, as he seeks to engage voters across the city.

When will you take action on city's spiraling crime?: Kejriwal questions HM Shah

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Claiming that law and order situation is deteriorating in the national capital, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday here said "When will you take action on Delhi's spiraling crime?" demanding answers from Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his inaction over the rising crime incidents in the national capital. The AAP National Convener visited the family of an elderly man brutally murdered in South Delhi's Panchsheel Park on Saturday. Expressing shock and concern, the AAP Supremo said the city is gripped by fear as incidents of violence, ransom calls, and attacks continue unabated. During a media interaction after meeting the aggrieved family, AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal said, "We are currently in Panchsheel Park, considered one of the most upscale areas



of Delhi. Just a few days ago, a horrific incident took place here where a 64-year-old man was brutally murdered. His throat was slit, and his body was repeatedly stabbed with knives in a ruthless act of violence." The AAP Supremo mentioned that he just visited the victim's family, and now standing in front of their house. He further described the victim's family as being in "deep shock and immense grief," struggling to comprehend the brutality of the crime. "The situation in Delhi has become alarming, where even senior citizens are

no longer safe. This victim was a senior citizen as well," he remarked. Kejriwal further highlighted the deteriorating law and order situation in the city, saying, "Businesspeople are receiving ransom and extortion calls. Shootouts are taking place in various parts of the city. Women are feeling unsafe. The entire city seems to be in a state of chaos, with crime spreading unchecked everywhere." In his concluding remarks, Arvind Kejriwal addressed Union Home Minister Amit Shah to focus on curbing the rising tide of crime. "Ever since Amit Shah became the Home Minister, the situation in Delhi has gone from bad to worse. He is unable to handle Delhi. The city is in a terrible state. I hope the situation improves in the coming days. I want to ask the Home Minister Amit Shah when will he take immediate and decisive action against this rising tide of crime," he stated.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal targeting the Centre and Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the alleged rise in crimes in Delhi and turning it into a 'gangster capital', the BJP on Saturday hit back and alleged that AAP is involved in serious criminal activities, accusing one of its MLA Naresh Balyan of running an extortion racket with the party's consent. In a post on X, BJP played an audio clip of a purported conversation of the AAP MLA Naresh Balyan with the gangster. "Ye hain AAP ke 'Kattar Imaandaar'... Aam Aadmi Party MLA Naresh Balyan in a conversation with a gangster. The gangster asks why the AAP leader has filed a complaint against him. Balyan replies that he was

being blackmailed by the gangster and his goons. The gangster responds that he would make some recording of Balyan viral, listening to which the MLA flips and starts singing like a canary," BJP said. "In another conversation, a close aide to Aam Aadmi Party MLA Naresh Balyan is talking to a gangster about a land deal, and blackmailing several other businesspersons. Behind their garb of Imaandaari, all these AAP frauds are doing is Gundagardi!" it added. BJP's IT department head Aam Malviya too targeted the AAP chief in a series of posts on X. "...Arvind Kejriwal is running an extortion network in Delhi and then blames the BJP for poor law and order," Malviya said. "...AAP has reduced Delhi to a cesspool of corruption," he added.



Addressing a press conference, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia and Delhi state president Virendra Sachdeva played an audio clip of purported conversation of the AAP MLA with the gangster. Bhatia alleged that AAP MLA Naresh Balyan was engaging in criminal activities with the consent of party chief Arvind Kejriwal and questioned whether the MLA would be expelled from the party. Bhatia claimed that the audio

clip revealed Balyan discussing threats and intimidation tactics to extort money from a builder. He alleged that such behaviour reflects the character of the AAP and its leadership. "Who is their (AAP) biggest supporter? It is the gangster who openly extorts money. And who asks them to extort money? Does the one who has taken the oath of the Constitution openly extort money with Kejriwal's permission?" he questioned. AAP MLA or it would be better if I say extortionist MLA Naresh Balyan, is talking to a gangster in this audio clip. The MLA is talking to the gangster like his brother. The MLA is indicating that a certain builder, a certain person, is being called, threatened, and intimidated. They discuss how to intensify threats,

demand ransom, and distribute the money collected. This cannot be acceptable behaviour for any MLA, however, if the MLA is from a party of dishonest party convener Arvind Kejriwal, then it is possible," he alleged. Drawing parallels with the BJP-led Centre, Bhatia said, "On one hand, the law and order situation in Delhi is the responsibility of the Centre and it is our responsibility that everyone feels safe. On the other hand, the elected government of Delhi, who has taken the oath of the Constitution, threatens Delhiites and ensures that they do not feel safe. This is worrisome." Bhatia also questioned Kejriwal's silence on the matter and demanded whether Balyan would be expelled from the party.

LG rejects GGSIPU's proposal to impose affiliation fees on Government institutes: Raj Niwas

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant move aimed at protecting the interests of students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, Delhi Lt Governor (LG) V K Saxena has rejected a proposal by Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU) to impose affiliation fees on government institutes, Raj Niwas said on Saturday. The amendment of Clause 5 of Statute 24 of the University, had it been implemented, would have required government colleges and institutions affiliated with GGSIPU to pay affiliation fees from the 2025-26 academic sessions. This would have inevitably led to increased



financial burdens on these institutions, ultimately resulting in higher course fees for students. As per the Statute 24, Clause 5, affiliation fee is charged from all the self-financed Institutions whereas no processing fee or affiliation fee is being charged from the colleges or institutions established and run by the Central Government or a State Government or fully

funded by the Central Government or a State Government. Expressing serious concerns over the potential implications of this decision, Saxena emphasized that such a move could disproportionately affect students from disadvantaged backgrounds who often rely on government institutions for affordable higher education. Disposing of the file in this regard, Saxena noted that meritorious students, many from poor economic backgrounds, generally get admission in government colleges, purely based on their talent and approving the University's proposal may put the future of these talented students at stake.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Consistent winds, clear sky with bright sun failed to improve the air quality as the air quality index in Delhi continued to remain in the "very poor" category with an Air Quality Index of 346 while experiencing its lowest minimum temperature of the season at 9 degree Celsius on Saturday morning, down from 10°C the previous day. This November was the second most polluted penultimate month ever after 2021. The average air quality index of November this year was 375 against 376 in November 2021. This was also the first time in Nov when AQI never fell below 300 in the entire month. After the warmest Oct in 73 years, Delhiites experienced the

warmest November in eight years. The lack of active western disturbances, coupled with insufficient snowfall in the Himalayan region, caused Delhiites to experience a warmer November this time. According to the India Meteorological Department's data both mean maximum and minimum temperature stayed above normal in November. The air quality in Noida and Gurugram also continued to fall in the 'very poor' to 'severe' category. This marks the seventh consecutive day that Delhi-NCR's air quality has remained in the 'very poor' category, creating significant challenges for public health and daily life. Meanwhile, IQ Air real time data recorded 392 and PM2.5 concentration is currently



54.2 times the World Health Organization annual PM2.5 guideline value. PM2.5 was the primary pollutant in Delhi, with levels recorded at 153 µg/m at 3 pm on Saturday. Out of the 38 monitoring stations across the national capital, only Shadipur recorded AQI in the "severe" category, while 34 stations recorded "very poor" AQI,

according to the Sameer app that provides hourly updates of national AQI published by the CPCB. In Anand Vihar, one of the national Capital's most polluted areas, the AQI reached an alarming level of 505 around 8 A.M., placing it in the hazardous category. This is a stark indicator of the deteriorating environmental conditions. The toxic air is not confined to Delhi alone, as neighboring cities are also grappling with dangerous pollution levels. Meanwhile, in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday morning, Noida recorded an AQI of 267, Greater Noida 286, and Ghaziabad 250, while Haryana's Gurugram saw an AQI of 284, with most areas falling in the 'very poor' to 'severe' categories.

Meanwhile, a report by the Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) has revealed that measures taken by the government to curb pollution in Delhi under the so-called GRAP-4 or Graded Action Response Plan has cost the city around Rs 2,500 crore (\$300 million). CTI chairman Brijesh Goyal said increased pollution levels have led to a sharp decline in footfall in markets as well as a slowdown in the tourism sector. Goyal said that around 300,000 to 400,000 visitors would arrive in Delhi markets before the AQI crisis but the number has since dropped to just over 100,000. This translates to a daily loss of over \$12 million to Delhi retailers and businesses as shoppers increasingly turn to online shopping.

NCRTC launches assistive aids for differentially-abled passengers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has launched an assistive aids distribution drive for differently-abled passengers, aiming to improve their mobility, accessibility and independence, helping them to navigate daily life with greater ease, a statement said on Saturday. Around 130 people residing nearby Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor have received the devices -- smart cane, hearing aids and crutches -- on Saturday, said a senior NCRTC official, adding the identification of others is underway and they will also get it. This is the first drive of distribution of assistive aids to differently abled. Similar initiatives will be organised in future, the statement said. These assistive devices were



thoughtfully selected through a survey by the team of disability experts to meet individual requirements, ensuring the most suitable support for these beneficiaries, it said. This initiative not only supports mobility and accessibility but also plays a crucial role in the empowerment and employability of differently-

abled individuals, the statement said. With improved access to transportation, daily activities and workspaces, differently-abled individuals can pursue job opportunities that may have previously been inaccessible, it said. Empowered with tools to navigate their environment with confidence, these individuals can realise their

potential and participate fully in economic and social activities, the statement said. The NCRTC has been committed to make RRTS stations and Namo Bharat train services universally accessible. This initiative marks a significant step toward this goal. These assistive aids will improve the quality of life for differently-abled individuals by fostering greater mobility, accessibility and social inclusion, it said. To aid visually impaired commuters, dedicated tactile paths have been provided at stations, guiding them along the shortest and most intuitive routes to key areas, minimising confusion and enhancing their independence, the statement said. Additionally, specially designed spacious lifts have been installed to accommodate not only

wheelchairs for differently-abled individuals but also stretchers to address the medical needs in emergency as well, it said. Ramps, multiple lifts and escalators are strategically placed at entry/exits to provide seamless access to concourse and platform levels, ensuring an easy and hassle-free journey for all commuters, including the elderly, children and women. In the Namo Bharat trains, seats are reserved for the women, elderly and differently-abled people in every coach. Additionally, a train attendant is deployed in every train to assist the commuters, the statement said. The drive is being organized in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific (JFPR), it added.

BJP leader conducts 'public survey' referendum at Rajiv Chowk Metro Station

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Vijay Goel, along with workers from 'Lok Abhiyan,' conducted a 'public survey' referendum at Rajiv Chowk Metro Station to determine the issues the public wants to highlight in the elections. Goel claimed approximately 3,700 people participated and shared their opinions during the referendum. Goel highlighted 12 major issues plaguing Delhi: sewer water, pollution, broken roads, heaps of garbage and waste, dilapidated hospitals, struggling schools, broken roads, lack of parking, poor law and order, corruption, polluted Yamuna, presence of Bangladeshi and Rohingya immigrants, and the status of full statehood for Delhi. Goel also posed a question, asking



who the public holds responsible for these identified problems. Bhagya Singh, an auto driver, described the parking problem in Delhi as suffocating, explaining that drivers face significant challenges in finding parking spaces, which often leads to serious crimes. Neetu Vashist, a mother of two children

studying in Class VI and VII, expressed concern about the health problems children and adults are facing due to pollution and hoped that this issue would also be addressed. Meanwhile, Shankar Avasthi, an IT student, highlighted the persistent sewer problems and the resultant flooding, which cripples the daily life of people during the monsoon.

ECI invites Congress to discuss Maharashtra poll result concerns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday asserted that all poll procedures it followed in Maharashtra were transparent and assured that it would review all legitimate concerns flagged by the Congress, which alleged serious inconsistencies. In its interim response to the party, the poll authority invited a Congress delegation on December 3 to discuss concerns expressed by it.

The commission reiterated that the process was transparent with the involvement of candidates or their agents at every stage. It also assured of a review of the Congress' legitimate concerns and a written response after hearing the party's delegation in person.

The Congress on Friday raised with the ECI "serious and grave inconsistencies," which it said were being revealed in the data relating to the polling and counting processes for the recently concluded Maharashtra Assembly polls and sought an in-person hearing to present relevant evidence.

The poll-body asserted that a transparent electoral roll updation process was undertaken with the involvement of all political parties. Responding to the issue regarding the voter turnout data, the ECI asserted



Maharashtra Cong chief Nana Patole wrote to the ECI seeking details and evidence of voter turnout.

PTI

that there was no discrepancy in it and the data was available with all candidates polling station-wise and is verifiable. The gap in the 5 pm polling data and the final voter turnout was due to procedural priorities, as presiding officers perform multiple statutory duties near the close of polling before updating the voter turnout data. As an additional disclosure measure, an ECI press note at around 11:45 pm was introduced during the 2024 Lok Sabha election and followed subsequently during all Assembly polls thereafter, the poll body told the Congress.

The ECI said that total votes polled at each polling booth was given by the presiding officer, before leaving the polling station, to the authorised agents of candidates (Form 17 C Part1) at the end of polling on 20th November, the day of polling in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. This cannot be changed. This number aggregates to final voter turnout which all political parties and candidates can verify. For the conduct of elections, ECI takes employees on election duty from various departments of state government. The presiding officer near the completion of polling

at the polling station performs multiple statutory responsibilities like filling up of various statutory forms, record keeping of activities, sealing of the machines, etc. before winding up the polling at the polling station. "The Commission will convey its detailed reply to the issues raised in your letter at the earliest possible, but after suitably hearing from you further in person, for which you have conveyed a request. Accordingly, INC delegation is welcome to the Commission at 5 PM on 3'd December 2024," the poll body said.

CPI (ML) in Jharkhand not to seek ministerial berth in Soren cabinet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
RANCHI

The CPI (ML)-Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya on Saturday said that they would not seek ministerial berth in the newly elected Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand. He said they would extend full support to the Soren government in its every right step and fulfil the guarantees given to the people during the election campaign.

"CPI (ML) L will not put any pressure for ministerial berth in the cabinet. We just have two legislators. So, we do not think we are ready for such responsibility. When we will have eight to ten legislators, we will take the responsibility," Bhattacharya told media persons here. CPI (ML) L contested four seats as part of the INDIA bloc in the recently concluded Jharkhand assembly elections and managed to win two seats. Bhattacharya said, "We will extend our full support to the



government for its every right step and fulfil the guarantees. Government is one front, while the struggle is another front. CPI (ML) L will continue to fight against wrong ideology, lies, hatred and corporate loot. We will be working to unite the society." On the offer for ministerial berth, Bhattacharya said that there was no such offer in his knowledge. Chief Minister Hemant Soren assumed office after taking

oath as the 14th Chief Minister of Jharkhand in a grand ceremony here on Thursday. The CM, after the first cabinet meeting on Thursday, told the reporters that expansion of his cabinet would be done shortly. The JMM-led alliance last week stormed to power in Jharkhand for the second time in a row, securing 56 seats in the 81-member assembly, while the BJP-led NDA managed 24 seats.

Karan Singh urges Yunus to prevent carnage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Veteran Congress leader Karan Singh on Saturday condemned the recent attacks on Hindu temples and community leaders in Bangladesh and urged the country's interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus to take immediate steps to prevent the "carnage" as well as reassure the Hindu community of their security. "I urge the Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, who heads the new (interim) government of Bangladesh, to take immediate steps to prevent this carnage and to reassure the large and widespread Hindu community that their lives, property and religious places shall be fully secure," Singh said.

Mehbooba urges LG to rethink Vaishno Devi ropeway project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Asserting that religious places should not be converted into tourism hotspots, PDP supremo Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday requested Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha to reconsider constructing a ropeway on the trek leading to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district. The former chief minister also demanded immediate withdrawal of an FIR against anti-ropeway protesters over the recent violence in Katra town, the base camp for pilgrims visiting the revered shrine atop Trikuta hills.

"The livelihood of shopkeepers, labourers and others are linked to the pilgrimage and they are bound to face a lot of problems (after construction of the ropeway). The government should think that it is a religious place and be treated like one instead of converting it into a tourism spot," Mehbooba told reporters after meeting the protesters in Katra.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) supremo said there were several places with tourism potential in Jammu and Kashmir.

"This is a place of reverence where a devotee comes with a



pure heart to seek blessings of the Mata. Construction of the ropeway will not only bypass three important locations enroute to the shrine but also snatch the livelihood of thousands of locals," Mehbooba said. Jammu and Kashmir is already grappling with the country's highest unemployment rate as government jobs are nowhere and private investment is not coming, she claimed. "Privatisation requires electricity. Though Jammu and Kashmir produces electricity, it is given free of cost to some states and we have nothing for ourselves. People who earn their livelihood by means of labour work with the blessings of the Mata will lose the oppor-

tunity after the ropeway's construction," she said. Mehbooba said the Baridar community, which managed the shrine's affairs before formation of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, were not happy with their ouster and were continuously protesting.

"The lieutenant governor (shrine board chairperson) should reconsider the decision and take the livelihood of the locals into account before starting work on the ropeway, which can be shifted somewhere else," she said. The PDP leader also demanded the withdrawal of an FIR registered against the anti-ropeway protesters last week following a clash between them and law enforcing agencies. "The lieutenant governor has been there for the last five years and he should tell how many jobs were created and given to youngsters... When you snatch livelihood opportunities from people, protests are bound to happen. We are living in a democracy and it is the right of the people to protest," he said. Meanwhile, the Congress' Jammu and Kashmir president Tariq Hameed Karra visited Katra and met Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti president and party leader Bhupinder Singh Jamwal.

BJP like landslides; does not follow rules, democratic norms: Priyanka Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
KOZHIKODE

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on a two-day visit to Kerala after her maiden electoral win from the Wayanad hill constituency, on Saturday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did not play by any rules or follow democratic norms in its political attacks.

Comparing the BJP's behaviour with the landslides that hit Wayanad in July, Priyanka contended that just like the natural disaster, the saffron party's conduct knows no rules, offers no explanations and follows no democratic norms that are normally adhered to in political fights.

"The political challenges we face (from the BJP) today are like landslides. There are no rules. There are no explanations." "The behaviour of the ruling party (at the Centre), the BJP, knows no democratic norms, not even those we normally adhere to in a political fight," she said while speaking at a

joint public meeting, with her brother and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, at Makkam here.

She further said that institutions were being destroyed, leading to the wavering of the people's basic faith in the electoral process and "the institutions that held our country together".

Later, at a reception given to her in Karulai in Nilambur assembly constituency in Malappuram district, Priyanka reiterated -- "we are fighting against the BJP that has no rules, no respect for democracy and the Constitution".

"They have a negative and destructive agenda," she added. She claimed that the Parliament had not functioned for a week as the BJP was afraid to discuss certain issues on which the Congress-led opposition wanted to hold discussions in the Lok Sabha.

"We have a big battle before us in the Parliament and across India. We are fighting to safeguard our Constitution," she said.



She also said that there was a need for a "fair, balanced and strong judiciary that is not pressurised".

Priyanka also assured the people of Wayanad LS constituency that she was in Parliament for them and it is their voice that she will raise there. "It is your voice that I will raise. It is your problems that I will try to resolve and it is your beliefs, values and aspirations that I will stand for each and every day from now till the end," she said.

Cochin shipyard to refit INS Vikramaditya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Ministry of Defence on Saturday signed a contract with Cochin Shipyard Limited for Short Refit and Dry Docking (SRDD) of aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya at an overall cost of Rs. 1207.5 Crore, a statement here said. INS Vikramaditya was commissioned in the Indian Navy in November 2013. After completion of the Refit, INS Vikramaditya will join the active fleet of the Indian Navy with upgraded combat capability. This project is an important step towards development of Cochin Shipyard Limited as Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) Hub for supporting the industrial ecosystem of India. The project envisages the involvement of nearly 50 MSMEs and would lead to employment generation for more than 3500 personnel. The Project will provide a major boost to Government of India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiative. The aircraft carrier was rebuilt in Russia according to Indian Navy specifications before it joined service.

150 two-wheelers caught in fire in Varanasi station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
VARANASI

Over 150 two-wheelers were destroyed in a fire that broke out at a parking stand in Varanasi's Cantt railway station, officials said on Saturday. There were no reports of any casualties.

The incident took place on Friday night when the fire erupted near the platform one parking stand, according to railway officials.

Upon receiving information about the incident, teams from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) along with the fire department rushed to the spot to douse the flames, they said.

The blaze was brought under control but over 150 vehicles were reduced to ashes, they added. Additional Divisional Railway Manager Lalji Chaudhary expressed regret over the incident.

He said that the parking stand was set up for railway employees and because of the fire there has been a lot of damage.

There has been no loss of life of any kind in the fire, Chaudhary said, adding that a committee has been formed to investigate the matter.

Two Mahseer fish found in south Odisha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Researchers at the Central University of Odisha have discovered two Mahseer fish species from the Indravati river system in the state's southern region, officials said.

These fish species belong to the cyprinidae family, which are large-bodied and big-scaled carps, and are also included under 20 mega fishes of the world, they said. They are often referred to as the 'king of the Indian aquatic system'. In Odisha, Mahseer fish species have earlier been reported from the Mahanadi and Brahmani rivers and the Similipal region. However, the

rare species were for the first time spotted in any river in the southern part, the Koraput-based institute said in a statement on Saturday.

"It is a sacred fish and worshipped in many Hindu temples in India," it said. Researchers led by Sharat Kumar Palita, dean of School of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources (SBCNR), discovered the fish species, said the statement.

Under close scrutiny in the university laboratory, the fishes were identified as Mahseer fishes and later confirmed by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata. The ZSI identified the two species as 'tor tor' and 'tor putitora', it said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Deprecating the orders passed by the high courts (HCs) fixing a time-bound schedule for conclusion of trial while rejecting bail applications, the Supreme Court (SC) has said such directions were difficult to implement and give a false hope to the litigants.

The apex court said such directions adversely affect the functioning of the trial courts as in many trial courts, there may be pending older cases of the same category. "Before we part with this order, every day we notice that in several orders passed by different high courts while rejecting the bail applications, in a routine manner, the high courts are fixing a time-bound schedule for the conclusion of the trials," said a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George

Masih. The top court passed the order while granting bail to a man, who has been incarcerated for two and a half years in a case of alleged counterfeit currency notes.

While granting him the relief, the bench noted that trial was not likely to conclude in a reasonable time and the appellant deserves to be enlarged on bail following the well-settled rule that "bail is rule and jail is an exception". It said every court has criminal cases pending which require expeditious disposal for several reasons such as requirement of the penal statutes, long incarceration, age of the accused etc. "Only because someone files a case in our constitutional courts, he cannot get out of turn hearing. Perhaps after rejecting the prayer for bail, the courts want to give some satisfaction to the accused by fixing a time-bound schedule for trial," the bench

observed. "Such orders are difficult to implement. Such orders give a false hope to the litigants," the bench said in its November 25 verdict.

It said if in a given case, in law and on facts, an accused is entitled to bail on the ground of long incarceration without the trial making any progress, the court must grant bail.

The bench said the option of expediting the trial was not the solution.

Referring to a constitution bench verdict, the apex court said it was held that in the ordinary course, the constitutional courts should refrain from fixing a time-bound schedule for disposal of cases pending before any other courts. "A direction which can be issued in exceptional circumstances is being routinely issued by high courts without noticing the law laid down by the constitution bench," the bench said.



spike protein in the brain, said the researchers.

"Vaccination reduced but did not eliminate spike protein accumulation after infection in

mice. Our findings suggest persistent spike protein at the brain borders may contribute to lasting neurological sequelae of COVID-19," said the

researchers. The reduction was "only around 50 per cent in mice, leaving residual spike protein that continues to pose a toxic risk to the brain".

For the study, the team developed a novel AI-powered imaging technique to understand how the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein affects the brain. The method, which offers a three-dimensional visualisation of viral proteins, was deployed to find previously undetectable distributions of spike protein in tissue samples from Covid-19 patients and mice. The findings revealed signifi-

cantly elevated concentrations of spike protein in the skull's bone marrow and meninges, even years after infection. The spike protein binds to so-called ACE2 receptors, particularly abundant in these regions. The study also suggested a mechanism for the virus's entry into the central nervous system. "In both mouse and COVID-19 human tissues, we found spike protein in the skull meninges connections (SMCs), which the virus or virus components could use to travel from the skull marrow to the meninges and the brain parenchyma," said the authors.

Headaches, sleep disturbance, brain fog may be long COVID

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind the Covid-19 pandemic, can persist in the skull and its surroundings i.e. meninges for years after infection, leading to a long-lasting effect on the brain, according to a major German study. Researchers from Helmholtz Munich and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitat (LMU) found that SARS-CoV-2 spike protein remains in the brain's protective layers -- the meninges, and the skull's bone marrow for up to four years after infection.

These spike proteins are responsible for triggering chronic inflammation in affected individuals and increase the risk of neurodegenerative diseases, the team found.

The study 'Persistence of spike protein at the skull-meninges-brain axis may contribute to the neurological sequelae of COVID-19,' by Prof. Ali Ertürk, Director at the Institute for Intelligent Biotechnologies at Helmholtz Munich among others said that the long-term neurological effects include "accelerated brain ageing, potentially leading to a loss of five to 10

years of healthy brain function in affected individuals." The study, published in the journal Cell Host & Microbe, said that the patients may also have neurological symptoms of long Covid such as headaches, sleep disturbances, and "brain fog," or cognitive impairment.

About five to 10 per cent of people infected with Covid are likely to experience long Covid -- approximately 400 million individuals may carry a significant amount of the spike protein.

Notably, vaccines against the deadly virus significantly reduce the accumulation of the

Yogi highlights environmental challenges, advocates sustainable development

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath voiced grave concerns on Saturday about escalating environmental and ecological challenges, emphasizing the Uttar Pradesh government's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainability. Speaking at the Green India Summit, the Chief Minister warned of the alarming pollution levels in Delhi, describing it as a "gas chamber." He expressed particular concern for the elderly and those with respiratory conditions, noting the judiciary's active role in addressing the crisis. Highlighting the impacts of climate change, CM Yogi

pointed to shifting monsoon patterns. "Earlier, the monsoon lasted from June 15 to August 15. Now, it extends from August 15 to October 15," he said, explaining how these changes disrupt traditional sowing and harvesting cycles, creating significant challenges for farmers. Uneven rainfall, with some areas experiencing floods and others drought, further exacerbates the problem. He attributed many environmental issues to unplanned development and harmful human habits, including water pollution. The CM noted that contaminated water is causing an increase in diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, and gastrointestinal disorders.



Yogi Adityanath criticized unscientific industrial practices, such as dumping waste into rivers, for creating ecological disasters. He also drew attention to the overuse of pesticides and chemicals in agriculture, citing the infamous "Cancer Train," named for its high number of cancer patients caused by chemical-intensive farming practices. The Chief Minister shared progress on the state government's initiatives to combat environmental degradation. Since 2017, Uttar Pradesh has installed over 16 lakh LED streetlights, reducing carbon emissions by 9.4 lakh tons and saving Rs 968 crore in energy costs. He encouraged citizens to adopt solar energy through the PM Suryaghar Yojana,

allowing individuals to generate and sell surplus power, promoting renewable energy use. Reforestation has been another area of focus. Since 2017, the state has planted 204 crore trees, increasing forest cover to 10%. The government aims to expand this to 15% in the next three years, alongside developing a 23,000-hectare land bank for renewable energy projects. Addressing pollution from stubble burning and traditional cooking methods, CM Yogi praised the Ujjwala Yojana, which has provided free LPG connections to 10 crore families since 2016. He explained that traditional cooking fuels are as harmful as inhaling smoke from 100

cigarettes daily. The Chief Minister also spotlighted Eastern Uttar Pradesh's sanitation revolution. Between 1977 and 2017, encephalitis caused the deaths of 50,000 children in 38 districts due to contaminated water and open defecation. Improved sanitation and clean water initiatives have eradicated the disease in the region within just two years. Yogi Adityanath called for collective efforts from governments, institutions, and citizens to protect the environment. He urged experts to focus on research and innovation in environmental conservation and lauded the Green India Summit as a significant step toward fostering awareness and action.

Manipur is not like Mizoram: CM N Biren Singh

PTI ■ IMPHAL

A day after the Manipur government urged Mizoram CM Lalduhoma to demonstrate "better statesmanship" by being a "good neighbour" rather than fueling hatred through "unwarranted comments", Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Saturday said Manipur is not like Mizoram, "which was once just a district in Assam". Speaking at a function for construction of infrastructure to relocate the Assam Rifles from the premises of the historic Langthabal Old Palace, Singh said, "Manipur is not like Mizoram. We have a written history of 2,000 years. Manipur merged with the Union of India as a single entity in 1949. Our boundaries were not newly created but we joined with the Union with intact boundaries." The Manipur CM's reaction came in the backdrop of a recent interview given by Lalduhoma to a national daily in which he said Singh was a liability for the state, its people and the BJP, and even President's Rule is preferable compared to his



administration. "Assam Rifles is here to serve the nation. They are not our enemies. We all are Indian citizens. The gap can be bridged through interactions between commanders, CSOs, and intellectuals. Our common enemy is located in foreign territories, not within. The paramilitary force can deal with insurgents or unlawful activities as they see fit, but not everyone is an insurgent," the CM said. "People ask, 'What is the Chief Minister doing?' Can the CM go and engage in firing? The CM makes policy plans—how to identify illegal immigrants, how to cancel the Free

Movement Regime, and how to implement the NRC. We will never rest until we have clearly safeguarded the entire land of Manipur and its indigenous people," Singh asserted. The CM asserted that the conflict since May 3 last year is not due to corruption by the government but because of measures taken to protect the original inhabitants of the land and address the distorted histories of the state. "Naturally, those who once thrived on the drug trade will be upset with the government and against me," he added. Singh also thanked Union Home Minister Amit Shah

and Assam Rifles authorities for agreeing to relocate their camp from Langthabal Old Palace. He said, "The Langthabal Palace is a historic place. The Assam Rifles has been stationed in the state for more than 100 years for security reasons. They cannot shift immediately. Major General Ravroop and the DG understand this well. They took the demands of the people for the relocation of the force from the old palace very seriously, as it is a historical site and very close to the university campus. Later, talking to reporters, Singh said, "I would like to thank Union Home Minister Amit Shah, IGAR, and Assam Rifles authorities. They agreed to vacate the Langthabal Old Palace, which is the second palace of the state, and relocate to another area. The people had been demanding the relocation of the Assam Rifles from the old palace, but it did not materialise due to a communication gap between the Assam Rifles and the state government. I am very grateful to the Assam Rifles for agreeing to shift. This is an

achievement for the government." Asked about statements made by the Mizoram CM in relation to Manipur, Singh responded, "I think the state government, through the DIPR, has already clarified this matter. As a mature CM of any state, one should not incite hate or interfere in the internal affairs of another state. It is very unfortunate." In the statement, the Manipur government had also said, "Mizoram CM reveals his democratic credentials by espousing imposition of President's Rule in Manipur while opposing boundary fencing of the Indo-Myanmar international border. He also calls for reunification of the Zo people. He also talks about possibility of armed militias in Manipur pointing their guns at Delhi and need for disarming, and sincere negotiations with hill leaders." Regarding the missing person case, Singh said, "We condemn such incidents. We have instructed the authorities to locate the person, and state forces are actively searching for his whereabouts."

Vaishnaw inspects track slab manufacturing factory near Surat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
AHMEDABAD

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday inspected a track slab manufacturing factory for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project near Surat in Gujarat. Vaishnaw said all the equipment at the factory in Kim was initially brought from Japan before their manufacturing was started in India, which will be beneficial for upcoming construction projects. This unit will play a crucial role in ensuring the stability and performance of the bullet train's tracks, according to the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), the project execution agency. This facility will produce track slabs for 237 km of high-speed rail track for MAHSR corridor in Gujarat & DNH (352 km), it said. The Railways Minister also visited a facility of Plasser India, a manufacturer of track maintenance machines,



support India's first bullet train project, is designed to produce high-capacity ballast-less track slabs using advanced Shinkansen technology. The unit will play a crucial role in ensuring the stability and performance of the bullet train's tracks, according to the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), the project execution agency. This facility will produce track slabs for 237 km of high-speed rail track for MAHSR corridor in Gujarat & DNH (352 km), it said. The Railways Minister also visited a facility of Plasser India, a manufacturer of track maintenance machines,

at Karjan near Vadodra. He said the educational course on the design, manufacturing and testing of machines will be taught at Gatishakti University in Vadodra to help create new opportunities for youth. "The Austrian company has the world's biggest plant in India which also exports. I inspected the products to be exported to Australia, Argentina, and two to three other countries. The skill level of our engineers and technicians is also increasing significantly," the Railways Minister said. Vaishnaw participated in the 2nd convocation of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, formerly National Rail and Transportation Institute, in Vadodra. India's first bullet train link is being constructed between Mumbai and Ahmedabad using Japan's Shinkansen technology to create a high-frequency mass transportation system. The project has been funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) with a soft loan of Rs 88,000 crore.

Mayawati calls on Centre, Opp to ensure Winter Session focuses on pressing problems

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) President Mayawati on Saturday called on the Centre and the Opposition to ensure that the Winter Session of Parliament focuses on the country's pressing problems rather than partisan clashes. The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister's appeal stemmed from controversies such as allegations against the Adani Group and the Sambhal mosque survey dispute, among others, which led to disruption in proceedings in both houses of Parliament this week. "Both the government and opposition should ensure that the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament focuses on the country's pressing problems rather than partisan clashes," Mayawati said, according to a BSP statement issued here. "Parliament must function in the broader interest of people. Both the ruling party and the opposition must demonstrate seriousness to address the challenges facing the nation," she added. The BSP supremo on Saturday addressed a meeting



of senior party leaders from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in Lucknow and stressed on them the need for Dalits and Ambedkarite communities to unite in their struggle for political empowerment. She stressed that the fight for the "master key to power" must intensify to free the society from the grip of "casteist and communal" forces, according to an official statement. Mayawati reviewed the party's organizational progress and directed the officials to address shortcomings at the district and divisional levels. She hit out at the BJP, accusing it of diverting public attention from pressing issues like unemployment, poverty

and inflation by using divisive tactics similar to the previous Congress governments. "The BJP's promises during the elections are forgotten once in power, leaving fundamental issues unresolved," she said, according to the statement. Mayawati also slammed Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath-led government for prioritizing religious agendas over constitutional responsibilities. She emphasized that economic struggles, unemployment and lack of education continue to affect millions in Uttar Pradesh and neighbouring Uttarakhand. "The government's failure to fulfill its responsibilities has pushed the public into deeper poverty and backwardness," she said. Speaking on the legacy of Dr BR Ambedkar, Mayawati reiterated the BSP's commitment to his vision of a welfare-oriented and egalitarian society. She announced plans for programmes on December 6 to honour Dr Ambedkar's contributions.

Amity confers degrees and diplomas to over 18,000 graduands

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

Noida based Amity University on Saturday organized its 20th Convocation for the Class of 2024, wherein more than 18,000 Graduands were awarded degrees, diplomas, certificates, medals and trophies from different domains including Management, Engineering and Technology, Law, Mass Communication, Psychology, Allied Sciences, Fine Arts, and Fashion Technology, amongst others.* On this occasion, Honorary Doctorate was conferred upon Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary to Govt. of India, a highly honored and privileged to receive the Honorary Doctorate form Amity University and I congratulate all the Amity students who have graduated today. The Department of Atomic Energy has dedicated itself to harnessing the energy from the atoms for the service to our nation and it works for national security, energy security, food security, health security, water security, science, research and innovation. Delivering her Acceptance



Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary to Govt. of India*, averred, "I'm highly honored and privileged to receive the Honorary Doctorate form Amity University and I congratulate all the Amity students who have graduated today. The Department of Atomic Energy has dedicated itself to harnessing the energy from the atoms for the service to our nation and it works for national security, energy security, food security, health security, water security, science, research and innovation. Delivering her Acceptance

Speech, Dr. Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd.,* said, "Today marks a glorious day for all the students and their parents and with the help of education received at Amity, students should be able to transform the world and build humanity which is the power and culture of India. Today, India is witnessing huge advancement in every field, India will become a chip manufacturing hub of the world and doctors are working on making the world disease free, therefore, there are a lot of opportunities for the students to apply their

knowledge and skills for the benefit of the society." Expressing his extreme pleasure on this occasion, Dr. Ashok K. Chauhan, Founder President, Amity Education Group*, stated, "Amity not only focusses on providing the best education to the students but also lays great emphasis on human values and sanskaars, since it is human values which make us great human beings. India will become a superpower and a developed nation by the year 2047 and we must aim to make India the best country in the world." Sharing the mantra of BHAAG, he added, "In BHAAG, B stands for Behavioral Science, H stands for Human values, A stands for Attitude, A stands for Ambition and G stands for God. If students follow this mantra, they are bound to succeed in all their endeavors." Accepting the Honorary Professorship, Dr. Sanjay Sachdeva, Vice Chairman ENT, Max Healthcare, asserted, "I'm honoured to receive the Honorary Professorship from a globally renowned and prestigious institution like Amity.

Students must be grateful to their teachers, parents, and institution who have been instrumental in shaping their career. Ancient wisdom combined with modern knowledge and values, is the best formula to attain success in any field." Congratulating the students, Dr. Atul Chauhan, Chancellor Amity University said, "Today marks a momentous occasion in the lives of our students. It is a day to celebrate their achievements, their perseverance, and their dedication to academic excellence. Amity has 7,00,000 Alumni across the world and all of them imbibe values imbibed in them at Amity. The knowledge, skills and values which the students have imbibed at Amity are the foundation upon which they will build their future. Every parent wants the best for their child and at Amity, we take care of every student as our own child. Through education, students must focus on giving back to society and make their country proud. Also present on the occasion Dr. (Prof.) Balvinder Shukla, Vice-Chancellor, Amity University Uttar Pradesh.

Jodhpur Jhal wetlands being transformed into bird sanctuary: Officials

PTI ■ MATHURA (UP)

Jodhpur Jhal, a wetland spread over 64 hectares in the Koh village of Mathura's Farah block, is being transformed into a bird sanctuary, officials said. Located just eight kilometres from the Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary in Agra and 35 kilometres from the Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur, the wetland is expected to become a significant attraction for bird watchers and tourists, they said. Shailjakant Mishra, vice-chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad, visited the site on Friday to review its development. Mishra inspected the ongoing

constructions and offered suggestions for improvements based on feedback from environment and bird experts. He also emphasised the need to expedite the work to make the site a key ecotourism destination. According to Vikas Parishad CEO Shyam Bahadur Singh and environment advisor Mukesh Sharma, the wetland had become a favoured spot for both domestic and migratory birds. Efforts are being made to develop Jodhpur Jhal as a bird sanctuary to attract tourists visiting Mathura and Agra, they said. Singh said, "The sanctuary is being preserved through the protection of water channels,



such as Sikandra and Terminal Rajwah, and measures are underway to create an ecosystem suitable for migratory birds." "Natural habitats are being developed and dense forests will be planted to support bird breeding and ensure their safety. Construction work is expected to be completed by February, after which a green corridor will be established," he added. The sanctuary will feature seven water bodies, 13 islands, and a 2,200-metre nature trail with 13 huts for visitors to rest. Ecotourism facilities such as watchtowers, a biodiversity study centre, seminar halls, parking spaces, canteens, and toilets are also being

developed, the officials said. Local youngsters are being trained as nature guides to provide visitors with a richer experience. The project is being executed with a budget of Rs 8.66 crore, they added. Dr Krishna Pratap Singh, a bird expert from the Biodiversity Research and Development Society, Agra, said studies conducted between 2019 and 2021 identified 181 bird species at the wetland, including 132 resident, 33 migratory, and 12 resident-migratory species. "These include prominent migratory birds such as the greater flamingo, northern shoveler, bar-headed goose, pied avocet, and red-crested pochard, as well as resident

species such as the sarus crane, black-breasted weaver, Indian roller, and green bee-eater," he said. The wetland is home to several endangered and threatened bird species, as classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The sanctuary aims to provide a safe habitat for these birds and promote their conservation and breeding, he added. "Once completed, Jodhpur Jhal is expected to enhance ecotourism in the region, attracting nature enthusiasts, researchers and photographers while contributing to the conservation of bird species and their habitats," the bird expert said.

Syrian insurgents inside Aleppo

Van could end if Ukraine-controlled territory comes under NATO, says Zelenskyy

AP ■ BEIRUT

Thousands of Syrian insurgents fanned out inside Aleppo in vehicles with improvised armour and pickups, deploying to landmarks such as the old citadel on Saturday, a day after they entered Syria's largest city facing little resistance from government troops, according to residents and fighters. Witnesses said two airstrikes on the city's edge late Friday targeted insurgent reinforcements and hit near residential areas. A war monitor said 20 fighters were killed. Syria's armed forces said in a statement Saturday that to absorb the large attack on Aleppo and save lives, it has redeployed and is preparing for a counterattack. The statement acknowledged that insurgents entered large parts of the city but said they have not established bases or checkpoints. Insurgents were filmed outside

police headquarters, in the city centre, and outside the Aleppo citadel. They tore down posters of Syrian President Bashar Assad, stepping on some and burning others. The surprise takeover is a huge embarrassment for Assad, who managed to regain total control of the city in 2016, after expelling insurgents and thousands of civilians from its eastern neighbourhoods following a gruelling military campaign in which his forces were backed by Russia, Iran and its allied groups. Aleppo has not been attacked by opposition forces since then. The 2016 battle for Aleppo was a turning point in the war between Syrian government forces and rebel fighters after 2011 protests against Assad's rule turned into an all-out war. The push into Aleppo followed weeks of simmering low-level violence, including government attacks on opposition-held areas. Turkiye, which has backed

Syrian opposition groups, failed in its diplomatic efforts to prevent the Syrian government attacks, which were seen as a violation of a 2019 agreement sponsored by Russia, Turkiye and Iran to freeze the line of the conflict. The offensive came as Iran-linked groups, primarily Lebanon's Hezbollah, which has backed Syrian government forces since 2015, have been pre-occupied with their own battles at home. A ceasefire in Hezbollah's two-month war with Israel took effect Wednesday, the day the Syrian opposition factions announced their offensive. Israel has also escalated its attacks against Hezbollah and Iran-linked targets in Syria during the last 70 days. **Insurgents raise flag over Aleppo Citadel:** A witness in Aleppo said government troops remained in the city's airport and at a military academy but most

of the forces have already filed out of the city from the south. Syrian Kurdish forces remained in two neighbourhoods. The redeployment "is a temporary measure and (the military central command and armed forces) will work to guarantee the security and peace of all our people in Aleppo," the military statement said. Abdulkafi Alhamdo, a teacher who fled Aleppo in 2016 and returned Friday night after hearing the insurgents were inside, described "mixed feelings of pain, sadness and old memories." "As I entered Aleppo, I kept telling myself this is impossible! How did this happen?" He said he strolled through the city at night, visiting the citadel, where the insurgents raised their flags, a major square and the university of Aleppo, as well as the last spot he was in before he was forced to leave for the country-side.

AP ■ KIVIV

An offer of NATO membership to territory under Kyiv's control would end "the hot stage of the war" in Ukraine, but any proposal, to join the military alliance should be extended to all parts of the country that fall under internationally recognised borders, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a broadcast interview. Zelenskyy's remarks on Friday signaled a possible way forward to the difficult path Ukraine faces to future NATO membership. At their summit in Washington in July, the 32 members declared Ukraine on an "irreversible" path to membership. However, one obstacle to moving forward has been the view that Ukraine's borders would need to be clearly demarcated before it

could join so that there can be no mistaking where the alliance's pact of mutual defense would come into effect. "You can't give an invitation to just one part of a country," the Ukrainian president said in an excerpt of the interview with Sky News, dubbed by the UK broadcaster. "Why? Because thus you would recognise that Ukraine is only that territory of Ukraine and the other one is Russia." Under the Ukrainian constitution, Ukraine cannot recognise territory occupied by Russia as Russian. "So legally, by law, we have no right to recognize the occupied territory as territory of Russia," he said. Since the start of the war in 2022, Russia has been expending huge amounts of weaponry and human life to make small-but-steady territorial gains to the

nearly one-fifth of Ukraine it already controls in east and southern Ukraine. "If we want to stop the hot stage of the war, we should take under the NATO umbrella the territory of Ukraine that we have under our control. That's what we need to do, fast. And then Ukraine can get back the other part of its territory diplomatically," he said. An invitation for Ukraine to join NATO is one key point of Zelenskyy's "victory plan", which he presented to Western allies and the Ukrainian people in October. The plan is seen as a way for Ukraine to strengthen its hand in any negotiations with Moscow. Earlier this week, NATO's new Secretary General Mark Rutte said that the alliance "needs to go further" to support Ukraine in its fight against a Russian invasion.

Military aid to Kyiv and steps toward ending the war are expected to be high on the agenda when NATO members' foreign ministers meet in Brussels for a two-day gathering starting on December 3. However, any decision for Ukraine to join the military alliance would require a lengthy process and the agreement of all member states. There is also uncertainty as to the foreign policy stance of President-elect Donald Trump. While Trump vowed on the campaign trail to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine in a single day, he has not publicly discussed how this could happen. Trump also announced Wednesday that Keith Kellogg, an 80-year-old, highly decorated retired three-star general, would serve as his special envoy for Ukraine and Russia.

3 parties battle for top place as counting starts in Ireland

AP ■ DUBLIN

Vote counting got underway on Saturday in Ireland's national election after an exit poll suggested the contest is a close-fought race among the country's three largest political parties. Ballot boxes were opened at 9 a.m. (0900GMT) at count centres across the country, kicking off long hours, or even days, of tallying the results. If the exit poll is borne out, that could be

followed by days or weeks of negotiations to form a coalition government. The exit poll suggested voters' support is split widely among the three big parties — Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Sinn Féin — as well as several smaller parties and an assortment of independents ranging from the left to the far right. The poll said centre-right party Fine Gael was the first choice of 21 per cent of voters, and another centre-right party,

Fianna Fail, at 19.5 per cent. Left-of-centre opposition Sinn Féin was at 21.1 per cent in the poll. Pollster Ipsos B and A asked 5,018 voters across the country how they had cast their ballots. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The figures only give an indication and don't reveal which parties will form the next government. Ireland uses a complex system of proportional

representation in which each of the country's 43 constituencies elects several lawmakers and voters rank candidates in order of preference. As a result, it can take some time for full results to be known. The result will show whether Ireland bucks the global trend of incumbents being ousted by disgruntled voters after years of pandemic, international instability and a cost-of-living pressures. The cost of living — especially Ireland's acute housing crisis — was a dominant topic in the three-week campaign, alongside immigration, which has become an emotive and challenging issue in a country of 5.4 million people long defined by emigration.

AP ■ TBILISI (GEORGIA)

More than 100 demonstrators were arrested overnight in Georgia as protesters clashed with police following the government's decision to suspend negotiations to join the European Union, the country's Interior Ministry said Saturday. It was the second straight night of protests after Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze of the country's ruling Georgian Dream party announced the decision the previous day. Demonstrators faced off against police late Friday in a number of major Georgian cities, including the capital, Tbilisi, and the Black Sea port of Batumi.

The Associated Press saw protesters in Tbilisi being chased and beaten by police as demonstrators rallied in front of the country's parliament building. Riot police used water cannons to push protesters away from the building and later moved to force them farther back along Rustaveli Avenue, the city's main boulevard. Police also used heavy force against members of the media and used loudspeakers to shout profanities and insults at the crowds. Georgian Dream's disputed victory in the country's October 26 parliamentary election, which was widely seen as a referendum on Georgia's aspirations to join the European Union, has sparked massive

demonstrations and led to an opposition boycott of the parliament. The opposition has said that the vote was rigged with the help of Russia, Georgia's former imperial master, with Moscow hoping to keep Tbilisi in its orbit. Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili joined protesters on Thursday after accusing the government of declaring war on its own people. In an address to the nation Friday, she urged police not to use force against protesters.

"This is evident in every way — no one is willing to accept a Russified Georgia, a Georgia deprived of its constitution, or a Georgia in the hands of an illegitimate government and parliament," Zourabichvili said. "That is why so many of you are out here today: I see you. I see you on Rustaveli Avenue and in cities across Georgia: Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Akhmeta, Lagodekhi, Telavi. It is unprecedented for citizens of Georgia to rise up simultaneously and spontaneously in this way."

STORES E-PROCUREMENT

Tender Notice No.: S/27/2024-25; Dated: 28-11-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:-

SN. 1; Tender No. 20/24/5002A/OT/226/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 12-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Main Transformer 7775KVA for WAP-5 & WAP-7 Three Phase Electric Locomotive CLW Specn No. CLW/ES/3/0660 Rev. D or latest & STR No. CLW/C-D & D/STR/001 Rev 0 or latest, Tank Spec. No. CLW/ES/3/0507. Alt. Nil or Latest Conservator Tank Spec. No. CLW/ES/3/0508 Alt-Nil or Latest & STR No. RDSO/2013/EL/STR/0079 Rev 0 or latest. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 1]. i) Qty- 1 No for SSE/D/New Guwahati, NFR (Assam). P.L. No. - 29731067.

SN. 2; Tender No. 61/24/5480/OT/227/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 16-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: (1) Manufacture and supply of Pre stressed Mono block Concrete sleepers (Pretension type) for wider base Slack Gauge sleepers to suit 60kg (UIC)/52 kg running Rail as per RDSO Drg No. RT- 8979 & IRS Specification No. - T-39 (Sixth revision-March 2021), along with latest alteration if any, as duly loaded in to road vehicle/wagon. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. Qty : 586 Nos for SSE/P-Way/HILL/Lumding, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.-60190206002. (2) Manufacture and supply of Pre stressed Mono block Concrete sleepers (Pretension type) for wider base Slack Gauge sleepers to suit 60kg (UIC) 52 kg running Rail as per RDSO Drg No. RT-8982 & IRS Specification No. - T-39 (Sixth revision-March 2021), along with latest alteration if any, as duly loaded in to road vehicle/wagon. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. Qty: 1608 Nos for SSE/P-Way/HILL/Lumding, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.-6019020600. (3) Manufacture and supply of Pre stressed Mono block Concrete sleepers (Pretension type) for wider base Slack Gauge sleepers to suit 60kg (UIC)/52 kg running Rail as per RDSO Drg No. RT-8981 & IRS Specification No. - T-39 (Sixth revision-March 2021), along with latest alteration if any, as duly loaded in to road vehicle/wagon. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. Qty: 563 Nos for SSE/P-Way/HILL/Lumding, NFR (Assam). P.L. No. - 60190206022. (4) Manufacture and supply of Pre stressed Mono block Concrete sleepers (Pretension type) for wider base Slack sleepers to suit 60kg (UIC)/52 kg running Rail as per RDSO Drg No. RT-8980 & IRS Specification No. - T-39 (Sixth revision-March 2021), along with latest alteration if any, as duly loaded in to road vehicle/wagon. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. Qty: 563 Nos for SSE/P-Way/HILL/Lumding, NFR (Assam) P.L. No.-601902060022.

SN. 3; Tender No. 10/24/3667B/OT/228/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 16-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Spring Assembly Rubber - Secondary Vertical to EMD Part No - 40075328 [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. Qty: 200 Nos for Siliguri Jn. Diesel Depot, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No.-17020293.

SN. 4; Tender No. 50/24/0633/OT/229/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 17-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Plug-in Type, M to C, DC Neutral Line, Non AC immunized Relay Style QN1, 24 V DC, 12 F-4B Configuration, Specification: BRS: 930, IRS S-34, IRS S-23. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. (i) Qty: 1000 Nos for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR (West Bengal). (ii) Qty: 1200 Nos for Kathar GSD, NFR (Bihar). (iii) Qty - 250 Nos for Pandu GSD, NFR (Assam). P.L. No- 56450163.

SN. 5; Tender No. 60/24/5061/OT/230/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 19-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: (1) Supply, installation & commissioning of EOT Crane 25/10 Ton (at Malda Town), along with DSL and its installation, spares (slings, chains, tackles etc.) as specified in Schedule-1, spares as per Schedule IV, maintenance tools as per Schedule V and preventive maintenance during two years of warranty period. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. Qty - 1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No. - 651000362201. (2) Comprehensive AMC for 5 years after the warranty period (for EOT Crane 25/10 Ton at Malda Town) as per Clause 17 of Section V. (Cost will not be included for evaluation purpose). [AMC Period: 5 years, Rate of Discounting: 10% Start After Year: 2]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. P.L. No. 65100042. (3) Any additional items/accessories suggested by the bidder (for EOT Crane 25/10 Ton at Malda Town)]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. Qty- 1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal) P.L. No-65100043. (4) Supply, installation & commissioning of EOT Crane 30/5 Ton (at Siliguri), along with DSL and its installation, spares (slings, chains, tackles etc.) as specified in Schedule-1, spares as per Schedule IV, maintenance tools as per Schedule V and preventive maintenance during two years of warranty period. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. Qty: 1 Nos for SSE/DEMUI/C/Siliguri Jn., NFR (West Bengal).


SN. 6; Tender No. 50/24/0632/OT/231/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 19-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Relay plug in type QTA2, metal to carbon, 9 Ohm, AC immune, DC neutral Track Relay, 2F/1B contacts, complete with plug board, retaining clip and tin plated connectors conforming to spec. no. BRS:939A with latest amendments/version. & BRS: 966 (Appendix F2) with latest amendments/version., IRS-S34 & IRS-S23 (as applicable). [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. (i) Qty: 945 Nos for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR (West Bengal). (ii) Qty: 623 Nos for Kathar GSD, NFR (Bihar). P.L.No. 56450229.

SN. 7; Tender No. 61/24/5481/OT/232/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 20-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: BG PSC T/OUT SLEEPER (1 IN 12) DRG NO.T-4218. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0].Qty: 15 Set for SSE/P-Way/Aluabari Road, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No.: 600501100101.

SN. 8; Tender No. 30/24/5103/OT/223/2024-25;
Closing/ Opening Date: 24-12-2024
Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Electro-Pneumatic Pressurized Flusing System in LHB Coaches at Dibrugarh Coaching Depot as per MCF Specification No. MMDTS 19027b Rev.01 (RSP PB Item No 1267/22-23). [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. Qty: 440 Set for SSE/C&W/Dibrugarh, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.33615238.

NOTE:- For full details of Tender notice and tender documents, tenderer may log on to the website (www.ireps.gov.in) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In case they are not registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

PCMM/ Maligaon

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Public at large is hereby informed that my clients Sh. Surender Kumar Singhal and his wife Smt. Kusum Singhal both R/o BM-30 West Shalimar Bagh, Delhi 110088 have severed their all relations from his Son and Daughter-in-law namely Mohit Singhal and Smt. Nigur Singhal and their Son namely Master Shivansh Singhal and hereby disown/debar them from their moveable and immovable properties and not liable for their any deed or misdeed whatsoever. Any person dealing with them will be dealing with them at their own risk, cost and consequences.

Yogesh Goel
(Advocate) E.No. D-1956/2010
Off. No.13, DDA Market, A-Block, Pitampura, Delhi-34

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client, Mr. Harant Kumar S/o Mr. Kesar Das is the Registered owner of a Residential House no. 593/2A, area measuring 81.86 sq. yds. covered area 538, out of Khasra no. 6976/11/4, situated at Wala Road, Landmark: Near DDA Dist-21, Old 1996 SR-GURGOAN executed by Mr. Viender Singh in favour of Mrs. Usha Narang and Regd Sale Deed Doc. No. 20417, Dated:-14.01.2013 SR-GURGOAN executed by Mrs. Usha Narang in favour of Mrs. Ruchi Sharma and Regd. NFR. NCR has been registered as LR no: 2354514/2024 dated 30.11.2024 and this above-mentioned property is going to be mortgage with F&B Bank Financial Services Limited any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, lien any objection whatsoever in regard to above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, R-113, Kankaroads Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered a/d 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. Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-7/3, Kankaroads Court, Delhi-110092, Mobile No. 9811215181.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public notice to hereby inform that respectable client Smt. Vandana Grover W/o Late Raj Kumar Singh, R/o-374A, Sector-13, Noida, District West, New Delhi-110018, has approached the Office of Sub-Registrar-II B at Janakpuri, New Delhi for the Registration of the Will dated 13.04.2024 executed by her husband Late Sh. Raj Kumar Grover S/o Lt. Sh. Agya Ram Grover after death, if anyone, having any objection regarding the Registration of the Will dated 13.04.2024, executed by Lt. Sh. Raj Kumar Grover in favor of my above named respectable client, he/she may can objection in the Office of Sub-Registrar-II B, Janakpuri within 15 days from the date of issuing public notice

Sudhir Tewatia & Associates (Advocate)
Office: Ch.No.322, Dwarka Court, Sec-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075
Mob: 9971593597

 **THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JC-502586H NB SUB Jasbir Singh, R/o- Ward No. 13, Patti, Teh- Patti, Dist- Tarn Taran, Punjab- 143416, declare that Kulwinder Kaur is my wife, in my service record her D.O.B is erroneously recorded as 10/10/1989, whereas her correct D.O.B is 19/10/1989.

PD(996)C

I, Jani Bai Patel W/o Jagdish R/o Essel House, Mandi Road, Sultanpur, New Delhi-110030, i have changed my name from Jani Bai Patel to Jani Patel.

PD(997)A

I, HITHERTO KNOWN AS MUKESH KUMAR ALIAS MUKESH KUMAR SHAH S/O JHARI LAL SHAH residing at H.NO.83, Block -7, Trilok Puri, East Delhi, Delhi - 110091, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MUKESH KUMAR SHAH.

PD(999)C

ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
प्लॉट संख्या-01, सेक्टर नौलेख पार्क-4, ग्रेटर नौएडा सिटी, जिला-गौतमबुद्ध नगर (नौएडा)

सार्वजनिक सूचना
ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अन्तर्गत M/S CSSE Sahkari Awas Samiti Ltd. भूखंड संख्या-GH-02, Sector-Phi-04, Greater Noida को दिनांक 30-08-2006 को मानविय स्वीकृति प्रदान की गयी थी। दफ्तरात विकासकर्ता द्वारा (Group Housing Project) का अधिमेल प्रमाण पत्र हेतु ऑनलाइन के माध्यम से आवेदन संख्या-CC-4706 (दिनांक 01-07-2022 को ऑनलाइन के माध्यम से आवेदन किया गया है। तत्कम से UP-Apartment Act-2010, Amendment 2016 in Section-4 Sub-Section-B के अन्तर्गत परियोजना के आवेदियों से आर्वा/सुझाव आमंत्रित किये जाने का प्रबान है। इस सम्बन्ध में विकसकर्ता द्वारा प्रस्तुत स्वीकृति मानचित्र एवं Declarations as per UP Apartment Act-2010 परीक्षण किसी भी कार्यक्षेत्र में सुबह 9:30 से साय 6:00 बजे के मध्य नियोजन दिनांक में तथा प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट पर किया जा सकता है। अतः उपरोक्त परियोजना के आवेदियों द्वारा Sanction Map एवं Declarations as per UP Apartment Act-2010 के सम्बन्ध में सूचना प्रकाशित करने के 30 दिनों के अन्दर आर्वा/सुझाव आमंत्रित की जाती है। उपरोक्त के निमित्तार्थ अपनी आपर्वाय लिखित रूप में अपने आवेदन पत्र नाम, पता एवं दृष्टांत नम्बर के साथ कार्यक्षेत्र समय व कार्यक्षेत्र में ग्रेटर नौएडा प्राधिकरण के मुख्य प्रशासनिक कार्यालय, भूखंड संख्या-1, सेक्टर-नौलेख पार्क-4, ग्रेटर नौएडा में लिखत मांग्रचयक (नियोजन/वास्तु) को सम्बोधित करते हुए सूचना प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिनों के अन्दर जमा करायी जा सकती है।

मांग्रचयक (नियो/वास्तु)
ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण

SIGNALING WORK

E-Tender Notice No. - N-2024-K-25; dated: 28-11-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SL. No.1; Tender No. -N-2024-K-25; Name of the work:** Signaling work during various Engineering machine work (PQRS and Unimat machine work in Raninagar Jalpaiguri - Kishanganj section) over Katihar Division. Tender Value: ₹38,80,470.72; Earnest Money: ₹77,800.00. **E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 20-12-2024 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 20-12-2024.** The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs of 20-12-2024 in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

DRM (S&T), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

MODERNISATION OF SIGNALLING ARRANGEMENT IN LUMDING DIVISION

E-Tender No. :SNT-36-LMG-2024-25; Dated: 28-11-2024; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; **Name of work :** Modernisation of signalling arrangement by provision of Electronic Interlocking at 3 stations (Sarupathar, Barpathar & Bhilaganj) in Lumding-Furkating Jn. section of Lumding Division. **Tender Value:** ₹19,00,66,597.49/-; **Bid Security:** ₹11,00,300/-; **Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hours and opening at 15:30 hours on 30-12-2024.** For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

DSTE, Lumding
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"

PUBLIC NOTICE
(In case of chain title deed)

NOTICE is hereby given that one Komal Arora is owner of Flat No. B-6301, "said Flat", on 6th floor, area measuring 85.80 Sq. Mtrs., built on Plot No. 36, in the layout of Vinayak Co-Operative Group Housing Society Ltd., situated at Sector 10, Dwarka, Delhi (hereinafter referred to "said property") vide Relinquishment Deed dated 01.10.2024 doc. no. 2024/16/113002 executed by Smt. Rita Arora, Smt. Archana Arora & Sh. Dinesh Arora in favour of Komal Arora in respect of their Share in said flat. Komal Arora intends to transfer the ownership by way of Sale Deed of aforementioned Flat to Alok Shukla who has agreed to create mortgage in respect of said property in favour of my/our clients (DFC FIRST Bank Limited (Branch Address: 2nd Floor, Express Building, 9-10 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi - 110002) If any person, body, individual, institution having any claim and/or objection in respect of or against or relating to or touching upon said property or part of the property by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, easement, maintenance, inheritance, testamentary disposition or otherwise or having in their custody any title, documents pertaining to said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at my address within 07 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the above mentioned property shall be considered to have been waived and abandoned. Any objections raised after the completion of the above period shall not be binding upon the said property or my Client.

Place: Noida Dated this 29th day of Nov 2024
Sd/- Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-441A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh- 201301 Landline(s): +910120-3161683 e-mail: accounts@vnmth.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, M/s. C2C Global Education India Pvt. Ltd. is in the process of undertaking development of a Primary School, Pioneer Presedia, Sector 62, Gurugram, over an area measuring 1 Acres part of group housing colony of Pioneer Urban Land and Infrastructure Ltd. Measuring 24.606 Acres (License no. 268 of 2007 dated 03.12.2007) in sector 62 Gurugram, granted by Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh. And whereas, the office of Director General, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has required seeking of objections against the revision of the building plans as a pre-condition for allowing such revision in the building plans. Accordingly, vide this public notice objections are hereby invited from any person/allottee on the proposed revision of the building plans of the said primary school. A copy of the earlier approved building plans bearing M.E.M.O. No. Z-P-338-C/D(DS)/2011/15378 dated 18/10/2011 and the building plans proposed to be revised bearing M.E.M.O. No. Z-P-338-1/PA(DK)/2024/35491 dated 20.11.2024 is available for perusal on our website www.c2cindia.in. The said building plans can also be perused at the office of undersigned at Primary School site, Pioneer Presedia, Sector 62, Gurugram, Haryana as well as in the office of the Senior Town Planner, HUDA Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram. Any person/allottee having any objection on revised building plans, may file his objection in the office of the Senior Town Planner, HUDA Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram within thirty days of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed revision in the building plans.

For C2C Global Education India Pvt. Ltd.,
Rahul Mangani
(Senior Executive Compliance)

JINDAL LEASEFIN LIMITED
CIN: L74899DL1994PLC059252
Regd. Office: 110, Babar Road, New Delhi 110001

EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND HALF YEAR ENDED 30.09.2024 (Rs. in Lacs)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended		Half Year Ended		Year Ended
		30.09.2024	30.06.2024	30.09.2023	30.09.2024	31.03.2024
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	11.37	1.50	12.87	-	0.73
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#)	9.51	-4.12	-1.41	5.39	-6.78
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#)	9.51	-4.12	-1.41	5.39	-6.78
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or extraordinary Items#)	-3.59	-3.01	2.02	-6.60	-5.02
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	13.72	9.09	13.43	22.80	18.71
6	Equity Share capital	300.89	300.89	300.89	300.89	300.89
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year	548.67	534.95	514.09	548.67	514.09
8	Earning per Share (face Value of Rs. 10/- each)(not annualised)					
1. Basic		-0.11	-0.11	0.06	-0.22	-0.17
2. Diluted		-0.11	-0.11	0.06	-0.22	-0.17

NOTE :
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Standalone Un-Audited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended September 30, 2024 filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange website www.bseindia.com. The same is also available on the Company's website www.jindalleasfin.in
2. The above results duly reviewed by the Audit Committee, were approved by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 30.11.2024.

For Jindal Leasefin Limited
Sd/-
(Chavi Rungta) Director

Date : 30.11.2024
Place : New Delhi

Post Perth, Aussie bowlers likely to tweak their bowling plans: Boland

PTI ■ CANBERRA

There will be few tweaks in Australia's bowling plans against Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul for the day-night Test in Adelaide after their defeat in Perth, revealed Scott Boland, who is set to replace injured Josh Hazlewood in the playing eleven. Hazlewood has been ruled out with a side strain and 35-year-old Boland, who has played 10 Tests since his Test debut in 2021, is top contender to bowl those hard lengths against an Indian batting line-up oozing with confidence after their second innings effort in the opening game. "We've spoken as a team about our plans for all the different Indian batters. I won't tell you those, but

we've got pretty set plans. They might have a little bit of a tweak after the guys have seen them again from Perth," Boland told reporters after the first day's play between India and Australian Prime Minister's XI was washed out. Jaiswal (161) and Rahul (77) added 201 runs in a record opening stand on Australian soil followed by Virat Kohli's 30th Test hundred. "Obviously (Yashasvi) Jaiswal batted really well there. KL Rahul batted well in the second innings as well and really dugged in. "So we'll probably have a chat over the next week and our plans might slightly change, but I'm pretty confident what we did in the first games was good," Boland said as much without letting out elaborate plans.



The troika of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Hazlewood couldn't make much of an impact in India's second innings but Boland defended the three senior stars. "I think our bowlers bowled really well as well. Maybe the only difference was that the Indian bowlers got a really nice long break between their first innings and second innings where our break wasn't as long." "Thought my chance has passed" Boland can't be held wrong if at a certain time during the last season the pacer felt that he won't be able to make a comeback since Starc, Cummins and Hazlewood have been so dominant at home. "Obviously those guys (the three fast bowlers) have

been so resilient, they don't miss too many and no one must give up their spot at any stage," Boland said. "And they were so dominant that last summer (even when) they weren't bowling a heap of overs, but we're still able to win most of those games, so yeah, I probably thought maybe the opportunity had passed." Boland credited his intense rehabilitation for getting him back in the national reckoning. "I have worked really hard in the off-season to get my body in a spot where I am confident that if I get another chance I will be able to perform for Australia again." "I just knew if I put the conversations I had with Ron [Andrew McDonald, the head coach] and George [Bailey, the chief selector]

over the pre-season - when I was rehabbing a lot was to try and get my body in the right spot - that I didn't want to rush anything and then re-injure something and then push back my return to play date. So, we took it pretty slow with my rehab." "There are chats but no panic as such" Boland accepted that individual performances will be discussed but the Australian dressing room isn't panicky after the heavy defeat in the opening Test. "There's definitely no panic stations in our change rooms. There's obviously going to be some chats around individual performances and everyone wants to perform really well every game they play. "But yeah, it's like, we've lost one game," he added.

Sindhu cruises past Hooda to reach Syed Modi final

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu cruised into the women's singles final with a dominating straight-game win over fellow Indian Unnati Hooda at the Syed Modi International Super 300 badminton tournament here on Saturday. Top seed Sindhu outclassed the 17-year-old Hooda 21-12 21-9 in just 36 minutes in the semifinal. Hooda struggled to challenge Sindhu, committing a series of unforced errors that allowed her illustrious opponent to maintain control throughout the match. "I am happy with today's performance. From the beginning, I maintained the lead. I was just trying out a few strokes and overall, I was confident with the way I was playing," Sindhu said after the match. "I think Unnati played her best, but I didn't give her a chance to overtake me. I was leading from the beginning to the end. She is an upcoming player, and I wish her all the very best. "I need to go back and prepare for tomorrow because it's not going to be easy. From the beginning, I need to give my best," Sindhu added. A former world champion,



Sindhu, currently ranked 18th, will face either Thailand's Lalinrat Chaiwan or China's Wu Luo Yu in the final as she chases her third Syed Modi International title. Earlier, India's mixed doubles pair of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila advanced to the final with a convincing straight-game victory over China's Zhi Hong Zhou and Jia Yi Yang. The fifth-seeded Indians secured a 21-16, 21-15 win in the 42-minute semifinal. They will meet the winner of the other semifinal between Chinese duo of Pin Yi Liao

and Ke Xin Huang and Thailand's sixth-seeded pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran. Sindhu's semifinal contest saw her gradually take control as she moved to a 5-3 lead with a precise cross-court drop shot, while Hooda initially kept pace with well-placed pushes and drops. However, the 17-year-old's errors, particularly in the length of her lifts, allowed Sindhu to lead 11-8 at the break. Hooda's determination to stay in rallies often resulted in smashes and drops going

wide. Sindhu extended her lead to 15-8 without relying on her trademark baseline smashes. Unforced errors continued to plague Hooda, enabling Sindhu to close out the first game comfortably. After the change of sides, Sindhu continued to dominate the proceedings, surging to 8-3 lead before extending it to 11-4 at the interval. She continued her aggressive play with a smash, an overhead cross-court drop, and a body smash, taking the score to 18-7.

Hooda saved one of Sindhu's 12 match points but ultimately faltered with another error, handing Sindhu the match. Reflecting further on her game, Sindhu said: "I am definitely happy with the way I am going. Definitely, there is a scope for a lot of improvement... It's not just that if we finish training or if we are at the top, we don't have to train. Every day is a new process, and I am doing that."

Addressing her recent struggles, including her Paris Olympics campaign, Sindhu said, "I know Paris was not a good one for me. I have tried my best, but it doesn't matter. I need to get back stronger. So, I am working on myself." Sindhu, who has been working with coaches Anup Sridhar and Korea's Lee Hyun-il, also spoke about adapting her fitness regimen. "Every athlete has a different style of fitness. You keep growing, and at the same time, your movements need to be perfect. Maybe back in my twenties, the training program might have been different. Now, it's completely different. It depends on age, how I am playing, and my movements. Accordingly, we keep changing it."

1st Test: Williamson makes another half-century but England dominate on day 3

AP ■ CHRISTCHURCH (NEW ZEALAND)

Kane Williamson completed his second half-century of the match and passed 9,000 Test runs on Saturday as he led New Zealand's faltering resistance to England's control on the third day of the first Test. Williamson followed his first innings 93 with 61 and was one of five batsmen to fall before New Zealand erased England's 151-run first innings lead. At stumps, New Zealand was 155-6, four runs ahead and with only bowlers yet to bat. Daryl Mitchell was 31 not out and Nathan Smith was on one. Brydon Carse had 3-22 and seven wickets for the match. England applied Bazball principles to take charge of the match almost from the resumption Saturday, dashing past New Zealand's first innings of 348 and building a commanding first innings lead at almost six runs per over. Harry Brook resumed at 132 and went on to 171 in a 159-run partnership with Ben Stokes who was 37 not out overnight and finished with 80.



Dashing late contributions from Gus Atkinson who made 48 from 26 balls and Carse who made 33 from 24 with three monstrous sixes piled more pain on New Zealand late in its innings as it made 499 all out. In total, England added 180 runs in 33 overs Saturday at a tempo set by Brook who posted his seventh century and third-highest score in tests and Stokes who reached his 35th half century from 105 balls, then added his next 30 runs from 41 deliveries. New Zealand then lost both openers, Tom Latham (1) and Devon Conway (8), with only 23 runs on the board and Rachin Ravindra (24) with 46 runs still needed to erase England's lead. Ravindra

continues to show enormous promise but was out to rash shots in both innings. Williamson provided an example of application to the rest of the New Zealand top order, continuing in his usual unflappable manner even after he was struck on the helmet by Stokes when on 26. In contrast, Ravindra was lured into an unnecessary shot at a short ball by Carse, knowing that the trap had been set and was sprung when he was caught in the deep by Jacob Bethell. Williamson passed 9,000 test runs in his 103rd test at an average of 54 when he reached 26. He went on to a half century from 74 balls when New Zealand was 117-3.

Southampton denied by VAR and Brighton rises to second in Premier League

AP ■ BRIGHTON (ENGLAND)

Southampton was denied a spriceless victory by a controversial VAR decision and ended up drawing with host Brighton 1-1 in the English Premier League. Kaoru Mitoma spectacularly headed Brighton into a first half lead and Flynn Downes hammered the equaliser an hour in. Then minutes later teammate Cameron Archer converted a cross from Saints substitute Ryan Fraser. A VAR check of more than four minutes eventually decided Archer was onside but then penalized Adam Armstrong, who was offside but did not touch the ball, for interfering with goalkeeper



Bart Verbruggen. "I find it hard to accept," Southampton manager Russell Martin told broadcaster Sky Sports. "We were told it affects Bart Verbruggen's ability, and if Adam's run moved Verbruggen from his position then I would understand the

decision, but he hasn't moved. I cannot see how it has affected the goalkeeper. "It is still human error in my opinion. The mistake is, it's not clear and obvious enough to be corrected. The on-field decision carries weight. I am frustrated."

Unfair to judge Gambhir so early in his coaching role: Jadeja

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India middle-order batter Ajay Jadeja on Saturday defended head coach Gautam Gambhir from the criticism he has received following the 0-3 drubbing against New Zealand, saying it's "unfair" given the short time he has been in the new role. Gambhir, the hero of the 2011 World Cup title triumph, took over the reins of the India team in July after Rahul Dravid's tenure ended. Following a bright start against Sri Lanka in the T20I series, India lost the ODI series to the home side. The Test team then thrashed Bangladesh 2-0 before a nightmare outing against New Zealand put Gambhir under massive scrutiny. "I think you are being unfair



to him... If you will start judging people on the basis of their coaching role or whatever way it is being looked at, it is too short a time to for people to be judged," Jadeja told PTI Videos in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of FICCI Turf event here on Saturday. "If you are not convinced that

he is good, then one performance here or there will be able to convince anyone. I don't think it is the time to judge him, it is the time we should enjoy him," added Jadeja, known for his exploits in the 50-over game where he scored over 5000 runs in 196 ODIs. India's massive 295-run win

against Australia in the first Border-Gavaskar Test at Perth following the no-show against the Kiwis has come as a huge morale-booster for the side and Jadeja felt Gambhir should not be judged within six months of his appointment. "So, there are phases and it will come, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. So, I won't go into that direction and start judging him (Gambhir) in six months. "You knew what you were asking for and what you were getting. He is a very clear-cut person and he has made it clear throughout his life. So, what your are seeing now is what everyone expected of him to do." Jadeja said that regular Test skipper Rohit Sharma's return for the second Test at

Adelaide from December 6 after missing the opening game will boost India's confidence. "Him (Rohit Sharma) coming back to the team will surely boost India's confidence, for sure. He is a leader, when the chips were down, team was going down, he stood up there as the leader and now when the team is going up, he will be again there as the leader." Asked whether KL Rahul and Rohit should swap batting slots in the second Test after the former had a formidable outing in the Perth game, Jadeja said, "I have no details of what the team is thinking right now, no views on who should bat at what number. Rohit Sharma has always been an asset to the side wherever he bats."

Face facts: Statues of stars like Kane and Ronaldo don 't always deliver. Sculptors offer advice

AP ■ LONDON

One art critic compared the new Harry Kane bronze statue to a bulging-jawed comic strip character. In Miami, observers say the Dwyane Wade sculpture looks more like actor Laurence Fishburne than the former basketball star. Of course, the infamous Cristiano Ronaldo bust in 2017 gave the chiseled soccer star a chubby face and goofy smile. A statue of Mohamed Salah in 2018 depicted the Liverpool star with a disproportionately large head. In 2011, a terracotta warrior statue of Andy Murray at a Shanghai tennis tournament drew chuckles, including from the star himself: "I thought I was better looking than that." It wasn't always this way. In classical times, sculptors "had absolutely no interest in depicting people accurately," explained Lucy Branch, a London-based sculptural

conservator. "What they ended up doing quite often, they recycled sculptures so when another athlete became more prominent, they just changed the name on the plaque," said Branch, host of the "Sculpture Vulture" podcast. "There's this idea now, in this era, that commemorative sculpture should be like portraiture — it should look exactly like the person they are commemorating. But actually that's a really new idea in sculpture." To avoid pitfalls, here are some tips from sculptors: Do your research London-based sculptor Hywel Pratley studied countless images of Queen Elizabeth II to create a memorial statue in the East Midlands town of Oakham. "A good portrait sculpture is evidence of 1,000 decisions after 10,000 observations," Pratley said. In addition, Yorkshire county sculptor Steve Winterburn recommends getting close



with a subject's family and friends to help find characteristics. "You don't want it looking like a Madame Tussauds," said Winterburn, who created a statue of five Rugby League greats at Wembley Stadium. "It still needs a bit of art in it,

a bit of soul. That's what makes art really sing." Smile at your peril The Ronaldo bust depicted the Portugal star smiling crookedly. Likewise, the Salah sculpture features the Egyptian smiling while celebrating a goal. In Miami,

Wade's mouth is open in the statue representing the moment the player famously jumped onto a courtside table and yelled "This is my house." It's probably best avoided. "It's really difficult to do teeth looking good in sculpture," Pratley said.

Get the profile right Start "by understanding the profile" before moving on to determine widths from the front view, Pratley said. "Get the profile right and you will have won half the battle, because then you can have something at least that you can trust," he said. "When you're lost, you can say, well I knew where I was then," — and you will get lost as a sculptor in the forms. "There's so many to understand. It's not two dimensions, it's three. There's an exponential opportunity for everything to go wrong. If you've got the profile, then you can go forward with more confidence." The eyes have it? Winterburn tries to make the eyes "come alive" in his work. "The eye is the soul of the person that carries it," he said. "If you look at a lot of public work, I'm not being funny, they're dead. There's nothing in them, they're just featureless, soulless. With a

painting, if in doubt, fade it out. With sculpture, there is nowhere to hide." For Pratley, especially when he is working with a live model, "I'm often struck by how the absolute essence of somebody is somewhere between the nostrils and the mouth. The flicker of muscles and the subtle movement of muscles around the mouth is so much you — it's so much that person." On a pedestal? Commemorative sculpture historically has been on plinths, Branch notes. "Part of the reason for that is because we put our heroes on a pedestal," she said. "The problem is, the lower to the ground the sculpture is, the more scrutiny it's going to get and the less it can get away with not looking quite right." The Kane sculpture features the England captain seated. "Being so low, people get to look at it incredibly closely," Branch said. "It's trying to get

sculpture to be more with the people, but then that comes with its own problems." Vote on it! In the UK, local councils — like a city council in the US — might propose a project, fund it and select the sculptor, sometimes with little input from the public and limited vetting of artists. Branch says there's a better way: Vote on it. That's what happened for the Emmeline Pankhurst statue in Manchester. A selection committee used an online platform to get public input and Hazel Reeves' proposal to honor the suffragette won. "It is a really good balance and check for whether people on the committees have chosen the right sculptor or the right composition for that person who is being commemorated," Branch said. "(The public) may not necessarily be highly educated about sculpture, but they always tend to know whether the artist has hit the nail on the head."



The curtains fell down at the Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Goa for the *International Film Festival of India (IFFI)*, marking a significant few days in the universe of cinema and cinema lovers. As the festival came to an end, it left an indelible mark on the cinephiles, celebrating the art of storytelling and the creative forces behind it.

2024 marked the 55th edition of the *International Film Festival of India* that took place on 20 to 28 November, 2024 at Panaji, Goa. The festival showcased around 200 films from 75 countries, including 15 world premieres, 3 international premieres, 40 Asian premieres, and 106 Indian premieres. Featuring celebrated titles and award-winning films from around the world, this year's festival promised to make a powerful impression on the audience.

The nine day film festival brought together pioneers from the film industry including directors, actors, cinephiles and awarded the best ones in the game.

The festival concluded with the Closing film, "Dry Season", directed by Czech filmmaker Bohdan Sláma, encapsulating the story of humanity, sustainability, and generational bonds. The closing night's most awaited segment was the presentation of the prestigious awards, recognising exceptional talent and storytelling.

The highest honour *Golden Peacock for the Best Film* presented by Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa and Ashutosh Gowariker, Jury Chairperson of the International Competition was bagged by Lithuanian film *Toxic*. *Toxic* is a film by Lithuanian filmmaker and screenwriter Saulė Bliuvaite. His debut feature film delivers a raw and haunting coming-of-age story of friendship. The Jury praised the film for exploring adolescence and the harsh realities of growing up in an economically deprived society, with so much sensitivity and empathy.

The *Silver Peacock for Best Director* was awarded to Romanian writer and director Bogdan Muresanu for his film, *The New Year That Never Came*. The accreditation recognised his outstanding direction and exquisite storytelling on screen with that film.

Claiming the *Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor* in the *Male* category was Clément Faveau. He was recognised for his incredible and compelling performance in the French film *Holy Cow*, expressing the emotional ups and downs of the protagonist, while traversing from ages of innocence to maturity. For the same, the Jury also made a special mention to actor Adam Bessa for his portrayal of Bilal, in the Tunisian film *Who Do I Belong To*. The actor was lauded for his nuanced and restrained performance in the film.

The actors Vesta Matulyte and Ieva Rupeikaite jointly were bestowed with the *Silver Peacock for Best Actor* in the *Female* category for their extraordinary debut performances for the film "Toxic".

The *Special Jury Award* was handed over to French filmmaker Louise Courvoisier. The actor was acknowledged for the creative excellence in filmmaking for the film 'Holy Cow'. The film shows that after losing his father, 18-year-old Totone (Faveau) must mature quickly to care for his younger sister and manage their family farm in Jura. The film showcases how his responsibilities grow further as he competes for the title of the region's best Comté cheese.

Familiar Touch by Sarah Friedland was bestowed with the Award for the *Best Debut Feature Film of a Director*. The film has been marketed as a coming-of-(old)-age story. 'Familiar Touch' centers on an octogenarian woman (Kathleen Chalfant) navigating the challenges of transitioning to assisted living. The film has explored her evolving relationship with herself and her caregivers as she faces the realities of cognitive decline.

Director Navijot Bandiwadekar bagged the *Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film* for his exceptional storytelling in the Marathi Film *Gharat Ganpati*. The award marked the IFFI's commitment to nurturing the emerging Indian filmmakers. The film has been selected from the list of other five feature-films, the Jury chaired by cinematographer and director Santhosh Sivan, agreed that the film was well crafted with robust performances and captures the complexities of familial bonds, the deep emotional resonance



makes the film a standout debut.

The prestigious *ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal* to celebrate the cinematic works that promote peace, tolerance, and dialogue, was awarded to the film *Crossing* by Levan Akin. The Jury praised the film for its stunning cinematic qualities and its thought-provoking exploration of gender equality with social understanding.

The *Best Web Series (OTT) Award* went to *Lampan* airing on *Sony Liv*. The web series was recognised for the transformative shift in storytelling, innovation and artistic merit in the digital space. 'Lampan' has been directed by Nipun Dharmadhikari.

The *Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award* was presented to Australian Filmmaker Phillip Noyce. Coming to the last but not the least, making the Indian Film Industry proud, Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa and Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting presented *Indian Film Personality of the Year* to actor Vikrant Massey. On receiving the award Vikrant said, "This is really a special moment for me; I never imagined I would get this award. There will be ups and downs in life but we should be ready to restart as my character did in the

film, 12th Fail. I am a storyteller at heart, I choose the scripts to be able to become the voice of the common people." Massey also further said that, "Own yourself, own your stories, own your roots wherever you come from. Indian Film industry is one of the spectacular industries to be part of."

There was special felicitation for the Iconic Indian Director *Ramesh Sippy* and celebrated actor *Jaya Prada* for their contribution to the Indian Cinema in the ceremony by the Chief Minister of Goa and Sanjay Jaju.

Embracing the enriching power of the cinema, extending hand to young filmmakers and ending the IFFI 2024, Ashutosh Gowariker, Jury Chairperson of the International Competitions, said, "All the movies selected for the competition stood tall. A great film doesn't just tell us a story, it changes us. To all the young filmmakers, let the light inside you burn brighter so that one day your vision will be seen by the world."

With the theme of 'Young Filmmakers: The Future is Now', 55th IFFI ensured a platform for young filmmakers, said Sanjay Jaju, Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

The evening reached its zenith with a mesmerising finale by actress and dancer Shriya Saran, titled as "Rhythms of India" showcasing the richness of Indian classical and folk traditions.

The IFFI 2024 was not just a cinematic showcase but was a festival that soared with cultural exchange, artistic celebrations, and an undying commitment to the future of films in the country and globally.

From illuminating conversations to inspiring mentorship, from India and other countries, unifying pioneers in cinema and unforgettable screenings, IFFI 2024 offered a transformative experience for film lovers worldwide.



CINEMA IS A MATTER OF
WHAT'S IN THE FRAME AND
WHAT'S OUT
— MARTIN SCORSESE

The *55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI)* concluded recently in Goa, celebrating the magic of cinema. The festival showcased over 200 films from 75 countries, honouring exceptional talent with an enriching global cinematic dialogue. The event came to a climax with the presentation of prestigious awards, recognising the best in films from around the world, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

IFFI 2024 CONCLUDES



“Music is the tool to express
life and all that makes a
difference”
— **Herbier Hancock**



A VOICE THAT HEALS



KAILASH KHER'S journey from humble beginnings to Padma Shri is truly inspiring. Through his music, he has touched millions, sharing the struggles and moments that shaped his path and the deep connection he holds with his fans, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

“जो टूट कर बना, जिसे मौत ने जाना,
वो क्या टूटे, वो और क्या मारे”
(What was broken and revived,
what death tried to take away,
how could it be broken again?)

These words, spoken with quiet strength, hold the raw truth of *Kailash Kher's* life. A life that, much like the music he creates, has been a journey of hardship, healing and everything in between. He has faced loss, endured difficult times and seen some of the darkest days. Yet, his songs are always filled with hope. This is what makes him not just a singer, but a storyteller of the human experience, a poet of strength. His music isn't just sound; it's a conversation with the soul. A conversation that comes from the heart of *Kailash Kher*, a man whose very being is felt in every note he sings. When he speaks about his journey, you can almost hear the weight of each experience in his voice, as if every word he shares is filled with emotion, shaped by years of struggle and success. In December 2016, a moment that would forever change his life arrived, though it took another few months for the reality to sink in. By April 2017, it was confirmed, he was to receive the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian awards. The news was a whirlwind of emotions, not just for him, but for his family. “I first told my sister,” he recalls with a soft smile. “It was a moment of joy because, in Delhi, we had suffered a lot. We left our homes, lived like orphans and went through many different experiences. We saw the world changing, relationships changing and people's attitudes changing, all of these shifts happened at a young age” His journey from hardship to honour is one of resilience. He talks about his childhood in Delhi, a city that seemed to change before his very eyes, as people, relationships and even attitudes shifted. Yet, despite the hardships, Delhi, in all its complexity, gave him the opportunity to realise his dreams. The recognition came not just for his music but for the spirit with which he has approached life. From a young age, music was more than just a

passion, it was his way of being. “As a child of 4 or 5, I was already curious about music, but I didn't sing the popular songs of the time,” he shares. Instead, he gravitated toward unique sounds that defied the norm. “I didn't sing filmi songs, ghazals, bhajans or qawwalis. I didn't sing what was already there. People were curious, what does this child sing and how?” It was this originality that later led to the birth of *Kailasa*, a name that would become synonymous with spiritual and soul-stirring music. As his career grew, his live performances became a way for him to connect deeply with his audience. “In Kota, Rajasthan, a girl came to one of my shows with a blade, saying she would harm herself if she didn't get to meet me. She was a devotee and my music was more than entertainment to her, it was her lifeline,” he remembers. “When I found out, I asked her to drop the blade, and she did. It was one of those moments that reminded me of the emotional power music holds. It's not just about melodies; it's about healing.” Every song he writes, sings and composes holds a piece of his soul. “When I sing, it's a reflection of my own emotions. But once it's out there, it becomes part of someone else's story too,” he explains. His music resonates with listeners in a way that breaks through language and culture, offering a universal connection. Despite his success in Bollywood, he differentiates the impact of film music from his non-film compositions. “Film audiences are looking for light entertainment but non-film music carries deeper emotions,” he says. “Non-film music touches the soul, while film music is more fleeting. Each platform has its unique audience and I enjoy the challenge of catering to different frequencies.” But no career comes without its challenges and his own journey wasn't without rejection. He remembers the time when his song “Allah Ke Bande” was initially dismissed. “At the time, I didn't understand the film industry very well. They told me it was a film song but it didn't have the usual budget. I had doubts. But when the song became a hit, the same people who rejected it came asking for collaboration. That song did become a turning point in my career and it was



IT WAS A MOMENT OF JOY BECAUSE, IN DELHI, WE HAD SUFFERED A LOT. WE LEFT OUR HOMES, LIVED LIKE ORPHANS AND WENT THROUGH MANY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES. WE SAW THE WORLD CHANGING, RELATIONSHIPS CHANGING AND PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES CHANGING, ALL OF THESE SHIFTS HAPPENED AT A YOUNG AGE

a lesson that sometimes the smallest beginnings lead to the biggest breakthroughs.” Reflecting on his career, he is humble about his influence. “People often ask me which of my songs defines me. It's difficult to choose. Life is so full of shifting emotions. Each song represents a different phase. Take ‘Piya Ghar Aavenge’, for example, it's about the anticipation of a reunion. Or ‘Teri Deewani’, which is about the intensity of love. And then there's ‘Saiyyan’, a song about surrendering to something greater than yourself. Each one reflects a part of my journey but none can define it entirely.” As for the impact of his music, he says that whether he is performing in India or abroad, the connection is the same. “Wherever I go, people connect with my music because it speaks to their hearts. Whether in the US or India, our indian audience understands the joy of life. But in Delhi,” he adds with a mischievous grin, “there's a certain energy here, a special ‘dhamaal’ that is unmatched.” He may not have imagined this journey when he first started singing as a child, but today, his music has touched the hearts of millions. It is the story of a boy who didn't follow the conventional path, a boy who sang from his heart and whose voice continues to resonate with the world. The Padma Shri award is just one chapter in his extraordinary journey, a journey that continues to inspire and uplift. *Kher's* journey is a beautiful reminder of the power of music to connect us to something deeper within ourselves. *Kailash kher* doesn't just make music; he shares pieces of his own story, inviting us all to reflect on our own. Every track, *Kher* insists, is a piece of his soul. “They're not just songs,” he says. “They're my prayers, my truths. And once they're out in the world, they take on lives of their own.” Much like the lyrics of *Piya Ghar Aavenge*, “आज मेरे पिया घर आवेंगे, हे—री, सखी, मंगल गाओ री, धरती—अंबर सजाओ री, उतरेगी आज मेरे पी की सवासे”, they speak of waiting, of anticipation, of the quiet joy that comes from knowing something beautiful is about to happen. Waiting isn't always celebrated, but his music shows us that there is beauty in the moments in between. The stillness and hope that accompany the wait remind us that sometimes the most profound moments in life aren't the arrivals, but the journeys we take while waiting. In his own way, *Kailash Kher* teaches us that there is an art to waiting. It's in those moments of anticipation when we hold our breath and trust that what we're waiting for will be worth it. Just like the joy in the song, the waiting itself is part of the magic, making the reunion all the more meaningful when it finally arrives.

FROM THE MAN HIMSELF

What one piece of advice to your younger self, the *Kailash Kher* just starting out, what would it be and why?
I would say, “You have never slept for 12 years, nor eaten properly. How did you survive without eating and sleeping? Eat a little, sleep a little and embrace life fully. Be human.” I lived like this, living many lives within one birth.

Is there any collaboration or project you have been wanting to do but haven't had the chance yet?
I have no desires or plans. I am a man with no plan and I cherish that state of being. My only “want” is that I have no wants and my only “desire” is to have no desires. I believe life flows best when you're not tied down by endless aspirations. Instead, I would advise others to focus on taking care of themselves first physically, mentally and spiritually, before chasing desires.

What message will you give to the younger generation who are coming into music?
I don't give advice often because I believe when you give something valuable, it should be respected. Because when you give something that holds value, it is respected. If you give it for free, it is not. If someone truly wants it, they will take it. If they don't want it, they won't. That's why I believe one should stay true to themselves, neither giving nor taking. If someone insists and asks me for advice, my advice would be this: “Never give advice to anyone. Neither give nor take. Just stay within yourself, and truly be true to yourself.

Who do you think would be the right person to portray your entire journey, from childhood to the present, in a film?
I don't look at it from that perspective and that's why I never have. Most people aren't fully honest in their work. In creativity, too, many people repeat the same things in the name of “new.” They claim to be creating something very unique, but it's already been done. Everyone's life and story are unique and to capture that uniqueness, you need a creator who's equally different. It's possible that someone who's never done it before, or even if they have, can bring something fresh to it because they understand the nuances of art and craft. If they can get it right, then it will have that newness and originality.





(left to Right) - Chef Mattea Nasi and Chef Alessandro Liberatore

perfection, with the prawns' sweetness melding beautifully with the risotto's rich texture. Every plate seemed to have the same meticulous attention to detail, leaving no palate unfulfilled. Throughout the evening, the service was impeccable, attentive without being intrusive. The vegetarian focus of the menu was a refreshing change, with every dish crafted with the same thought and care as any meat or seafood counterpart. It felt as though the vegetables were the stars of the show, celebrated for their natural flavours and textures rather than treated as just substitutes. Dessert was another highlight: a *Chocolate Cocoa Short Crust Pastry* filled with raspberry cream and chocolate ganache. The sharp tartness of the raspberry paired beautifully with the velvety richness of the chocolate, creating a harmony that felt like the perfect conclusion to an already outstanding meal. Yet, it was the final offerings under *Until We Meet Again* that left me in wonder.

The Selection of Tea and Coffee was perfect to wind down, but the real treasures were the petit fours. These weren't just bite-sized treats; they were flavour bombs that delighted and surprised. My personal favourites, *Cabosse, Noisettes, Mango & Coconut Petit* each carried a distinct personality, but together, they created a symphony of textures and flavours that blew my mind. The Signature *Lemon, Chocolate & Coffee Petit Four* were as indulgent as they were unique, leaving a sweetness that felt like a parting gift.

Zanotta's charm lies not only in its food but in how every aspect of the experience is curated to perfection. Chef Liberatore's collaboration was a reminder of why Michelin stars matter, not for their prestige, but for the heart and soul they demand from a chef. Whether you're a vegetarian, a seafood enthusiast or simply someone looking to experience an unforgettable meal, *Zanotta* delivers on every front. It's not just a meal; it's a memory, a moment and a masterpiece rolled into one. For me, it was proof that fine dining isn't just about eating, it's about truly living.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

MICHELIN MAGIC ON A PLATE

Imagine indulging in a meal where every bite feels like a discovery where flavours, textures and creativity come together in perfect plate. That's exactly what you can expect at *Zanotta*, where Michelin-starred Chef Alessandro Liberatore's culinary genius takes fine dining to a whole new level, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

For anyone who considers themselves a foodie, there's an unmistakable thrill in the promise of a Michelin-starred experience. It's not just about eating; it's about savouring stories told through food, each dish a chapter of creativity, tradition, and mastery. As a vegetarian, I've often found myself navigating the labyrinth of fine dining, where plant-based options can sometimes feel like an afterthought. But my recent visit to *Zanotta* at *The Leela Ambience*, for a unique collaboration with Villa Cora's two-Michelin-Key Chef Alessandro Liberatore, turned all my expectations on their head.

Picture this: a sparkling Gurugram skyline, soft live music and the kind of atmosphere that makes you lean in just a little closer to hear the clink of glasses and the hum of conversation. That's the setting at *Zanotta*, perched elegantly on the sixth floor. *The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences* proudly presented this iconic pop-up featuring VillaCorà, the prestigious two-Michelin-Key hotel from Florence. The stage was perfectly set for a menu promising innovation, comfort, and the finest ingredients, all tied together with a ribbon of Italian finesse. It began with what could only be described as edible art: a

Deconstructed Bruschetta, forget the standard fare of toasted bread and diced tomatoes; this was a vivid celebration of marinated cherry tomatoes, bursting with flavour and delicately balanced with a drizzle of herbaceous olive oil. It was light, refreshing and a reminder that sometimes, the simplest ingredients hold the most potential. The next dish, *Millefeuille Aubergine*, was a revelation. A delicate layering of eggplant, tomato coulis, buffalo mozzarella and basil pesto transformed the humble aubergine into something extraordinary. Each bite was an orchestra of smoky, creamy and tangy notes that remained long after the plate



was cleared. It felt like comfort food, but with the refinement you expect from an Italian maestro. Then came the *Potatoes Gnocchi*, a dish that, quite frankly, stole the show. The *gnocchi* were soft, pillowy, and bathed in a luxurious cacio e pepe sauce. But what set it apart was the addition of sour vegetable brunoise, which



provided a sharp, tangy contrast to the creamy richness. It was bold yet understated, the kind of dish that makes you pause and appreciate the skill behind it. And then, the pièce de résistance: *Tomato Tarte Tatin*. If there's a dish that can truly redefine your perception of vegetarian food, this was it. Caramelised tomatoes, their



natural sweetness amplified, rested atop a perfectly flaky pastry. The balance between the sweet and savoury flavours was brilliantly done, showcasing Chef Liberatore's ability to surprise and delight. For non-vegetarians, the feedback I heard was just as glowing. The *Red Prawn Risotto* was singled out as a showstopper, cooked to



Immersing the Italian cuisine in his own taste and style, Michelin-starred Chef Mattia Bianchi made his India debut with the Italian restaurant *Sorrento* at *Shangri-la, New Delhi*. The feast was filled with the signature collection of dishes by Chef Bianchi himself and was made available for the people for five days. Being known for their artistic composition, Chef Bianchi's food was a culinary delight. Bringing a slice of authentic Italian cooking, his pop-up dinner was a symphony of flavours, textures, and impeccable artistry, designed to tantalise the most refined palates. The menu was a love letter to Italian cuisine, featuring dishes that showcased Chef Bianchi's innovative

techniques and passion for fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The meal started with Chef Mattia's *Degustation Menu* with the *Caprese Cloud* for the vegetarian and *Mediterranean Fantasy* for non-vegetarian. *Caprese Cloud* served with *Fratelli Noi* had delicate foam of Buffalo Mozzarella paired with a medley of roasted cherry tomatoes, garnished with basil leaves with a mouth-watering taste. *Mediterranean Fantasy* on the other hand was a luxurious blend of shabu shrimps and salmon eggs atop silky potato foam, dusted with tomato powder and infused with Mediterranean aromas for a sensory delight served with *Fratelli Noi*.



Then came the *Risotto* with the dish *Herbs Whisper's* *Risotto* as the signature dish served with *Fratelli J'Noun White*. It was a Creamy risotto in a wild herbs infusion, topped with crunchy smoked umami almonds powdered with tangy sumac. *Pastas* entered the third round of the menu with *Fusilli Rock n Roll* which had vibrant fusilli infused with beetroot extract,



Chef Bianchi's Culinary Debut in India was a delight to the tastebuds at *Sorrento* in *Shangri-la, New Delhi*, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**



crowned with tangy goat cheese crumble and aromatic rocket pesto, perfectly paired with the rich notes of *Fratelli Sette* wine. *Fusilli Citrus* was served with *Fratelli Sette* wine with lime scented fusilli cooked in beetroot extract and garnished with raw marinated scallops.

The main course showcased a togetherness of flavours, led by the *Sunlit Chicken Rhapsody* with Chicken supreme with butternut squash and *Medley Feast*, a culinary masterpiece perfectly paired with *Fratelli J'Noun Red* wine. The addition with the same wine glasses was *Bitter Bliss* with roasted baby gem, caper fruits, pine nuts and beurre blanc sauce, making the plate look like a painted canvas.

The end was saved for the best: the dessert with three types of symphonies, namely *Autumn, Summer, and Winter*. The *autumn* was the *Tiramisu Delight*, with traditional Tiramisu with mascarpone cream and marsala-kissed sponge cake veiled in the coffee crumble. The *Winter* Symphony featured *Midnight Silk* with dark chocolate cloud, gilded almonds, and frozen hazelnut cream. The *Summer* symphony had *Summer Ode* with exotic fruits soup-bathed yogurt pearls on vanilla sable. The overall experience of the dessert was a unique one blended with music. There were cards explaining how the desserts explain the personalities of the people.

The experience at *Sorrento* was more than just a meal; it was an unforgettable journey through the heart of Italian gastronomy, curated by Chef Mattia Bianchi's masterful touch. Each dish was a testament to his ability to merge tradition with innovation, creating a dining spectacle that celebrated the art of food.

The guests were left in awe, their taste buds delighted and their senses elevated. Chef Bianchi's debut in India with his pop-up at *Shangri-la, New Delhi*, left an indelible mark on every diner who had the privilege to partake in this symphony of flavours.



World Food Carnival

By TEAM **AGENDA**

Worldmark Aerocity in New Delhi recently hosted the *World Food Carnival*, a feast for the senses that brought together food lovers from across the city. With over 30 stalls offering a wide range of cuisines, Mexican, Italian, Indian, Middle Eastern, and more there was something for everyone. Renowned restaurants like *Kampai, Café Delhi Heights*, and *Monsoon* showcased their signature dishes, elevating the food experience to new heights. The carnival opened with a lively performance by "The Artictern," setting an upbeat tone for the day. Cultural performances like the *Dragon Dance* and a saxophonist added a magical touch to the atmosphere. Guests enjoyed live face painting and an instant GIF creator, which kept everyone entertained and added a fun element to the event. The Kids' Zone was a family-friendly highlight,

offering activities to keep children busy while parents could indulge in the food offerings. On the second day, the excitement continued with live bands "The Gus Band" and "The Cherish," whose performances had the crowd swaying to their beats. An African Dance performance added a vibrant touch, and the food stalls kept everyone's taste buds satisfied. The carnival also featured plenty of activities for children, from magic shows to face painting. What stood out was the way the event brought people together. It wasn't just about the food; it was about creating an experience that celebrated culture, community and fun. The carnival's vibrant atmosphere, combined with delicious food and entertainment, made it a memorable event. For anyone who loves good food and a lively atmosphere, the *World Food Carnival* at *Worldmark Aerocity* was an experience not to be missed.





COORG: WHERE COFFEE CULTURE MEETS ASPIRATIONAL AVOCADOS



Coorg’s lush landscapes are evolving, with century-old coffee plantations now sharing space with thriving rows of avocado trees, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

As I pack my bags in Delhi the AQI is reading staggering 430, the smog has dawned on the city and there is heaviness in the air, eyes burning, breathing is an effort to be undertaken. The touchdown in Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru is smooth the temperature is almost at par with Delhi but air is breathable. The five hours journey to Coorg is tiring but relaxing scenery changes from rocky to green to lush green, on the way you get to see the Gabbar Singh’s den, the place where Sholay film was shot some 40 years back. On the way we have elephant family waiting for us by the roadside and snake crosses the road as drives pushes the brakes. Yes, all of us have right to live, even snakes!

It is night already and the day is done without much fuss as we retire in 140-year-old property a British bungalow now a tata property -Taneerhulla in ama coffee trail. The morning view from the window is fascinating, Delhi smog has given way to Coorg fog, and AQI has dropped to 43! I take a deep breath, as if to store this purity and carry it back home.

Coorg, or Kodagu as it is known in Kannad is nestled in the heart of the Western Ghats, has a fascinating history shaped by its strategic location, natural resources, and the allure of its spices. This region has been a magnet for traders, rulers, and explorers, each drawn by its bounty and beauty.

The history of Coorg dates back to ancient times, with its mention in early Indian texts like the Sangam literature. The region was originally home to indigenous tribes like the Kodavas, who developed a rich culture centered around nature and agriculture. Kodavas are known for their martial traditions, unique customs, and close-knit community life, which continue to define Coorg’s identity today. Over centuries, Coorg saw the rise and fall of several South Indian dynasties, including the Cholas, Gangas, Hoysalas, and Kadambas. These rulers left their imprint through temples and forts, which stand as silent witnesses to the region’s historical significance.

By the 15th and 16th centuries, the fame of the Western Ghats and their riches spread beyond India’s borders. The spice trade was the primary lure, as Coorg, along with other parts of the Western Ghats, became a significant source of black pepper, cardamom, and other exotic spices. The Portuguese were among the first Europeans to set sail for India, with Vasco da Gama’s arrival in 1498 marking a new era of trade and conquest. Soon, Dutch, French, and British traders followed, vying for control of spice routes. Coorg, though a landlocked region, became an integral part of these trade networks due to its fertile hills and spice plantations.

In the early 19th century, the British annexed Coorg after defeating the local ruler, Chikka Veerarajendra, in 1834. Recognising Coorg’s agricultural potential, the British transformed its economy by introducing coffee cultivation alongside spices. This was the beginning of coffee plantation on



commercial scale in Coorg and has stayed that way since. Coffee thrived in the region’s climate, and Coorg became one of India’s premier coffee-producing areas. The planters were of course the British who lived near their plantations. Their Bungalows dot the place and the one we stayed was of course belonged to a British. The British also admired Coorg’s natural beauty. Coorg is often referred to as the "Scotland of India" for its rolling hills, misty valleys, and temperate weather. Under British influence, the Kodavas were granted special privileges, including exemption from the Arms Act, which allowed them to retain their traditional firearms-a legacy still continues. The Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are among the most biodiverse regions on the planet. Stretching over 1,600 kilometers from Gujarat to Kerala, these ancient mountains are home to an astonishing

variety of flora and fauna. In Coorg, the Western Ghats reveal their most enchanting side. Dense forests, gurgling streams, and cascading waterfalls dominate the landscape, making it a paradise for nature enthusiasts. The forests host an incredible range of plant species, from ancient trees to medicinal herbs. They are especially known for sandalwood, teak, and bamboo. The Western Ghats are a haven for wildlife, including tigers, elephants, gaurs, and numerous endemic species like the Lion-tailed Macaque and Malabar Civet. The Ghats are also critical for the region’s agriculture, providing a fertile environment for growing coffee, spices, and now avocados. Coorg’s history is a blend of ancient traditions and modern influences. Its spice heritage continues to thrive alongside its renowned coffee plantations. Now, with the introduction of avocado



cultivation by Westfalia Fruit, Coorg is stepping into a new chapter of agricultural innovation. Tourists visiting Coorg can trace its history through ancient temples, forts, and colonial-era bungalows, all while enjoying its natural beauty and rich culinary traditions. The intertwining of the Western Ghats’ biodiversity with the cultural tapestry of Coorg makes it one of India’s most enchanting destinations. Coorg’s identity is deeply intertwined with its coffee plantations, which have been the backbone of its economy for decades. Introduced by Baba Budan in the 17th century, coffee found an ideal home in Coorg’s rich soil and temperate climate. Today, the district is one of India’s leading coffee-producing regions, renowned for its Arabica and Robusta beans. The plantations, often set against misty hillsides, not only produce world-class coffee but also create picturesque

landscapes that attract tourists. Coffee estate tours allow visitors to learn about the journey of coffee beans from farm to cup, making them an integral part of the Coorg experience. Located in southwestern Karnataka, Coorg is a verdant hill station known for its cool climate, scenic views, and pristine environment. It is part of the UNESCO -listed Western Ghats, one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots. The region’s dense forests, cascading waterfalls and diverse wildlife make it a haven for eco-tourism and outdoor activities such as trekking, birdwatching, and nature photography. Some must-visit spots include the Abbey Falls, Raja’s Seat, Dubare Elephant Camp, and the Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary. The Kaveri River, originating from Talakaveri in Coorg, adds to the district’s charm, serving as a lifeline for the southern states of India. While coffee remains Coorg’s hallmark,

the region is now witnessing a burgeoning avocado revolution, led by Westfalia Fruit, a global leader in avocado production. Recognising Coorg’s favourable climate for cultivation, Westfalia has established a state-of-the-art avocado nursery in collaboration with Sam Agri and Dvori-Or Nursery. The initiative focuses on growing high-quality Hass and other commercial avocado varieties.

The saying, "Where tea and coffee grow, avocados can grow better," perfectly describes Coorg’s potential. Its tropical climate, high elevation, and fertile soil make it an excellent location for avocado farming. Westfalia’s meticulous approach to planting, nurturing, and harvesting ensures that the avocados meet global quality standards.

Westfalia has already contributed to planting over 500 acres of avocado farms across India, with a target to exceed 1,000 acres by 2026. The Coorg nursery plays a critical role in supplying premium rootstock and planting material, ensuring sustainable practices and high yields. For coffee farmers, avocados offer a promising diversification crop, creating additional income streams and contributing to rural development. Westfalia, in partnership with the World Avocado Organisation (WAO), is driving efforts to educate Indian consumers about the health benefits and culinary versatility of avocados. Campaigns like "Avocado Ki Paatshaala," led by celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor, have been instrumental in popularising the fruit. We get hands on lessons on avocado grafting and cloning the techniques Westfalia is introducing in Coorg for avocado plantation sooner than later Coorg avocados would be available across the country. Avocados is one of the healthy diet options which can served in several avatars from avocado-on-toast to guacamole and even avocado shake and ice cream. This is going to benefit the local farmers as well as they can four to five times the amount they make on coffee. Coorg’s transformation from a coffee giant to a hub for avocados signifies its adaptability and progressive approach to agriculture. Visitors to Coorg can now enjoy not only a cup of freshly brewed coffee but also a taste of locally grown avocados, blending wellness with indulgence.

Whether you’re exploring its lush landscapes, learning about coffee cultivation, or witnessing the avocado revolution, Coorg offers a unique journey through nature and innovation. This jewel of Karnataka remains a must-visit destination for travellers and a shining example of India’s agricultural potential. As the time to leave draws near, I find myself reflecting on the air of Delhi and take one last, deep breath of Coorg’s pure, refreshing atmosphere. The aroma of spices beckons us to the local market, where we gather handfuls of fragrant treasures and, naturally, Coorg’s signature Arabica and Robusta coffee. With our bags filled with spices, coffee, and the newfound delight of avocados, we bid farewell to this enchanting land and set out on the highway to Bengaluru. As we journey home, our hearts are brimming with memories that promise to call us back. Coorg is a place one longs to return to-sooner rather than later.



Lucky number 6 | **Lucky colour** Lavender
Lucky day Saturday

Lucky number 18 | **Lucky colour** Black
Lucky day Wednesday

Lucky number 5 | **Lucky colour** Cream
Lucky day Tuesday

Lucky number 14 | **Lucky colour** Indigo
Lucky day Sunday

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Sagacity - Stupidity Coexist. Accent and

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