



Aryan Age

The Age of Truth

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Advantage BJP+ In Maharashtra, Close Fight In Jharkhand, Predict Exit Polls

Exit poll by Poll Diary gives NDA 122-186 seats, MVA 69-121 and others 12-29 in Maharashtra
As per exit poll by People's Plus NDA will get 175-195 seats and INDIA will get 85-112 and Others 7-12.
As per exit poll by Matriz NDA will get 150-170 seats and INDIA Bloc will get 110-130 seats.

New Delhi : Maharashtra the state where complication was a given in the assembly election -- has left pollsters befuddled, with three out of seven predicting a hung house and the rest leaning towards the ruling alliance. Jharkhand, where most expected a clear outcome, did not offer much clarity, with poll analysts being divided sharply down the middle. Three are of the opinion that the ruling alliance will retain the state, three others appear equally convinced that the NDA will wrest it from the INDIA bloc.

The aggregate of seven exit polls, though, indicates an NDA victory in Maharashtra. Data also indicates a close fight in Jharkhand, where the end result could be a split verdict.

The aggregate indicates that the Mahayuti -- ruling alliance of Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party and the BJP could win 153 seats and the Maha Vikas Aghadi, the coalition of Uddhav Thackeray's faction of Shiv Sena, NCP Sharad-chandra Pawar and the Congress,



may get 126. The majority mark in the 288-member assembly stands at 145.

In Jharkhand, currently ruled by the alliance of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and the Congress, the NDA could marginally fall short of

the magic figure of 41, ending up with just 39 seats, show the aggregate of six exit polls. The INDIA alliance, though, will be close behind with 38 seats.

Exit polls though, can often get it wrong. People's Pulse has

170 seats and the MVA 110 to 130 seats.

P-MARQ is unclear about the outcome in Maharashtra, giving both sides a chance. The numbers of the ruling alliance, it claims, could be between 137-157 seats and the MVA 126 to 146 seats.

Lokshahi Marahi Rudra is expecting the NDA to get between 128 and 142 seats and the MVA 125 to 140 seats. A mammoth 18 to 23 seats, it expects, will go to 'Others'. In Jharkhand, the Opposition NDA will win 44 to 53 seats, and the INDIA bloc 25-37 seats, People's Pulse predicted. The majority mark in the 81-seat assembly stands at 41. Matriz expects NDA to get 42 to 47 seats and the INDIA alliance to end up with anything between 25 and 30 seats.

Times Now-JVC also expects an NDA win in Jharkhand with 40-44 seats and 30-40 for the INDIA bloc.

The only poll to predict that the ruling alliance will retain Jharkhand is Axis My India, which gives it a whopping 53 seats and the NDA 25.

Additional Ration, 12 gas cylinders will be New Year gift for people of J&K: Minister



Srinagar : Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Satish Sharma on Wednesday said the enhanced ration quota and 12 gas cylinders will be a new year gift for the people of JK.

Sharma was talking to reporters in Srinagar.

The National Conference in its poll manifesto promised to provide 12 LPG cylinders to the economically weaker sections each year for free.

"We are going to announce the New Year gift for the people of Jammu and Kashmir", the Minister said adding "additional Ration and 12 cylinders will be announced on the eve of new year".

"Give us eleven months to fulfil the gap of 11 years of development for that we need people's cooperation", he said.

"First we have to get back the statehood so that all issues could be redressed and for that the Chief Minister had already met the central leadership, Sharma said.

"I believe that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is personally committed to restoring statehood, and after that, all other issues will be addressed," he said.

In reply to a question, the Minister said that all preparation for the coming winter months have been taken up and all sufficient dumping of essentials have already been made.

Maha Assembly polls Over 60 pc votes polled

Mumbai : Over 60 percent of the total 9.70 crore plus voters exercised their democratic rights in the single phase Maharashtra Assembly election, that remained peaceful, except for a few incidents of clashes between political rivals till 5 pm on Wednesday.

According to sources in the Election Commission, on an average 58.22 percent votes were polled in the state, with Gadchiroli district reporting the highest polling figure of 64 percent. Mumbai City saw the lowest polling at 49.07 percent.

The election authorities said, besides reports of glitches in EVM machines at different places, and a few clashes between the rival political parties in some area, polling went on peacefully and no major untoward incident has been reported so far across the state.

The polling, which began at 7 a.m., is scheduled to end at 6 p.m., but the election authorities said all those reaching the booths by the closing time would be allowed to vote.

The polling started at a slow pace in the opening hour, but turned brisk as the



closing time approached.

In Nashik district, supporters of Shiv Sena (Shinde) candidate Suhas Kande and his independent rival Sameer Bhujbal, nephew of state minister and NCP (AP) leader Chhagan Bhujbal, clashed in Nandgaon constituency.

Bhujbal accused Kande of bringing hundreds of outsiders in a vehicle and distributing money, but the Shiv Sena contestant rubbished the allegations.

Governor C P Radhakrishnan cast his vote at the polling booth here at the

Raj Bhavan, which falls under the Colaba assembly constituency.

The bigwigs who came out to vote included RSS Sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, Union ministers Narayan Rane, Ramdas Athawale, Nitin Gadkari and Piyush Goyal, NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray, former CM Prithviraj Chavan and MNS chief Raj Thackeray.

family.

The fate of 4136 candidates across the 288 assembly seats are being decided during the day, as part of forming the government in one of the largest states in India.

The prominent candidates include Chief Minister Eknath Shinde (Shiv Sena), Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis (BJP), Ajit Pawar (NCP), Aditya Thackeray (UBT), Amit Thackeray (MNS), Dhananay Munde (NCP) Rohit Pawar (NCP-SP), Yugendra Pawar (NCP-SP), Vijay Wadetiwar (Cong), Prithviraj Chavan (Cong) and Dilip Valse Patil (NCP-AP). The ruling Mahayuti - Shiv Sena (Shinde), BJP and the NCP (AP) - is engaged in a fierce contest with the opposition combine Maha Vikas Aghadi in the state known for its thriving commerce and vibrant culture which also includes one of the world's largest entertainment industries. The Indian National Congress, Shi Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) constitute the MVA. The votes will be counted along with those from the Jharkhand Assembly polls on November 23.

Rajnath meets Chinese Defence Minister on sidelines of ASEAN

New Delhi : Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday met his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun in Vientiane, Lao PDR on the sidelines of 11th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus and both agreed to work towards a roadmap for rebuilding mutual trust and understanding.

This was the first meeting of the two Defence Ministers following the recent disengagement agreements, and the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of BRICS summit, an official statement said.

Rajnath highlighted the fact that amicable relations between India and China, the two largest nations in the world, would have positive implications for global peace and prosperity. Considering that both countries are and will continue to remain



neighbours, he mentioned that "we need to focus on co-operation rather than conflict".

He called for reflecting on the lessons learnt from the unfortunate border clashes of 2020, take measures to prevent recurrence of such events and safeguard peace and tranquility along the India-China border.

Singh emphasised and looked forward to greater

trust and confidence building between the two sides through de-escalation. Both sides agreed to work together towards a roadmap for rebuilding mutual trust and understanding. Earlier in the day, Rajnath arrived at Vientiane on a three-day visit. He will attend the 11th ADMM-Plus on Thursday and address the forum on regional & international security issues.

IHC grants bail to Imran Khan in Toshakhana 2.0 case

Islamabad : The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday granted bail to former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in the Toshakhana 2.0 case. IHC's Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb approved PTI founder's bail plea, ordering the latter to submit surety bonds of Rs 1 million each for securing the bail. The Express Tribune reported. The court also directed the incarcerated former premier to appear before trial court following the bail. During the proceedings today, PTI's legal

counsel, Barrister Salman Safdar, argued that the charges against the PTI founder were based on the use of influence for personal gain. He contended that the chargesheet did not clearly specify who the main accused and the case was filed more than three years after the alleged incident. Barrister Salman further claimed that no crime had been committed under the Toshakhana policy, as the gifts were acquired in accordance with the established procedure, according to media reports.

Over 67 pc votes cast in Jharkhand Assembly polls phase 2

Ranchi : Over 67 percent of the total 1.23 crore electors exercised their franchise amid heavy security arrangements for 38 seats in the second and final phase of the Jharkhand Assembly election on Wednesday.

According to the Election Commission data, the voter turnout was approximately 67.59 percent when polling officially drew to a close at 5 p.m. Of the total 81 constituencies in the state, 43 had voted in round one on November 13.

According to the EC, the polling figure was the highest at 76.15 percent in Jamtara district, followed by Pakur at 75.88 percent. Bokaro district saw the lowest polling of 60.97 per cent. Among the Assembly constituencies, Maheshpur has recorded the highest turnout of 79.4 percent. The polling was lowest in the Bokaro constituency at 50.52 percent. The polling began at 7 a.m. with people coming out to vote in large numbers wearing colourful



clothes. In 31 of the total 14,218 booths that saw polling during the day, voting officially concluded at 4 p.m.

Among the prominent people who voted are state BJP president and former Chief Minister Babul Marandi, All Jharkhand Students Union chief and former state Deputy Chief Minister Sudesh Mahto,

daughter-in-law Sita Soren (BJP) from Jamtara, Louis Marandi (JMM) from Jama and Lobin Hembram (BJP) from Borrio.

Unlike the first phase of elections in the state, the majority of the seats (27) in the final round belong to the general category, while eight are reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and three for Scheduled Castes (SC). To ensure trouble-free polling, the Election Commission has deployed 585 companies of central forces and 60 companies of Jharkhand Armed Police, besides 30,000 district police personnel and homeguards. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), helmed by the Bharatiya Janata Party is locked in an intense fight with the incumbent Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-headed Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (I.N.D.I.A) for forming the next government in the tribal-dominated state.

The heavyweight candidates in this phase are Chief Minister Hemant Soren from Berhait, Babul Marandi from Dhanwar, Sudesh Mahto from Silli and Assembly Speaker Ravindra Nath Mahto (JMM) from Nala. Besides, there are other star contestants like Kalpana Soren (JMM) from Gande, JMM chief Shibu Soren's

Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi embarks on visit to Nepal

New Delhi : General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) on Wednesday embarked on a visit to Nepal, marking a significant step in further bolstering the close defence co-operation between India and Nepal.

During his visit from November 20 to 24, General Upendra Dwivedi will interact with Naveen Srivastava, Indian Ambassador to Nepal and thereafter he will have an informal discussion with General Ashok Raj Sigdel, Chief of the Army Staff, Nepali Army at Shashi Bhawan, a Defence Ministry statement said. On November 21, the Army chief will be given a Guard of Honour at the Nepali Army HQ followed by an interaction with the COAS, Nepali Army.

General Dwivedi will also be briefed by Director General Military Operations (DGMO), Nepali Army on issues of common interest. Later, he will attend the Investiture Ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan, Shital Niwas, wherein as per unique tradition between Indian Army and Nepali Army, he will be conferred with the Honourary Rank of General of Nepali Army by the Right Hon'ble President of Nepal.

He will also call on the Right Hon'ble President of Nepal and engage in talks to further boost the defence partnership between India and Nepal. In the evening, he will attend a Banquet, hosted by the COAS, Nepali Army.

On November 22, the COAS will address the student officers of Nepali Army Command and Staff Course, Shivapuri.

PDP responsible for abrogation of Article 370: Nasir Wani

Srinagar : Political advisor to Chief Minister Nasir Wani on Wednesday said that the People Democratic Party (PDP) was responsible for the present mess in J&K that led to the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A in Jammu and Kashmir.

Wani said this while replying to a question from media persons in old Srinagar in response to PDP's claim that the National Conference has failed to bring about a resolution about the restoration of Article 370.

Wani along with J&K minister Satish Sharma and MLA Tanvir Sadiq had gone to Abi Rainawari where a devastating fire on Tuesday destroyed numerous homes and displaced 26 families.

"Had not the PDP supported BJP in 2014, the Articles 370 and 35A would not have been abrogated", Wani said adding "Neither the people would have seen the past ten years of destruction in Jammu and Kashmir".

Wani said People will never forgive PDP.

He said whatever they promised in the manifesto, they will be fulfilled in reality.



ISRO readying for PROBA-3 ESA satellite launch from SHAR on Nov 29

Chennai : The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing for the launch of European Space Agency's Proba-3 Satellite using its reliable workhorse launch vehicle PSLV from the SHAR. Range, Sriharikota on November 29.

The PSLV-C59 is expected to lift off from the First Launch Pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

The preparations for the launch are going underway at Sriharikota, report said.

Proba-3 is a dual probe technological demonstration mission by the European Space Agency (ESA) devoted to high precision formation flying to achieve scientific coronagraphy.

It is part of the series of PROBA satellites that are being used to validate new spacecraft technologies and concepts while also carrying scientific instruments.

Proba-3's innovative approach involves two satellites flying in precise formation, with one casting a shadow on the other to



block out the Sun's disk and the ISRO was expected to use it PSLV XL version for the launch.

The Proba-3 mission is a collaboration between the ESA and ISRO.

The mission's goals are to use two satellites to study the Sun's corona, the outermost part of its atmosphere. The two payloads are Coronagraph spacecraft 340 kg and Occulter spacecraft 200 kg.

The satellites will fly in formation to create a solar coronagraph that will allow for uninterrupted observation of the Sun's corona.

The Proba-3 mission will be the first precision formation flying mission, demonstrating the ability of satellites to fly together in formation to achieve precise positioning.

The Proba-3 mission will be a major scientific experiment that will help improve understanding of the Sun and solar weather.

The Proba-3 satellites will reach a high elliptical orbit that is 60,000 kms from Earth. The satellites will fly autonomously to maintain a precise position, with an accuracy of a single millimeter.

In its website, ESA said Proba-3 is ESA's – and the world's – first precision formation flying mission. A pair of satellites will fly together maintaining a fixed configuration as a 'large rigid structure' in space to prove formation flying technologies and rendezvous experiments.

The mission will demonstrate formation flying in the context of a large-scale science experiment.

The two satellites will together form an approximately 150-m long solar coronagraph to study the Sun's faint corona closer to the solar rim than has ever before been achieved.

Beside its scientific interest, the experiment will be a perfect instrument to measure the achievement of the precise positioning of the two spacecraft. It will be enabled using a wide variety of new technologies.

Ruling DMK slams BJP-led regime at Centre on various fronts

Chennai : The high level meeting of the ruling DMK on Wednesday flayed the BJP-led Government at the Centre on various fronts, including its oft-repeated attempts to impose Hindi on non-Hindi speaking states, by ignoring Tamil and other languages, holding Hindi week fete, its silence on the Manipur violence and taking over the denying the legitimate rights of the states.

A total of six resolutions were adopted at the meeting held at Party headquarters 'Anna Arivalayam' here and it was chaired by DMK President and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin.

Of the six resolutions, four were targetted at the Centre for its attempts to destroy the pluralistic fabric of the country by promoting and implementing divisive and communal agenda.

Targetting the Centre, one of the resolutions strongly condemned the BJP-led regime for the delay in holding the decennial census along with caste enumeration, reducing the allocation under MNREGA, 9.2 per cent rise in unemployment putting youth to hardships, stripping minorities of their rights with the new Waqf Bill, the anti federal and anti-democratic push for One Nation One Poll concept, failure to prevent the increasing train accidents, non-release of funds under the SSA scheme affecting students and teachers, adopting biased attitude towards opposition ruled states in the devolution central taxes, usurping the rights of the States as enshrined in the Constitution and not providing reservation as per Mandal Commission recommendations.

It said "In the last ten years the BJP-led Government had neither fulfilled a single poll promise made in 2014 polls nor took any initiative for that, but was hell bent on implementing its communal agenda with utter disregard for constitutional norms and destroying the country's plurality".



Another resolution cited the burning situation in Manipur and accused the Centre and the BJP-ruled Manipur of washing its hands on the issue and wondered how many more lives are going to be lost.

Noting that Manipur was burning for the last 18 months, it questioned why Prime Minister Narendra Modi had not visited the strife-torn state even once and expressed its condemnation.

Another resolution referred to the recent Parliamentary polls in Sri Lanka and the victory under President Anur Kumara Disanayake's leadership and urged the Indian government to protect the rights of the Tamil Nadu fishermen and put an end to their frequent arrests and impounding of boats by the Sri Lankan Navy and secure the release of arrested fishermen.

Another resolution referred to Mr Stalin's speech at the 16th Finance Commission meeting and demanded devolution of central taxes by hiking the states' share to 50 per cent.

Congress to emerge as leading party in Maha Assembly election: MPCC chief

Mumbai : Considering the public's response, the Congress will emerge as the largest party in the state and the formation of a Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state is certain, asserted Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president Nana Patole on Wednesday.

Talking to media persons after exercising his right to vote with his family in the Sakoli assembly constituency of Bhandara district in Vidarbha region, he said, "In the assembly elections, there is significant enthusiasm among the people, and the self-respecting citizens of Maharashtra will elect a government that prioritises the state's welfare."

Criticising the BJP, he alleged BJP had violated constitutional norms during the elections, with its national general secretary Vinod Tawde being caught while distributing money in a hotel in Virar town of Palghar district. "What was Tawde doing there when it was not his constituency," he asked and dismissed his claim that he was meeting party workers as false. According to the rules, leaders from outside a constituency are not allowed to remain there after the end of campaign, the Congress chief pointed and argued that hence, Tawde's explanation is false. Also, liquor bottles



were found stored in a warehouse belonging to BJP candidate Wankhede, who is the personal assistant of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, he claimed. "How did the liquor stock appear in Wardha district, where liquor is prohibited? The BJP is trying to win votes by distributing money and liquor," he

added. Targeting BJP for spreading misinformation in name of "vote jihad", Patole stated that "If a community appeals to vote in favour of a particular party, then BJP labels it as 'vote jihad'. Voting is a fundamental right. Now, if a community calls for voting for BJP, will they also call that 'vote jihad'."

Technopark-based centre of US firm bags Clutch global award

Kollam : Technopark-Kollam-based development facility of California-headquartered design and development company Incredible Visibility has received Fall Clutch Global Award 2024, instituted by leading global marketplace of B2B service provider Clutch for the company's industry expertise and client feedback.

The company has also secured a spot among Fall Clutch Champions 2024, an exclusive group recognized for outstanding performance and for obtaining at least three new verified client reviews between May 20 and November 5, 2024.

Incredible Visibility, which is specializing in innovative digital solutions for various industries, was selected for Fall Clutch Global Award 2024 based on their expertise and ability to deliver scores calculated based on client feedback from thousands of reviews published on Clutch.

These honours recognize the company as a top-rated leader in web



development and digital solutions domain based on the clients' satisfaction and high quality service ratings.

"This recognition from Clutch validates our commitment to delivering high-quality digital solutions and becoming a trusted technology partner for our clients worldwide. Our success is built on our ability to provide comprehensive digital solutions while maintaining exceptional customer satisfaction across various industries including retail, healthcare, and fintech," said Vinicius, CEO of Incredible Visibility.

Tim Condon, Chief

Revenue Officer, Clutch, said the most compelling stories of B2B excellence are told through verified client testimonials.

Since its establishment in 2016, Incredible Visibility has grown to over 73 employees and serves clients globally with comprehensive digital solutions including

web and mobile development, e-commerce solutions, cloud infrastructure management, and digital marketing services. The company has delivered projects for notable clients such as Sand Cloud, KashHero, and Digital Currency Systems, demonstrating consistent growth and excellence in service delivery.

Incredible Visibility is headquartered in California, US, with a development center in Kollam. It is specializing in web and mobile development, e-commerce solutions, cloud infrastructure, and digital marketing, besides delivering innovative solutions that drive business success across various industries.

Technopark Phase-V is situated beside the scenic Ashtamudi Lake at Kundara near here.

Technopark Kollam includes a LEED Gold-certified building named Ashtamudi, covering 1 lakh sq ft. The IT building accommodates 19 IT/ITeS companies with approximately 400 employees working on the campus.

12 security personnel killed in suicide attack on joint check post in Bannu: ISPR

Bannu (Pakistan) : At least twelve security personnel were killed in a suicide attack on a joint check post in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, an official said. The attack on a joint check post in Bannu district resulted in the killing of 12 Pakistani soldiers, including 10 from the security forces and two from the Frontier Constabulary, Express Tribune reported quoting (ISPR). The

attack was carried by Khwarij, who attempted to breach the check post in the general area of MaliKhel, the ISPR said in a statement. During the ensuing exchange of fire, six terrorists were killed, it said. However, in an attempt to break through the post's defences, the terrorists rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into the perimeter wall, triggering a suicide blast, according to media reports.

Government taking all steps to improve quality of education in Bihar: Nitish

Patna : Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday said his government is taking all possible required steps to improve the quality of education in the state including recruitment of more teachers and providing infrastructural facilities for the purpose.

Kumar while addressing a function after handing over appointment letters to teachers, who cleared the competency test for being upgraded as "Vishista Sikshak", said that his government had been taking several steps to improve the quality of education since 2005 when he became Chief Minister of the state. Before 2005, teachers were not available in sufficient numbers in schools, and school buildings were in dilapidated condition, he added. "Several incentives were given to girl students to increase their presence in



schools which included cycle and uniform schemes", the Chief Minister said adding that the amount being given to girls after passing the intermediate examination was increased from Rs 10,000 to Rs 25,000. Similarly, girl students were now getting Rs 50,000 on being graduate while earlier they

were receiving only Rs 25,000, he added.

Schools having teaching facilities up to 12th standard were opened in every panchayat to improve number of girls getting quality education. Now, the number of girls and boys in schools was almost the same, he pointed out.

Briefs :

Woman & daughter die in fire in S Delhi

New Delhi : A 42-year-old woman and her daughter were killed in a fire that broke out in a slum in south Delhi's Neb Sarai on Tuesday. The deceased were identified as Farzana and her daughter Ravina. The fire department received a call around 2.12 am on Tuesday and 14 fire engines with 84 firefighters were dispatched to the scene, along with police. A fire official said that after a five-hour battle, the fire was brought under control. Two badly burnt bodies were found in a single hut. The victims were identified as the mother and daughter. According to the fire department, about 100 huts were built on about 4,000 square yards. The fire spread rapidly, engulfing one hut after another. Panic ensued. Initially, people tried to extinguish the fire themselves, but it quickly spread beyond control. "Due to the presence of combustible materials, the fire spread quickly, giving no chance for the mother and daughter to escape," the officer said. Police are investigating the cause behind the fire. According to Delhi Fire Service (DFS), the materials used for the construction of JJ clusters are highly combustible and produce toxic gases. This makes these structures extremely vulnerable to fire hazards, leading to rapid fire spread and posing significant risks to the lives of residents. The use of substandard materials, lack of fire safety measures, and overcrowding in these clusters exacerbate the fire risk. In another incident, a fire broke out in a JJ Colony, prompting the deployment of 16 fire tenders. Over 150 shanties were gutted. Another fire engulfed a factory in the area, and 22 fire tenders were sent. No one was injured.

Man stabbed by duo over parking

New Delhi : A 27-year-old man was stabbed after a heated argument over parking space turned violent in north-west Delhi's Wazirpur on Monday. Police have arrested two men. The stabbing was reported in Wazirpur's JJ Colony. Police got information about a scuffle at the Bharat Nagar police station. After reaching the spot, officers found out that a man was returning home from a wedding in Pandav Nagar when the incident occurred. "As he attempted to park his car outside his house, he was confronted by two men who started quarrelling over the parking spot. The situation quickly escalated and he was stabbed in the waist," a senior police officer said. His father rushed outside to intervene in the fight but was unable to prevent the assault, the officer added. The victim, identified as Ankit Kumar, is receiving treatment in a hospital. When police arrived at the spot, they found one suspect, 22-year-old Rohit Jha, who was arrested immediately.

Delhi high court summons OpenAI in ANI copyright breach case

New Delhi : Delhi high court issued on Tuesday summons against US-based artificial intelligence firm OpenAI on a plea alleging unauthorised use of content by the company to train and operate its AI tool ChatGPT, thereby violating copyright laws. This is the first such lawsuit in India against a US-based AI major. HC sought the AI major's stand on a suit filed by news agency ANI (Asian News International) against OpenAI Inc and OpenAI OpCo LLC seeking Rs 2 crore in damages and a decree of mandatory and permanent injunction.

Delhi air quality improves slightly, back into 'severe' category



New Delhi : Delhi's air quality showed a slight improvement on Wednesday morning, shifting from the "severe plus" category to "severe." However, the city remains shrouded in a thick smog that continues to affect visibility and overall air quality. At 9 a.m., the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recorded an air quality index (AQI) of 424, which falls under the "severe" category. This comes

after two consecutive days of the AQI being in the "severe plus" range. Despite these hazardous conditions, residents were seen jogging and walking near India Gate. Train operations also faced disruptions, with the railways reporting delays for 13 trains and the rescheduling of nine others due to the dense smog.

The ongoing pollution crisis has also impacted the Yamuna River, where toxic

foam was observed floating near Kalindi Kunj and Okhla Barrage. According to SAFAR-India, AQI levels in different parts of Delhi ranged from 382 to 465, reflecting alarming levels of pollution.

To address the worsening situation, Delhi Police are enforcing Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which includes restrictions on older diesel vehicles. Meanwhile,

Delhi implements work-from-home for 50% govt employees as AQI remains 'severe'

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai announced on Wednesday that the government will implement work-from-home arrangements for 50% of its employees as part of efforts to tackle the escalating pollution crisis.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Rai stated that this measure is among several steps being taken to address the deteriorating air quality, with the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) remaining in the "severe" category for two consecutive days.

On Tuesday, Delhi recorded an average AQI of 460, a slight improvement from Monday's 494, which was the second-highest on record. However, experts caution that significant improvement is unlikely in the near term due to stagnant wind patterns and elevated moisture levels.

The Graded Response Ac-

tion Plan (GRAP) has escalated to its highest Stage IV measures, which include halting construction activities and restricting the entry of trucks, except those providing essential services.

Despite these interventions, Delhi's air quality remains the worst in the National Capital Region (NCR), with neighboring cities like Ghaziabad (AQI 434), Gurgaon (AQI 402), and Noida (AQI 370) performing marginally better.

The India Meteorological Department predicts ongoing fog and mist, which are likely to trap pollutants and exacerbate air quality issues. Meanwhile, a forecast from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) suggests that AQI levels will stay in the severe range until November 22, with only minor improvements expected thereafter.

Delhi's Environment Minister, Gopal Rai, has called on the Union Environment Minister to explore cloud seeding as an emergency intervention. "Artificial rainfall is urgently needed to disperse the smog," Rai said,

urging an immediate meeting to discuss the measure.

The Supreme Court has also stepped in, directing Delhi and nearby regions to rigorously implement anti-pollution measures to mitigate the crisis.

This winter you may not have to wait endlessly onboard planes to take off at foggy Delhi Airport

New Delhi : This winter, passengers at Delhi Airport may experience significant relief from prolonged waits inside aircraft during low-visibility conditions. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has introduced a new policy allowing passengers stranded due to weather or technical delays to disembark and re-enter smoothly without undergoing repeated security checks. This move aims to reduce inconvenience and ensure a seamless re-boarding process once flights resume. The aviation ministry announced on Wednesday that drills involving all stakeholders are being conducted to implement the new rules effectively.

For years, passengers at fog-prone airports like Delhi's IGIA have voiced frustrations over being kept onboard during delays caused by low visibility. Airlines previously refrained from allowing disembarkation as it could lead to further delays, including security re-checks and loss of takeoff slots. With the updated BCAS guidelines, such scenarios are expected to improve significantly.

The decision comes after Union Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu reviewed the early onset of fog and



smog in the NCR to ensure smooth operations during winter. "We are adopting a passenger-centric approach to prepare for winter challenges, ensuring better comfort and uninterrupted operations," Naidu posted on X (formerly Twitter). He emphasized the importance of real-time coordination between air traffic control, airlines, ground handlers, and airport operators.

Additionally, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has mandated airlines to deploy CAT III-compliant aircraft and crew for flights operating during low-visibility hours. Three

of Delhi Airport's four runways are now equipped with CAT III Instrument Landing Systems (ILS), enabling aircraft to operate in dense fog. Airlines have also been instructed to proactively communicate with passengers regarding delays or cancellations and maintain updated contact details to facilitate better communication.

Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) has been directed to install LED screens at key locations to provide visibility updates and increase the number of "follow me" vehicles for guiding aircraft during low-visibility conditions. Air-

lines have been asked to prioritize passenger comfort, including canceling flights delayed beyond three hours and ensuring full staffing at check-in counters during peak hours.

Aviation Secretary Vumlungmang Vualnam, along with officials from DGCA, BCAS, DIAL, and representatives from airlines, reviewed the preparedness at IGIA earlier this week. "We are making steady progress in addressing visibility-related challenges to ensure minimal disruptions and enhance passenger experience," the ministry stated.

Amid rise in pollution, Delhi Metro sets record with 78 lakh passenger journeys

New Delhi : Delhi Metro created a new record on Monday by registering the highest passenger journeys at 78.67 lakh. With an Air Quality Index of 494, Monday was the second most polluted day ever. Additionally, BS III petrol and BS IV vehicles are banned as part of the Graded Response Action Plan's emergency measures.

Delhi Metro broke the record set on Aug 25, a day after Raksha Bandhan, at 77.49 lakh passenger journeys. "It reflects the growing faith shown by the passengers in Delhi Metro's reliability, punctuality and seamless travel covering most parts of the Delhi-NCR, which at present is facing severe air quality deterioration. To ensure that more people prefer to use the metro in this scenario, DMRC is already running 60 extra trips on weekdays, thereby offering more carrying capacity than usual," said Anuj Dayal, principal executive director, corporate communications, DMRC.

DMRC defines a passenger journey as the number of metro lines used by a passenger to complete his or her jour-



ney. However, ridership data includes total tickets sold and metro cards used by commuters to exit a station. Delhi Metro used to calculate passenger ridership until 2018, but it started reporting passenger journeys from 2019.

Of the total 78.67 lakh passenger journeys recorded, the highest was on Yellow Line at 20.9 lakh, followed by Blue Line at 20.8 lakh. Yellow and Blue lines are the busiest lines in the DMRC network. Since Aug this year, DMRC has repeatedly breached its own passenger journey records several times. "It indicates that people prefer to opt for an environment-friendly system. The more people prefer metro over private vehicles, there is bound to be a reduction in vehicular

emissions, leading to an improvement in the air quality of the city and its peripheries," said Dayal.

Additionally, DMRC has taken a host of measures in recent times that empower passengers to book their single/multiple journey tickets from multiple digital platforms, giving them the freedom to plan their journey anytime from anywhere without having to stand in queues at the station.

Tie-ups with other organisations like IRCTC, NCRTC, ITP, etc., further empower people to not just travel by the metro but avail further interconnecting travel options with various offers or events being available with seamless ease. DMRC is one of the most environment-friendly transport options and the first metro in the world to be registered for carbon credits with the United Nations body for measures for environmental sustainability, said an official.

At AIIMS Delhi, patients stare at 3-year waitlist for MRI scan

New Delhi : Unless you are a VIP, getting an MRI scan done at the city's premier hospital, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), could stretch from a mere few weeks to an agonising three years.

Recently, a 52-year-old Joydip Dey, who was referred to AIIMS for treatment for his right leg injury at the orthopaedic OPD, was given an appointment for an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan on Sept 7, 2027.

Insiders acknowledge that this extended waiting period is not unique, as numerous other patients encounter similar delays in their appointments for MRI scan and other imaging procedures.

Each day, about 15,000 patients visit the outpatient department at AIIMS. Of these, roughly 10% require diagnostic imaging procedures, such as ultrasound, X-ray and MRI scans. The waiting period for these procedures varies significantly, with numerous patients receiving appointment dates ranging from six months to three years ahead.

Dey said being a BPL (below poverty line) patient, it is impossible for him to seek treatment at a good pri-

vate hospital in Delhi-NCR, where an MRI scan can cost anything between Rs 18,000 and Rs 25,000.

"I don't have that kind of money. I can't even pay Rs 4,000-5,000," he said, adding that during his last visit to AIIMS Delhi on Nov 9 this year, the OPD doctor, after finding out that MRI scan was scheduled after three years, insisted that he must get it done immediately even if it is in a private hospital. "I don't know what to do. I have exhausted all my options. So, I stopped the treatment," he told. AIIMS offers MRI diagnostic services at affordable and economical rates, typically ranging between Rs 2,000 and Rs 3,000. In 2022, Dr M Srinivas, the institute's director, issued instructions to ensure round-the-clock operation of all MRI machines. This directive aimed to facilitate scans for both inpatients and outpatients within the hospital premises, preventing treatment delays caused by extended MRI waiting times. He also emphasised that "the number of appointments for MRI will be increased to reduce the waiting list". Prof Rima Dada, AIIMS media cell in-charge, said the hospital categorises patients based on priority levels.

The Taj Mahal could be central to India's 2036 Olympic bid

New Delhi : Neither Mumbai nor Ahmedabad but the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) and Agra — home to the Taj Mahal — could be the leading choice for India to host the 2036 Summer Olympics, should the International Olympic Committee (IOC) give them a go-ahead.

After India's expression of interest to host the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the next major step in the process will be identifying the potential host city. So far, Ahmedabad and Mumbai were being seen as the leading choices. Ahmedabad was being seen as frontrunner by virtue of being home to the 1.32 lac capacity Narendra Modi cricket stadium while Mumbai, India's financial capital, was being touted to be the other obvious choice given the commercial behemoth that an event like the Olympics can go on to be.

However, contrary to reports, the Delhi-NCR and Agra region could turn out to be the front runners in the near future for the following reasons: 1) Delhi is the

country's national capital and the gateway to some of India's prime tourist destinations, 2) Connectivity in and around Delhi-NCR and Agra has been growing at a rapid pace and there are already four airports that can serve the heavy flow of visitors, 3) There is a major source of land available for new construction, going forward, 4) The Taj Mahal, a wonder of the world, could provide the theme and setting for India to promote the idea of being worthy hosts. As has been evident over the years, consideration for the Olympic bid will not hinge just on the regions and favouritism but on multiple factors such as tourism potential, manufacturing industry, space, accessibility, airports and population size.

Keeping that in mind, with tourism as the central aspect, no spot is more iconic for India than the Taj Mahal. Additionally, previous successful bids have banked on prominent sites to showcase their candidature. For London 2012, river Thames and Tower Bridge were central, at Rio

2016, the statue of Christ the Redeemer was highlighted, and most recently, the Eiffel Tower was crucial to Paris' bid. Based on these learnings, the Indian government could use the Taj Mahal as the emblem of the Olympic bid.

The Delhi-NCR region enjoys good connectivity with Agra and the region is served by the Indira Gandhi International Airport and the upcoming Noida International Airport near Jewar. The decision and next steps in the process will not be taken before at least the next year when IOC members choose the next president in March. The current chief, Thomas Bach, has publicly backed India's intention to host the Games.

Following the elections, the bids from all countries, which IOC claims are in "double digits", will undergo a thorough evaluation based on various criterias, including infrastructure, financial stability, and the capacity to deliver a sustainable Olympic Games in line with the IOC's "The New Norm" reforms. In October, IOA reached out to the IOC Fu-

ture Host Commission to express India's interest in hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2036. PM Modi had first announced India's ambition to organise the Olympics during the Opening Ceremony of the 141st IOC Session in Mumbai in 2023. That intention was then emphasised by him while addressing the athletes after the Paris Games and then to the Indian diaspora in New York in September.

DTC workers' protest still on, delegation meets CM



New Delhi : The protest by temporary Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) drivers and conductors over regularisation of jobs continued for the fourth day on Tuesday.

However, by late night, a resolution seemed imminent following a meeting of union members with chief minister Atishi who, said protesters, assured the demands would be given due consideration.

DTC officials said that the protestors should sit at the negotiation table instead of taking the law into their hands, as a few instances were reported from some places. "Representatives should come for discussions instead of resorting to disruptions, as it would only

worsen the situation," said a senior official of the corporation.

"We formed a committee and asked them to give written presentations. We got those from four-five women staffers and two other unions," the official said, adding that although the department had asked them to meet the committee, they had not turned up so far. "The problem is -- this protest is not limited to voicing their concerns now; law and order is being disrupted by a few. There have been cases when four buses were damaged and drivers on duty were manhandled. This is not the way forward. We asked them to talk, but they are not coming," the official said.

Editorial

Countdown begins!

The voting process for the Maharashtra and Jharkhand assembly elections, which is catching the attention of the entire country, has been completed. Counting of votes will be held on November 23. But before that some exit polls for Jharkhand and Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha have come out. In Jharkhand today, 38 seats in the last phase went to polls on November 20, while on November 13, voting was held in 43 seats in the first phase. Congress has suffered a big blow in Jharkhand exit polls. Jharkhand exit polls predict formation of NDA government. According to Matriz exit poll, BJP may form the coalition government in Jharkhand, NDA may get 42-47 seats, Congress alliance may get 25-30 seats in Jharkhand. While in the JVC exit poll, NDA can get 40-44 seats, while Congress alliance can get 30-40 seats. According to People's Pulse exit poll, NDA can get 44-53 seats in Jharkhand, while Congress alliance can get 25-37 seats. According to the Lok-pol exit poll, the BJP alliance will get 36-39 seats and the India alliance is predicted to get 41-44 seats.

According to the prediction made by the poll diary, the coalition government will come in Maharashtra. Poll Diary has predicted that the Grand Alliance will win 142 to 186 seats. He predicts that Mahavikas Aghadi will get 121 seats. The exit poll of News X has predicted that Mahayuti will get 145 to 155 seats. According to Matriz's prediction, the grand alliance government may come again in the state. The Grand Alliance can win around 150 to 170 seats. Whereas Mahavikas Aghadi is likely to get 110 to 130 seats. People's Pulse estimates say that the Grand Alliance is expected to win between 137 and 157 seats. It is estimated that Mahavikas Aghadi will get 126 to 146 seats. Other parties and independents are predicted to get 2 to 8 seats. Chanakya Strategy has also given predictions for Maharashtra elections. According to this, the grand alliance led by Bharatiya Janata Party is estimated to get 152 to 160 seats. Chanakya has predicted that the Congress-led Mahavikas Aghadi will get 130 to 138 seats. Independents and other parties are expected to get six to eight seats. According to the exit poll of Megh Updates, there is a possibility of the grand coalition government coming again in the state. It is estimated that Mahayuti will get 150 to 170 seats. Megh Updates estimates that Mahavikas Aghadi with Congress will get 110 to 130 seats. Independents and other parties are expected to get eight to ten seats.

At this time, the BJP and the Congress, which are the national parties, had landed a strong army of leaders in Maharashtra, while Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray single-handedly managed the campaign and created a good atmosphere. This is going to be. The magic of women's votes will be important in Maharashtra in this election.

This year's assembly election is going to be different for Maharashtra in every way, instead of sustainable development, election campaign was made on the topics of vote jihad, free electricity scheme, free education, reservation. In this election, there was no discussion on the issues of agriculture, inflation and unemployment. As soon as it was realized that the issue of soybeans was decisive in nearly 75 constituencies in the last phase, assurance was given in this regard. Batenge to katenge, ek hai to safe hai BJP's slogan ultimately created a good atmosphere, but on the other hand, BJP got to see Rama's name forgotten in the election. The Ladaki Bahin Yojana for women was at the center of this year's campaign, and the women's vote is likely to be decisive because of this scheme. Similar to the beloved sister scheme, the Mahavikas Aghadi announced to give 3,000 subsidies in the name of Mahalakshmi scheme when the government comes. Therefore, only Revadis were announced on the occasion of elections in Maharashtra. While Maha Vikas Aghadi is fighting on one side and Maha Uti on the other side, as MNS has taken the election seriously this time, there is a possibility that the MNS factor will once again appear in this election. Looking at the various experiments in Maharashtra politics after 2019, now people will not find it inappropriate if something different happens. On the one hand, insurgency and nepotism have surrounded the alliance and alliance in this election, two brothers from the same family from different parties and a daughter standing against her father for the first time. Apart from the same established, the same families and the same candidates, the second, third generation, fourth generation, no candidate was seen in all the parties. Those who lost in the Lok Sabha are now seen contesting the assembly elections. Ram Satpute, Mihir Kotecha on Legislative Council, Bhavna Gawli, Gopichand Padalkar, and Milind Deora on Rajya Sabha are in the arena of assembly elections. As a result, the field of politics is seen to be monopolized by certain families, Sujay Vikhe-Patil of Nagar wanted to contest the Assembly elections after losing the Lok Sabha elections, but the party denied him a ticket. In this election, it was seen that there is a large amount of nepotism in all the major parties.

The BJP, which accused the Congress-Nationalist Party of corruption in the past several elections, also focused maximum attention on the Ladaki Bahin Yojana, a scheme like Vidyavetan to 10 lakh students, through such a scheme, the Grand Alliance campaigned with women and youth at the center, Narendra Modi while campaigning in Maharashtra, Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Targeted Congress without criticizing Thackeray, while Sharad Pawar In Maharashtra, when the meetings were held, they became aggressive and appealed to the voters. Speaking in a meeting in the constituency of Dilip Valse-Patil, Pawar gave emotional support to the voters by saying that Valse-Patil is a traitor, Pada, my manasputra but we have no family relation. Pawar has never been seen as aggressive, on the other hand, Uddhav Thackeray, while speaking in a meeting in Abdul Sattar's constituency, said that he would talk to the BJP if he had time but drop him.

There is no doubt that the result of this election will be the true Shiv Sena on the one hand and the true NCP on the other, so there is no doubt that this election will be stormy. Now it cannot be said precisely whether the voters will ignore this carrot or whether this election will revolve around the original issues.

100% Health Centre Conversion and Boost in Maternal Care



On the second day of his visit to Namsai district, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh reviewed the district's performance under the Aspirational District Programme (ADP). Emphasizing collaboration, convergence, and competition, he underscored the transformative impact of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and said, PM Modi has made Northeast an essential part of India's mainstream growth story.

The Minister noted that before 2014, the region often felt alienated from the rest of the country. Today, it stands as an integral part of India's cultural and developmental landscape. Citing examples such as youth from the North East excelling in the tourism and aviation industries, Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed the strides made in fostering a sense of belonging and national integration.

Highlighting good practices in Namsai, he pointed out initiatives such as integrating Anganwadi Centres with schools to improve early childhood education and health outcomes and the innovative "Pehli Sawari" ambulance service for newborns. Such ideas, he said, are worth replicating across other aspirational districts.

Dr. Jitendra Singh appreciated the fact that the Namsai district has emerged as a beacon of progress under the Aspirational District Program (ADP), showcasing remarkable improvements across various sectors, including health, education, and infrastructure. The district's composite score has surged from 35.8 in April 2018 to 54.0 in March 2024, reflecting a 37.64% improvement. This leap has propelled Namsai from the 97th position to the 12th among 112 districts, earning it accolades and substantial rewards under the Sustainable Development Goals - Empowered Action Group (SDG-EAP).

The health sector in Namsai has witnessed transformative changes. The district has achieved a 100% conversion of sub-centres and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) into Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs). Additionally, 75% of PHCs now comply with Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS), and 70% of specialist services are available in district hospitals. However, challenges remain, such as the acute shortage of General Duty Medical Officers (GDMOs) and nurses, and the absence of radiologists in the district hospital.

Maternal and child health indicators have also shown significant progress. The percentage of pregnant women receiving four or more antenatal care check-ups has increased from 35.46% in April 2018 to 81.3% in March 2024, and institutional deliveries have surged from 46.7% to 117%. The district has also achieved a remarkable 119% immunization rate for children aged 9-11 months.

Namsai's education sector has made strides in improving literacy and school infrastructure. The district, which has a predominantly rural population with 76% dependent on agriculture, has focused on enhancing government schools, which cater to 67% of the student population. The literacy rate has improved, but it still lags behind state and national averages.

Key initiatives include the renovation of 27 old school buildings, construction of additional classrooms, and provision of computer labs in five government higher secondary schools. The district has also addressed basic amenities, ensuring functional toilets in 81% of schools and drinking water facilities in 98% of schools. The innovative e-fencing software has been implemented to monitor attendance and reduce absenteeism.

The district's progress is a result of collaborative efforts involving various stakeholders. Significant projects include the construction of a laboratory building and an OPD building under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, the establishment of model Anganwadi Centres, and the provision of modern diagnostic equipment for district hospitals and Community Health Centres (CHCs). The "Pehli Sawari" initiative, funded by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), provides free ambulance services for institutional deliveries, further enhancing maternal health outcomes.

Agriculture and Infrastructure: Addressing Challenges and Leveraging Potential Agriculture remains a critical sector for Namsai, with 74% of the population engaged in farming. The district faces challenges such as inadequate irrigation facilities, exploitation by middlemen, and low productivity of local livestock. However, the fertile plains and excellent road connectivity offer significant potential for agricultural diversification and agro-based industries.

Infrastructure development has also been a priority, with 100% household electrification, improved road connectivity under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), and enhanced access to potable water and sanitation facilities.

Namsai's journey under the ADP serves as a model for other aspirational districts. The district's comprehensive approach, focusing on health, education, and infrastructure, coupled with collaborative efforts, has yielded significant improvements. As Namsai continues to address its challenges and leverage its potential, it stands as a testament to the transformative power of targeted development programs.

Dr. Jitendra Singh's visit not only showcased the achievements of Namsai but also highlighted its potential as a model for other districts. The Minister emphasized that such targeted developmental efforts demonstrate how collaboration and innovative practices can overcome challenges and drive inclusive growth.

As Namsai continues its journey of progress, its story serves as an inspiration for aspirational districts across India. The Minister's visit has reignited focus on leveraging local potential and ensuring equitable development, aligning with the government's vision of a self-reliant and inclusive India.

Grievance Redressal Time Reduced to 13 Days from 30 days

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted a transformative milestone in public grievance redressal, announcing that the average grievance resolution time has dropped from 30 days to just 13 days and will soon be reduced further.

Speaking at the National Workshop on Effective Redressal of Public Grievances through a virtual platform, the Minister underscored this achievement as a testament to the government's commitment to responsive and citizen-centric governance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Jitendra Singh noted that the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), launched in 2007, has undergone ten-step reforms that have revolutionized grievance management. These advancements have led to over 116,000 grievances being registered in October 2024 alone, with pending grievances reduced to 53,897 in central secretariats.

"For 28 consecutive months, central secretariats have resolved over 100,000 grievances each month," Dr. Jitendra Singh stated, adding that such benchmarks underscore the effectiveness of the system.

The Minister pointed out that a number of citizens provided positive feedback in surveys, showcasing growing trust in the government's efforts. Ministries like Skill Development, Postal, and Food Distribution emerged as top performers among Group A ministries, while Parliamentary Affairs, Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, and Land Resources Departments led the way in Group B categories.



Dr. Jitendra Singh also announced the introduction of next-generation technology powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to further modernize the grievance redressal system. These tools aim to make the process more user-friendly, efficient, and aligned with citizens' expectations, ultimately enhancing their ease of living.

The Minister emphasized the strategic significance of public grievances as a direct reflection of citizens' feedback on government services and policies. He reiterated the government's commitment to leveraging technology-driven solutions to address these issues promptly.

Dr. Jitendra Singh lauded the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) for consistently setting new benchmarks. Over 51,000 new users joined CPGRAMS in 2024, indicating its growing reach and reliability. These achievements, he added, demonstrate the government's focus on measurable outcomes and citizen satisfaction.

Concluding his address, the Minister reaffirmed the government's mission of proactive governance, noting that the evolving grievance redressal system is central to delivering a seamless and inclusive public service experience. "We are committed to not just resolving grievances faster but also ensuring systemic reforms to prevent them from arising in the first place," he said.

The workshop witnessed participation from senior officials, ministry representatives, and key stakeholders who deliberated on further refining grievance redressal mechanisms for a citizen-friendly governance ecosystem.



SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2024

Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communication Dr. Chandrasekhar Pemmasani inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela 2024 during 43rd India International Trade Fair (IITF), Hall No. 9 & 10 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi today. After inauguration MoS visited all the stalls in the Saras Aajeevika Mela and interacted with all the SHG's Didis. The Senior officials from the ministry accompanied the minister during the visit. The Minister was highly impressed by the wide variety of products displayed at the Saras Aajeevika Mela 2024. He appreciated the creative minds behind the innovative products made from plants like water hyacinth, which is typically considered a menace to water bodies. The Minister of State (MoS) applauded the organizers for executing the Saras Aajeevika Mela at an international standard. He also highlighted how the mela has boosted the confidence of SHG Didis, paving the way for the true empowerment of rural women. So far, we have one crore Lakhpati Didis, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has envisioned creating at least three crore Lakhpati Didis," the MoS said. "I am confident that we can achieve and surpass this target," the Minister added.

SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2024, focusing on the theme of 'tradition, art, craft and culture' highlighting one district one product pavilion is one of the most prestigious government initiatives, that not just offers best of the cultural heritage, but also tells a story of rural women donning the hat of an entrepreneur at a national level platform. The finest handicraft and handloom products from the remote areas of Rural India will be at display at the SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2024, organised by the Ministry of Rural Development and supported by National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD-PR). More than 300 craftsmen and SHG's Didis are participating and showcasing their products through around 150 stalls in the 5 zones of the exhibition.

This year, the Saras Aajeevika Mela at IITF presents products, highlighting the unique traditional crafts and diverse livelihood products of rural India like silk saree, cotton from Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh; Tasar Saree from Jharkhand; Chanderi Saree from Madhya Pradesh; Wooden handicrafts from Andhra Pradesh, Assam; Pashmina Shawl from Jammu & Kashmir; Pickles from Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Sikkim, UP; Kantha Stich from West Bengal, Woolen products and natural food products of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and various dry fruits and handloom products of Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and Bamboo products of Assam, Jharkhand and Nagaland. This initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission [DAY-NRLM], Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is to bring the rural women SHG members formed under DAY NRLM, in one platform to showcase their skills, sell and build linkages with potential market players in a fair price.

The Ministry of Rural



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The Ministry of Rural Development is providing a marketing platform to rural women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to sell their products through Saras Aajeevika Melas under Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). Through Saras Aajeevika Melas, members of rural women self-help groups get an opportunity to directly communicate with urban customers and know the market interest and accordingly fix the price of their products by improving the packaging of their products. Saras Aajeevika Mela provides women of rural self-help groups not only creating livelihood opportunities but also presenting a great example of women empowerment in country.

The Ministry of Rural Development has been organizing Saras Aajeevika Mela since 1999. The Ministry tries to provide a good platform to as many producers as possible for sales and their marketing. Deen Dayal Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission aims to bridge the gap between skills and market access by supporting rural producers, especially women. Workshops on product packaging design, communication and business-to-business marketing equip them to tap into mainstream markets. This integrated approach not only promotes women empowerment but also aligns with the government's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Vocal for Local.



Briefs :

Illegal structure razed in Ambala

Ambala :The PWD (B&R) conducted an anti-encroachment drive to remove part of a ‘peer mazar’ on the government land in Ambala City on Tuesday evening. The ‘peer mazar’ is situated on old NH-65 opposite Panchayat Bhawan in Ambala City. Some portion of the mazar illegally encroached the PWD land, which was shown in the demarcation report conducted and submitted by the Revenue Department. The mazar is situated on the edge of the bituminous road and creates problems for the road users and is a cause of several accidents. As per the demarcation report, there was an encroachment on 810 sq ft area on the PWD land, adjoining the road. Last week, members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal had staged a dharna against the encroachment made by those who had constructed a ‘peer mazar’ on the government land and demanded its demolition. The administration had fixed November 19 as the date for the anti-encroachment drive. Though the caretaker of the mazar had also filed a stay application against the demolition drive, the application was dismissed on Tuesday. After the application was dismissed, the process to remove the illegal structure was started. Though initially the caretaker of the mazar started the process of dismantling but later the department engaged machines to expedite the demolition process. BJP leader advocate Sandeep Sachdeva, who has been associated with the VHP, said, “The application filed by the other party has been dismissed by the court and the demolition drive was conducted. If they try to encroach upon the land again, we will approach the court and take action. Though the department has removed the structure, we are not satisfied because the remaining structure is also illegal. We will continue to take a legal route to get the structure demolished.” A heavy police force was deployed. Meanwhile, Executive Engineer PWD (B&R) Ritesh Aggarwal, said, “There was encroachment on 810 sq ft area on land and after plea was dismissed, in compliance with the directions of the court, the illegal encroachment on the PWD land has been removed. They were initially given time to remove their structure, after which machines were engaged for the demolition. The remaining structure is on the land of other departments and only they can take action.”

Youth found dead at Panjab University hostel

Gurugram :A 24-year-old youth was found dead under mysterious circumstances at Boys Hostel No 7 of Panjab University. The police suspect it to be a drug overdose case. The victim, who hailed from Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh, had come to meet a friend who resides in the hostel on Monday. He was found unconscious today and rushed to the Government Multi-Specialty Hospital (GMSH), Sector 16, by his friends. The doctors declared him dead on arrival. The police were informed about the incident.

Mahendragarh records 15% rise in road accidents in 10 months

Mahendragarh : Contrary to the target of reducing road mishaps this year, Mahendragarh district has recorded a rise of 15 per cent in roadside accidents in the past 10 months (from January to October) of current year as compared to the corresponding period last year.

As per sources, a total of 278 road mishaps have been reported in the district from January to October this year, which claimed lives of 128 people and left 394 others injured while a total of 242 road accidents were registered in the corresponding period of 2023 with the death of 122 people and injuries to 208 persons. “Over speeding, illegal cuts and lack of sign boards on highways, least strictness in issuing challans against violators of traffic rules are the main reasons behind the road mishaps in Mahendragarh district. The rise in the number of road accidents is indeed a matter of concern,” said Rajesh Kumar, an office-bearer of Road Safety Organisation (RSO). He said over 15 black spots had been identified in the district, which were prone to road mishaps due to multiple reasons. “The situation gets more risky for driving especially in winter when dense fog



reduces the visibility. However, awareness campaigns are being run in educational institutes and other places to motivate the students to follow traffic rules in order to put a check on the road mishaps,” he added. Rajesh claimed that many persons did not bother to wear helmet while riding two wheelers and to use seat belt while driving four-wheelers. “Such violators should be dealt with strictly by issuing challans against them so that they do not forget to

follow traffic rules in future,” he added.

As far as traffic challans are concerned, the district police authorities had issued a total of 702 challans in August. Among them, the highest 144 challans were issued for not wearing helmet, 72 for overspeeding, 19 for driving without seat belt, six for using mobile phone while driving, three for wrong side driving, two for drunken driving and 456 for other violations of the traffic rules, said the source.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Vivek Bharti said all efforts were being made to bring the count of accidents down in the district.

“The officials concerned have been directed to close all illegal cuts on the highway and draw white lines on all roads in view of foggy season. The National Highways Authority of India and PWD (B&R) officials have also been asked to get the safety audit of their roads done,” he added.

Chandigarh: Doctors differ on drawing parallel between poor AQI, smoking

Chandigarh : The Air Quality Index (AQI) of the City Beautiful, which touched 425 last Thursday, worst ever for the city and higher than New Delhi (423), moderated to “poor” (203) today. Fresh memes on AQI have flooded the social media with one of them suggesting “smoking in Bangalore is healthier than doing yoga in Delhi”. Prof Ashutosh N Aggarwal, Head, Department of Pulmonary Medicine, PGI, said, “There is no simple formula to draw an equivalence between air quality and smoking tobacco. However, full day exposure to an AQI greater than 400 (categorised as ‘severe’) with PM2.5 (particulate matter) concentrations of >250 µg/m3 might roughly have the same health hazards as smoking >10 cigarettes that whole day.” Dr Ravindra Khaiwal, Professor of Environmental Health, Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGI, termed equating AQI with smoking tobacco as misleading. He said, “Many online platforms and media outlets compare AQI to cigarette smoking. However, this comparison should be based on PM2.5 levels, not AQI. A PM2.5 concentration of 22.5 µg/m3 is roughly

equivalent to smoking one cigarette. That said, it is incorrect to compare air pollutants with cigarette smoking because it can create a false perception that smoking is less harmful. Smoking a single cigarette exposes a person to over 70 known harmful chemicals/carcinogens at once. While raising awareness about the dangers of high levels of air pollution, using AQI and PM2.5 calculators is important, equating it with smoking risks normalising tobacco use can be counterproductive.” Not all doctors hold the same opinion. Contrary to the PGI doctors, Dr Robin Gupta, consultant pulmonology, Paras Health, Panchkula, confirmed that exposure to “poor” air quality is akin to smoking cigarettes, posing significant risks to lung health. He said, “The AQI levels above 100 can cause irreversible damage. AQI between 101 and 200 is comparable to smoking 4-10 cigarettes per day. It goes up to 10-20 cigarettes per day for 201-300 level and around 20 cigarettes per day for 300 level.” Common harmful pollutants in AQI >100 are particulate matter (PM), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), ozone (O3) and carbon monoxide (CO).



Khattar bats for providing 50% help before marriage under vivah shagun yojana

Karnal : Union Minister of Power and Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar, suggested providing at least 50 per cent of the eligible amount to beneficiaries under the Mukhya Mantri Vivah Shagun Yojana on the day of the wedding itself. “It came to my notice that benefits are given several days after the registration of marriage. I have suggested the officials provide 50 per cent of the amount on the wedding day and the rest of the amount should be given after the marriage. I will suggest the same to the state government to implement it,” said Khattar, while reviewing the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DDCMC-DISHA) at the Mini-Secretariat on Tuesday. The Haryana Government has launched the scheme for the welfare of daughters belonging to SCs, BCs, widow, divorced, destitute, orphan, tapriwas, BPL families of general

castes and others, under which amount as per categories is provided in the form of Shagun at the time of marriage.

While reviewing around 30 agendas related to various departments, Khattar exhorted officials to focus on public service and expedite developmental projects.

He also invited suggestions for improving existing schemes, saying that modifications could be made to ensure better implementation. Highlighting the essence of a welfare state, he noted, “Rules and regulations are created for public welfare. Officials must act as ‘sevak’ of the public, ensuring timely delivery of benefits to those in need.” He also inquired about 68 pending projects under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MP-LADS). Officials assured that 30 projects would be completed within three months and the remaining 38 within six months.



Taking note of delays in the disbursement of funds for toilets in rural areas, the minister directed immediate action. He instructed that funds be transferred between banks on the same day to resolve

the issue. For villages yet to be declared ODF Plus, he directed SDMs to resolve land availability concerns promptly. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), officials were instructed

to inform beneficiaries about the timeline for house allotment. Karnal district has received 13,098 applications, exceeding the target of 10,393 houses. The minister also reviewed progress under the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana, where 14 out of 60 identified works in 10 villages were complete. During the review of Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana, the minister directed the authorities to increase the number of kiosks at Karnal’s Sanjha Bazaar. He suggested setting up of similar bazaars near railway stations and bus stands to support self-help group (SHG) women. Under the the Swamitva Yojana, the officials reported 100 per cent mapping completion and resolution of 260 out of 329 complaints. The minister requested detailed data on youth trained under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, noting that 160 of the 665 trained youths had secured jobs.

Khattar also approved the allocation of 160 computers for PM SHRI and Model Sanskriti Schools through CSR funds. He instructed them to make a list of households under the Ujjwala scheme which had not refilled their cylinders even once in a year. Khattar unveiled statues Bhagwan Parshuram at Mughal Canal, statue of astronaut Kalpana Chawla at Kalpana Chawla Government Medical College (KCGMC), Dr Mangal Sen’s statue at the Dr Mangal Sen auditorium complex. Khattar also inaugurated a newly constructed two-storey multi-purpose hall at Bal Bhawan.

Khattar interacted with party workers and exhorted them to work actively in membership drive. Khattar later held a meeting with the party workers and leaders at the party’s office Karna Kamal in Sector 9, where he exhorted them to work actively in the party’s membership drive.

Work from home for Gurugram, Faridabad private offices to beat smog

Faridabad : In the absence of any respite in the air quality and pollution, the authorities of twin NCR cities Gurugram and Faridabad today issued an advisory to all corporates and private offices to switch to the work-from-home mode for at least 50 per cent of the workforce.

They cited the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) stage 4 norms, which call for work from home for at least 50 per cent of the workforce in all offices to reduce vehicular load on the road and curtail emissions.

The step, according to Gurugram Deputy Commissioner Ajay Kumar, will not just help reduce the pollution but will also keep people away from smog. It’s not just about reducing the vehicular load, but also ensuring that the ongoing pollution crisis doesn’t transform into a health crisis. Giving the work-from-home option to people will help them stay away from smog and its harmful effects. The schools have been closed and people have been advised to keep children and seniors indoors, especially during the morning and evening hours. We are also emphasising on the strict implementation of the GRAP rules. The defaulters are being challaned and fined,” said Ajay Kumar.

The Gurugram and Faridabad authorities have to



an extent managed to curtail the construction activity by big builders, but dealing with relatively small-scale construction is proving to be a major challenge for them. The twin cities received over 50 complaints of GRAP violations today, a majority pertaining to unchecked construction activity on sites ranging from 200 sq yards to 500 sq yards. “Smaller sites are a major concern right now as a majority of the complaints are from there. These sites don’t count themselves as projects and many owners are ignorant about the GRAP norms. These are a major cause of dust pollution and we are challaning the defaulters,” said Vijay Chaudhary, Regional Officer (South), Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Gurugram.

Meanwhile, developers said they were willing to cooperate with government

agencies in adhering to the GRAP-4 norms, but the authorities must do a rethink on the blanket ban on the construction activity. They have written to the Commission for Air Quality Management, saying that the ban would not only impact the project timelines but also the budget and developers’ obligations to financial institutions.

They demanded that RERA-compliant projects should be exempted from the GRAP guidelines. G Hari Babu, national president of the National Real Estate Development Council, said RERA-approved projects, “which adhere to stringent pollution-control measures”, should not be grouped under this blanket ban.

“These projects already comply with strict environmental norms, ensuring minimal dust and pollution during their execution,” he said.

Minister administers oath of office to 6,391 panches

Ludhiana : Cabinet Minister Hardeep Singh Mundian on Tuesday exhorted newly-elected panches to work hand-in-hand with the state government to ensure comprehensive development of villages while also fostering communal harmony, peace and brotherhood. He was addressing a gathering after administering the oath of office to 6,391 newly-elected panches at Dhanansu village near here.

The minister said the people had entrusted them with important responsibility of promoting prosperity and progress of their villages. He said it was their duty to fulfil society’s aspirations and pledged his support and cooperation for the all-around development of the villages.

He also urged the panches to ensure that they start working from today itself and start sending proposals of development works to the government so that funds could be released instantly to facilitate the projects.

Mundian emphasised that the state government was dedicated to put the state on a path of high growth for which significant efforts were already underway to ensure that it becomes a lead-



ing state in every area. He said the strenuous efforts of the state government would only fructify if the newly-elected panches, along with their sarpanches, contribute generously for development.

The minister also stated that the state government had fulfilled most of the promises made to the people. The education and health sectors had witnessed unprecedented development, with several reforms imple-

mented since the government’s formation. He said the state-of-the-art infrastructure was being established in government schools and hospitals, ensuring delivery of quality services. Budget for both Education and Health departments have also been increased to serve the public in a better way. A major initiative has been launched to promote sports through the Khedan Watan Punjab Diyan tournament.

Over 48,000 youth had secured government jobs through a fair and transparent process since we had formed the government in the state,” he said. While addressing the gathering, Raitkot MLA Hakam Singh urged the panches to work dedicatedly for the holistic development of villages, emphasising that the time had come for everyone to make joint efforts towards rural development.

Bill passed for job security to extension, guest lecturers

Gurugram : The Haryana Legislative Assembly today passed the Haryana Extension Lecturers and Guest Lecturers (Security of Service) Bill 2024, which will benefit 2,016 extension lecturers and 46 guest lecturers of government colleges, allowing them to continue working till the age of superannuation.

Those who have completed at least five years of service, as of August 15, 2024, are eligible.

The engagement of extension lecturers was started in 2010 when they were paid Rs 200 per period. Guest lecturers engaged before 2014 were not regularised under

the Regularisation Policy dated June 16, 2014. extension and guest lecturers are being paid Rs 57,700 per month, as of now. After the passage of the Bill, they will be paid Rs 57,700 plus dearness allowance.

Speaking on the Bill, Congress' Rohtak MLA BB Batra said, "Why regular appointments have not been made? These teachers (extension and guest lecturers) were appointed without advertisement and screening. You are approaching towards the failure of the system."

He added, "What is the crime of university contractual teachers? They have

been selected through a proper process.

The government gives them salaries. There must be 1,500 such teachers in the varsities. They are similarly placed." Former CM Bhupinder Hooda argued, "Why do you need the HPSC, Haryana Staff Selection Commission? No reservation policy has been followed in these recruitment."

Lashing out at the Opposition, CM Nayab Singh Saini said they were correcting Congress' mistakes and wouldn't allow the expulsion of these lecturers. But later he replied, "We will think about regularising contractual varsity teachers."

All must speak in one voice on new Assembly matter: CM; Opposition says stand by govt

Gurugram : After the Congress raised the issue of "irresponsible statements" by Punjab leaders on a new complex for the Assembly on the last day of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha session here today, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said the construction of the new Vidhan Sabha in Chandigarh was a serious issue and all parties should rise above politics and speak in one voice.

As soon as the proceedings began, Congress leader Ashok Arora said Haryana had as much right on Chandigarh as Punjab did.

"The city is a joint capital for the two states till Punjab gives us the 107 Hindi-speaking villages of Abhohar and Fazilka. They are holding back our share of water through the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal despite the Supreme court's order. Punjab's leaders are going about making irresponsible statements. I think we should not give any money or land in exchange for land for our



new complex since it is our capital," Arora said.

Speaker Harvinder Kalyan said an all-party meeting would be held to discuss the "serious issues" and no discussion

would be allowed till the matter was discussed. Saini said Punjab leaders had previously politicised issues like the SYL canal, depriving Haryana farmers of their legiti-

mate share of water. The Supreme Court has also ruled that Haryana farmers are entitled to this water.

"Such actions, where even the directives of the

Supreme Court are bypassed, should not happen in this country. It is unfortunate that now the Punjab leaders are raising questions about the construction of the State Vidhan Sabha complex in Chandigarh. We will have our next delimitation exercise in 2026, so we need to increase the seating capacity. We will hold an all-party meeting, and this is not about politics.

We have to send out a message that Haryana is united," the Chief Minister said. He emphasised that the entire state of Haryana stands united on this issue. He assured that whatever all the members of the Vidhan Sabha say unanimously, the government will take that forward.

Meanwhile, extending their support to the government on this issue, the Opposition stated that it would stand by the government and that the Chief Minister should lead and all parties would come together to present a united front.

Transport authority starts drive to reduce accidents

Yamunanagar : The Regional Transport Authority (RTA), Yamunanagar, has started a special drive to reduce road accidents during the foggy season.

On the directions of DC Capt Manoj Kumar, officials of the RTA are making drivers aware about careful driving, putting reflector tapes on vehicles and issuing instructions to drivers to drive under-loaded vehicles. Inspector of RTA, Yamunanagar, Vikas Yadav said that vehicles were not visible in the absence of reflector tapes in the foggy season causing a number

of road accidents.

"The Regional Transport Authority, Yamunanagar, has started a special drive to avert road accidents during the foggy season. Two teams of the RTA have started putting reflector tapes on the vehicles," said Inspector Vikas Yadav. He said the stray cattle roaming on the roads were also being made to wear reflector belts so that the possibility of accidents was minimized by stray cattle on the roads. He also appealed to the drivers to drive the vehicles within the speed limit,

BJP had no answers to Cong questions in Vidhan Sabha: Hooda

Karnal : Former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda today said the failures of the newly-elected BJP government had been exposed and, like the previous BJP regime, it could neither provide fertilisers nor MSP to farmers.

Addressing a press conference at the end of the Assembly session, Hooda said the government could not give satisfactory answers to the questions raised by the Congress in the House.

"The government lied about the availability of fertilisers. It said there was no shortage of fertilisers, whereas farmers are in distress due to their non-availability," he added. Hooda said the BJP had promised to give Rs 3,100 for paddy, but "the truth is that after forming the government, BJP did not even give the MSP to the farmers".

"Farmers had to sell their crops at Rs 200- 400 less price. Before the elections, the BJP had promised to give gas cylinders for Rs 500 and Rs 2,100 every month to women. But the government has not fulfilled any of its promises till now," he said.

As regards Kaushal Ni-



gam employees, he said: "The policy makes it clear that BJP is completely against reservation and merit, because there is neither reservation, nor merit, nor transparency in Kaushal Nigam." He said the Congress had demanded that the practice of contractual employment in Haryana should be stopped and skilled workers be regularised. "No system should be made in which the youth is exploited, but the government rejected the demand of the Congress and dashed

the hopes of skilled workers doing temporary employment at low wages," he stated.

Hooda said BJP had announced to provide two lakh jobs in the elections, but now the BJP was not ready to discuss this and neither had it started any recruitment process. "Unemployment is continuously increasing in Haryana. Due to this, 54 per cent of the state youth are going to other states and countries in search of employment," he pointed out.

Hooda said: "Today 70 per cent of the population of Haryana has reached below the poverty line... the BJP should tell what happened to its claims of development? If there has been development, how has such a large population become poor?" he said.

He said the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has also confirmed the allegations of the Congress. "It is now clear that BJP has burdened the state with a debt of Rs 4.5 lakh crore," he stated.

Crushing season begins at Karnal Cooperative Sugar Mill

Karnal : The Haryana Cooperative and Tourism Minister, Dr Arvind Sharma, started the 49th crushing season of the Karnal Cooperative Sugar Mill on Tuesday with a traditional havan-yajna ceremony.

After the ritual, Dr Sharma initiated the process by feeding sugarcane into the crushing machine.

During the event, Dr Sharma assured farmers that they would face no difficulties at the mill and promised them timely payments for their produce. He said the Haryana Government was providing the highest sugarcane price in the country and highlighted the district's achievement of cultivating sugarcane across 232 villages. The sugar mill is currently operating profitably, thanks to the hard work of farmers and mill administration, earning it three awards to date," said Dr Sharma. He said realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India a developed nation by 2047 required participation from all sections of society. He also praised Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar for driving the state's development forward.



Highlighting employment initiatives, Dr Sharma mentioned that the government recently distributed appointment letters to 26,000 youths and had abolished the kharchi-parchi system, offering jobs based on merit. He announced plans to provide employment to an additional two lakh youths. Chairman of Haryana Sugarcane, Dharamveer Dagar, said the mill had set a target of crushing 50 lakh quintals of

sugarcane this season, with a recovery rate target of 10.01%. Last season, the mill crushed 49.34 lakh quintals of sugarcane, producing 4.90 lakh quintals of sugar with a recovery rate of 9.95%.

Dagar appreciated the farmers' efforts and urged them to bring clean sugarcane to the mill to ensure better recovery rates. He noted that the introduction of the online token system had sig-

nificantly saved farmers' time. Sugarcane cultivation in the mill area covered 22,658 acres this year, with 71% early-maturing and 29% mid-season varieties. The mill had been recognised 21 times for its achievements in sugarcane recovery and development.

Three farmers—Krishna from Khirajpur, Netrapal from Dilwara and Sohan Lal from Chorpura—were honoured during the event.

No takers for 'bapu-beta' style of politics: Khattar to Hooda

Hisar : Union Minister of Power and Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar has advised former CM and Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda to strengthen internal democracy within his party by allowing leaders outside his (Hooda) family to rise.

"If the Congress continues with this 'bapu-beta' style of politics, it will only harm the party. Dynastic politics, where leadership is passed down like royalty, no longer resonates with people," said Khattar while responding to media questions about Hooda's defence of his family legacy and ties to the freedom movement in response to BJP's criticism of 'bapu-beta' politics.

Khattar stated this at the Mini Secretariat after chairing a meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DDCMC-DI-SHA) today. Following the Congress' defeat in the Assembly elections, Hooda has faced criticism



from both BJP leaders and members of his own party over his alleged 'bapu-beta' politics. However, Hooda recently defended his family's legacy, highlighting his family's contributions to the freedom movement.

However, Khattar took a dig at Hooda's remarks, saying that several fami-

lies from various parties are linked to the freedom struggle, not just the Hooda family.

Being asked about Delhi's pollution crisis, Khattar called it a serious issue. "Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) IV restrictions have been implemented as per court directions. Haryana regis-

tered 1,118 cases of stubble burning this year (from September 15 to November 18) compared to nearly 9,600 in Punjab. States need to work together to tackle pollution effectively," he said.

Asked about the Rapid Rail Transit System (RRTS) project reaching Karnal, he said the first

phase would connect Delhi to Panipat. "The project will eventually be extended to Karnal, for which administrative approval has already been granted. I advocated for this expansion last year, and it will soon benefit Karnal," he said. On whether Karnal was part of the NCR, Khattar clarified, "Karnal is already part of the NCR and will get benefits from its inclusion. Discussions are being held to address challenges related to the restrictions imposed."

Addressing Punjab's objections to Haryana's plan for a separate Assembly building, Khattar reiterated the urgent need for a new facility. "Haryana is acquiring land for the Assembly through a land exchange agreement, not for free. If Punjab needs a new building, they have ample land available. Our requirement is urgent as the current facility lacks proper seating for 90 MLAs, and the number may increase to nearly 126 after delimitation," he said.

Farmers protest canal remodelling in Sirsa

Sirsa : The canal remodelling work undertaken by the Irrigation Department has sparked protests by farmers in several villages. The Ban Mandori distributary, supplying water to villages like Shahpur Begu, Arnianwali, Dhingania, and Rangri Khera, has been revamped. However, locals claim the changes have disrupted water supply to around 10,000 acres of farmland.

For the past five days, dozens of farmers from these villages have been protesting near the canal. Farmer Ashok Kumar alleged that the department lowered the canal bed across about four km near Nezia village on November 14, leaving the middle section dry while water reached the tail end. He explained that the elevation of fields near the canal now exceeds the canal level preventing water from flowing into these areas.

Sharing his views, farmer Harbans said the groundwater in the area was 200-250 feet deep and was saline, making it unsuitable for farming. The fields depend entirely on canal water. He added, "If we use pipes to



draw water, it will be considered theft, and no farmer wants to resort to this measure." Another farmer Prithvi Singh accused the department of political interference, claiming the canal bed was intentionally lowered by 1.5 to 2 feet in some areas. He cited a similar issue in Bakri-anwali village, where residents of five villages had been protesting for months.

Meanwhile, Sheranwali sub-division SDO Lakhwinder Singh refuted the allegations, stating the canal's design was appropriate and ensured water reaches the tail end, which was previously dry. "The design is

based on approved water levels, and all outlets are sized accordingly. Farmers demanding more water are asking beyond what's approved," he clarified.

He added the protesting farmers want more water but the canal provided water according to the approved capacity, and the outlets were built accordingly. "Our job is to distribute water equally to all villages. We cannot supply more water to some and less to others. The current canal design was prepared by the head office following the Chief Minister's announcement, and there are no flaws in it," Singh said.



Morne Morkel provides on Gill, Shami

Perth : India's promising young opening batsman Shubman Gill has suffered a minor setback ahead of the upcoming series after injuring his thumb during a match simulation in Perth on November 16.

However, the 25-year-old's resilience remains unshaken as he continues his recovery, with hopes of returning to full fitness soon.

The injury occurred while Gill was fielding in the slips, but he showed remarkable determination by returning to bat later in the session. In the second innings, he remained unbeaten on 42*, a testament to his grit and composure under pressure.

India's bowling coach, Morne Morkel, acknowledged the setback but pointed out that Gill's recovery would be a "day-to-day process," and emphasised the need for the young opener to adapt to the varying conditions. "He's here for a reason—he has the skill and talent. It's about continuing to work hard," Morkel said on Wednesday.

Gill's injury comes during a stellar run of form this season, where he has accumulated 806 runs in 10 matches across 19 innings, with an average of over 47. This includes three centuries and fifties, with a highest score of 119*.

His performances at the number three spot have been equally impressive, with 926 runs from 14 matches, averaging 42.09. His consistency makes him one of India's most reliable top-order batsmen, and the



team is hopeful that he will regain full fitness ahead of the series.

Morkel remains confident that Gill will play a significant role in the series once fully recovered. The coach highlighted that the team's focus will be on helping Gill adapt to conditions while pushing him to extract the best from his natural ability. "For us as a team, it's about breaking barriers and making our mark," Morkel added.

Mohammed Shami's return to cricket has been another key development for India. After recovering from an ankle injury, Shami impressed with seven wickets for Bengal in a recent Ranji Trophy match.

Morkel referred to Shami as a "world-class bowler," stressing the importance of managing his workload as he regains match fitness. "It's a massive win to see him back. His experience and leadership will be crucial for us,"

Morkel said.

The bowling coach also expressed optimism about young bowlers Harshit Rana and Prasidh Krishna, both of whom add variety to India's pace attack. "Harshit bowls with pace and extracts bounce, which can be very useful in certain conditions," Morkel noted. Both bowlers are considered exciting prospects for India's future. He acknowledged the pressure on India's relatively young batting lineup but expressed excitement about their potential. "Pressure is inevitable for a young squad. The key will be to build partnerships and break the game into manageable sessions," he said.

Morkel added that the players have the talent to rise to the occasion against quality opposition.

Virat Kohli's work ethic and intensity in training were also highlighted by Morkel. "Virat sets the highest standards. His relentless focus during net

sessions is a masterclass for younger players," Morkel explained. Kohli's approach continues to inspire the entire team.

The India Bowling coach stressed the importance of partnerships and using all-rounders strategically to ease the workload on fast bowlers. "All-rounders are vital in balancing the team and managing the game," he stated.

Among the rising stars, Morkel singled out Nitesh Reddy for his hard-hitting ability and potential as a game-changer in conditions with seam movement. "His role in balancing the team will be crucial," Morkel said.

Reflecting on the upcoming series, he acknowledged the pressure due to past performances but remained confident. "This series is an opportunity to embrace the challenge and focus on playing solid cricket," Morkel concluded.

Coetzee, Edwards & Sufyan reprimanded for breaching ICC Code of Conduct

Dubai : Netherlands captain, Scott Edwards, Oman bowler, Sufyan Mehmood and South Africa bowler, Gerald Coetzee have been found guilty of breaching the ICC Code of Conduct in their matches over the weekend.

Edwards was found to have breached two articles of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel. Article 2.8 which relates to "showing dissent at an umpires decision during an international match" and also article 2.2 which relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during an International Match."

Both breaches followed his dismissal during the third T20I between Oman and the Netherlands. The first incident occurred when Edwards showed his bat to the umpire when given out LBW.

The second incident was when he threw his bat and gloves onto the field when returning towards his team's dressing room.

The cumulative sanctions see that the captain has been fined 10% of his match fee and received two demerit points – one point for each offence – which have been added to his disciplinary record.

In the same match, Mehmood was fined 10% of his match fee and had one demerit point added to his disciplinary record after being found to have breached Article 2.5 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match."

The incident took place when the bowler (Mehmood) dismissed the batter, Teja Nidamanuru, giving him a send-off by pointing him back towards his team's dressing room.

Both Edwards and Mehmood admitted their respective offences and accepted the sanctions proposed by Neeyamur Rashid Rahul of the ICC International Panel of Match Referees and, as such, there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Harikrishna Pil-



lai, Rahul Asher and third umpire Vinod Babu levelled the charges.

In the fourth T20I between South Africa and India, Gerald Coetzee was found to have breached Article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "showing dissent at an umpires decision during an international match". The incident occurred when Coetzee made an inappropriate comment to the umpire after a 'wide' was called following one of his deliveries.

Coetzee received a reprimand and

had one demerit point added to his disciplinary record. He admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Andy Pycroft of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, therefore no formal hearing was needed. On-field umpires Allahudien Paleker and Stephen Harris, third umpire Lubabalo Guma and fourth umpire Arno Jacobs levelled the charge. Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

Chennai to host FIBA Asia Cup qualifiers from Nov 22-25

Chennai : Big time Basketball comes to Chennai after a very long time, when this teeming megapolis will host the Men's FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Qualifiers (Window 2) from November 22 to 25.

Hoopsters from 24 teams across Asia will vie for honours in this premier men's basketball championship to be held at the multipurpose Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor stadium.

"Bringing this event to Chennai represents a significant leap forward in the growth and development of basketball in our region

and highlights India's commitment to promoting international sports". Basketball Federation of India President Aadhav Arjuna and Secretary-General (Kulvinder Singh Gill), told reporters on Tuesday. The India Senior Men's Basketball Team will go head-to-head against Qatar on November 22 and Kazakhstan on November 25.

As part of their rigorous preparation, the national team has been training in Chennai since June and recently completed two exposure trips to Dubai.

Businesswoman Kang pledges \$30m to US women football

London : Businesswoman Michele Kang has pledged \$30m (£23.6m) to US Soccer - a donation the organisation says will "transform" women's and girls' football in the United States.

The commitment by American Kang, who owns National Women's Soccer League team the Washington Spirit, French top-flight side Lyon Feminine and the London City Lionesses of the Women's Championship, is the largest ever made to US Soccer by a woman, a BBC report said.

In a statement, external US Soccer said Kang's investment over the



next five years "will scale competi-

tive opportunities for youth players,

expand and improve talent identification, and fuel professional development for female players, coaches, and referees". "Women's sports have been undervalued and overlooked for far too long," said Kang. US Soccer highlighted an opportunity to double the number of national team camps it currently runs, specifically funding camps for women and girls. Kang said she is "committed to raising the standard of excellence in women's soccer - both on and off the pitch" by providing female athletes with the resources needed to "reach their full potential".

Patna Pirates rout Bengaluru Bulls 54-31 in Pro Kabaddi League

Noida : It was another night to remember for the young raiding duo of Devank and Ayan as Patna Pirates secured a massive 54-31 win over Bengaluru Bulls at the Noida Indoor Stadium here.

Devank moved to the top of the Season 11 raiders list with 131 raid points to his name as his side moved to third on the standings on Tuesday night.

Four Super Tackles defined the start of the game as Bengaluru Bulls' defenders got the better of Patna Pirates' raiders in what many thought would be a topsy-turvy clash.

Bengaluru Bulls rode on the ability of their defenders like Saurabh Nandal and Sunny to keep the

dangerous Devank and Ayan quiet.

However, this was not to be for too long. Devank and Ayan found their groove soon as Patna Pirates inflicted the first All-Out of the match on Bengaluru Bulls courtesy of a tackle by Deepak on Saurabh Nandal.

This gave the three-time PKL champions some much-needed momentum as they began to race away from their opponents.

At the end of the first half, the score read 20-13 in favour of Patna Pirates.

It was in the second half that Patna Pirates really took the game to their opponents. Within three

minutes, they inflicted an All-Out on Bengaluru Bulls with Sandeep joining his raiding partners Devank and Ayan on the scoring charts.

A Super Raid soon followed for Devank and within a span of five minutes, Patna Pirates took a lead that would eventually become unassailable.

Another Super 10 soon followed for the young Devank, who made raiding look easy with his performance.

The point that got Devank to another Super 10 also inflicted a third All-Out on Bengaluru Bulls, who continued to look out of sorts as the match came to a close.

Puneri Paltan, UP Yoddhas play out hard-fought tie in PKL

Noida : Pro Kabaddi League Season 11 witnessed another tie between Puneri Paltan and UP Yoddhas ended in a stalemate with the scoreline reading 29-29 at the Noida Indoor Stadium here.

Bhavani Rajput registered a Super 10 for UP Yoddhas, while Pankaj Mohite scored 9 points for Puneri Paltan on Tuesday night.

It was a rapid start from the defending champions as Pankaj Mohite registered the first tackle of the game to open the scoring. His side cruised to a 4-0 lead in three minutes, going about like it was business as usual.

After a slow start, UP Yoddhas got their first points on the board courtesy of a Super Tackle from Ashu Singh. From there on, it didn't take them too long to level the score at 5-5.

Puneri Paltan then managed to inch ahead with a three-point lead before another tackle, this time from Sumit, got UP Yoddhas on even terms again. UP Yoddhas steadily found their groove and inflicted an All-Out on Puneri Paltan, opening a six-point gap between the two sides.



The defending champions weren't going to go down without a fight as the first half was coming to a close. V Ajith Kumar's two-point raid helped them cut the deficit down to two

points, ending a closely contested first half with a scoreline of 16-14 with UP Yoddhas in the lead.

It was a cautious start to the second half from both sides until Bhavani Rajput

was on the right side of a Do-or-Die Raid, ensuring UP Yoddhas stay in the lead.

Pankaj Mohite returned the favour, getting two points in a Do-or-Die Raid to help close the gap for Puneri Pal-

tan before Aryavardhan Navale evened things up at 20-20 with 10 minutes to go in the game.

The defending champions got their noses in front again after Mohit tackled Bhavani Rajput on a Do-or-Die Raid, followed by Pankaj Mohite carrying on his good work on the offensive end.

Gaurav Khatri's third tackle of the night, this time on Keshav Kumar helped Puneri Paltan inflict an All-Out and move back in front by five points.

V Ajith Kumar also got some momentum, inflicting a couple of quick raids to keep Puneri Paltan's lead intact.

However, Bhavani Rajput was doing his bit to make sure that UP Yoddhas stayed in the hunt with under four minutes to go and only three points separating the two teams.

There was no stopping Bhavani Rajput as he scored a two-point raid, cutting the deficit to one point for UP Yoddhas. He completed his Super 10 to even things out for his side in the dying moments, ensuring that the two teams share the spoils.

Rafael Nadal bows out in his last professional match

Malaga : Rafael Nadal, one of tennis's all-time greats, stepped onto the court for the final match of his illustrious career amidst an electrifying atmosphere at the Davis Cup Final 8 here on late Tuesday night.

The 38-year-old, returning from a three-month competitive hiatus, was greeted by deafening cheers from a packed spectators of 11,300 fans in the iconic bullring.

However, the day did not go as the Spanish faithful had hoped.

In a bittersweet farewell, Nadal fell to Dutchman Boti van de Zandschulp 6-4, 6-4 in the opening singles encounter of the quarterfinal tie.

Despite a valiant effort, Spain's hopes of advancing were dashed as they succumbed 2-1 to the Netherlands.

Nadal, who has claimed 22 Grand Slam titles and two Olympic gold medals over a glittering career, was visibly emotional as he entered the court to thunderous applause. The spectators cheered each year of his Grand Slam triumphs as it was announced over the stadium speakers, and tears filled the Mallorcan's eyes during the Spanish national anthem.

"It's in some ways good if that was my last match. That probably was my last match if nothing happens," Nadal said in the post-match press conference. "I lost my first match in the Davis Cup, and I lost my last one. So we close the circle."

The match itself was a



challenge for Nadal, who admitted to struggling with form and fitness after his extended absence from the circuit. Van de Zandschulp, unfazed by the partisan fans, delivered a composed performance, breaking Nadal's serve early in both sets.

"I knew it could be my last match as a professional, and the emotions were difficult to manage," Nadal reflected. "When you've spent so much time out of competition, everything is decided by small details."

Despite the loss, the Spanish fans rallied behind their hero, chanting "Yes, you can!" and celebrating every point he won.

Carlos Alcaraz kept Spain's hopes alive with a commanding 7-6(0), 6-3 win over Tallon Griekspoor in the second singles match. But in the decisive doubles,

the Dutch pair of Wesley Koolhof and Van de Zandschulp edged out Alcaraz and Marcel Granollers in two tight tie-break sets, 7-6(4), 7-6(3).

Nadal, from the bench, turned into the team's chief motivator, offering advice and encouragement. Still, it wasn't enough to turn the tide.

As the match ended, Nadal received a standing ovation from the Malaga spectators, marking the end of a storied career. Reflecting on his journey, he said, "Today won't be the day for me to criticise myself. I'm grateful for everything this sport has given me."

For fans and fellow players alike, Nadal's last dance was not just about tennis but a celebration of an athlete whose legacy transcends the sport.



Datta Infra to invest Rs 5000 crore in Renewable Energy in Rajasthan

New Delhi : Datta Power Infra Private Limited on Wednesday said it has entered into an agreement for a Rs 5000 crore investment in Rajasthan's renewable energy infrastructure, at the prestigious Rising Rajasthan 2024 event.

"At Datta Infra, we are not just investing in renewable energy; we are investing in a sustainable future for Rajasthan and India. Our Rs 5000 crore MoU under Rising Rajasthan 2024 reflects our dedication to driving clean energy innovation and creating opportunities that empower communities while preserving the environment," Mr Varchasvi Gagal, CEO & Managing Director, Datta Infra said.

Datta Infra is committed to developing Rajasthan as a major hub for renewable energy, encompassing solar, wind, and hybrid power projects, across Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Nagaur, Pratapgarh and Jodhpur districts,



the company said in a release.

The company intends to set up 1000MW connected to State Transmission Utility (STU) including under KUSUM Scheme, and are expected to contribute to creating 500 to 750 jobs in the region.

Mr Rajeev Kumar Bansal, CFO, Datta Power Infra Private Limited added, "As Datta Power Infra

Private Limited embarks on a transformative journey with our investment of Rs 5000 crore in Rajasthan's wind, solar, and wind-solar hybrid projects, we are positioning ourselves to drive sustainable growth while contributing significantly to India's renewable energy capacity."

This strategic investment aligns with company's long-term growth

plans to increase its renewable energy portfolio by 30% over the next five years.

By executing this MoU at the Rajasthan Rising Summit, we are not only reinforcing our commitment to sustainable energy but also opening doors for new business opportunities and local job creation, the CFO said.

In the short term, the company anticipates a

strong positive impact on both the regional economy and company's bottom line, with expected revenue growth of 15-20% by the end of FY 2025. This project is a pivotal step in realising Datta Power's vision of becoming a leader in renewable energy and contributing to the nation's energy transition.

The company has successfully executed several renewable energy projects for notable clients. These projects encompass site development, transmission lines, and civil works for over 2 GW of capacity in Rajasthan.

Datta Infra provides comprehensive services across the renewable energy project lifecycle, including project planning, land acquisition, engineering, procurement, construction, transmission, substation and O&M. Notably, the company excels in the development of solar and wind parks, enabling efficient and sustainable energy production.

Average home price in top 7 cities in India at Rs 1.23 crore in H1 FY25

Kolkata : Amid escalating demand for luxury homes after the pandemic, there have been record new launches and sales of costlier homes across the top 7 cities in India, according to the latest ANAROCK data.

The average ticket size of homes sold in these cities was Rs 1.23 crore in H1 FY 2025, against Rs 1 crore in the corresponding period of FY 2024.

"Over 2,27,400 units worth approx. INR 2,79,309 Crore were sold across the top 7 cities between April and September 2024. Contrastingly, the corresponding period of FY2024 saw approx. 2,35,200 units worth INR 2,35,800 Crore sold. Despite a 3 percent drop in overall unit sales, the total sales value outstripped that of a year ago by 18 percent - underscoring the unrelenting demand for luxury homes," ANAROCK group Chairman Anuj Puri said in a statement on Wednesday.

A deep dive revealed that at 56 percent, NCR saw the highest average ticket size growth - from approximately Rs 93 lakh in H1 FY2024 to over Rs 1.45 Crore in H1



FY2025. Approximately 32,315 units worth Rs 30,154 Crore were sold in the region in H1 FY2024; in H1 FY2025, about 32,120 units worth Rs 46,611 Crore were sold.

While the value of sold inventory increased by 55 pc in this period, the total number of units sold declined by 1 pc, the report said.

"MMR saw no change in average ticket size in this period," said Puri.

"In H1 FY 2024, the average ticket size of sold units was INR 1.47 Crore. The region saw approx. 76,410 units worth INR 1,12,356 Crore sold in H1 FY 2024, while H1 FY 2025 saw approx. 77,735 units worth approx. INR 1,14,529 Crore

sold." At 44 pc, Bengaluru witnessed the second-highest jump in average ticket size among the top 7 cities - it rose from Rs 84 lakhs in H1 FY2024 to Rs 1.21 Crore in H1 FY 2025.

In Hyderabad, H1 FY 2024 saw the average ticket size of sold units at Rs 84 lakhs - this increased by 37 pc to Rs 1.15 Crore in H1 FY 2025.

Chennai saw a jump of 31 pc in average ticket size - from Rs 72 lakhs in H1 FY2024 to Rs 95 lakh in H1 FY 2025.

In Pune, the average ticket size in H1 FY 2024 was Rs 66 lakhs - it increased by 29 pc to Rs 85 lakhs in H1 FY 2025.

ICRA projects GDP growth to slow down to 6.5 pc in Q2, full-year growth seen at 7 pc

New Delhi : Research and rating firm ICRA on Wednesday projected India's GDP growth to slow down to 6.5% in July-September quarter (Q2) of current financial year 2024-25 (FY25) due to factors like heavy rains and weak corporate margins.

Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) will release the GDP estimates for the September quarter on November 29, 2024.

In its estimate, ICRA said that while government spending and kharif sowing have shown positive trends, the

industrial sector, particularly mining and electricity, is expected to slow down. It further said that despite these challenges the services sector is projected to improve, and a back-ended recovery is anticipated, leading to a full-year GDP growth of 7%. "However, risks such as a slowdown in personal loan growth and geopolitical uncertainties remain," it said. As per ICRA, the growth in the gross value added (GVA) is estimated to ease to 6.6% in Q2FY25 from 6.8% in Q1FY25, driven by the industrial sector, amid a pick-up in the



expansion in services and agricultural GVA.

"Based on available data for the Centre and the states' indirect taxes and subsidies, ICRA estimates that the growth in net indirect taxes (in nominal terms) rose slightly to 9.0-9.5% in Q2 FY2025 from 8.0% in Q1 FY2025. Given this, the GDP-GVA growth wedge (in real terms) is expected to remain inverted in Q2 FY2025 as well," it said.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head-Research & Outreach, ICRA said that Q2 FY2025 saw tailwinds in terms of a pick-up in capex after the Parlia-

mentary elections as well as healthy expansion in sowing of major kharif crops.

"Several sectors faced headwinds on account of heavy rainfall, which affected mining activity, electricity demand and retail footfalls, and a contraction in merchandise exports. Further, margins appear to have weakened for corporates in a variety of sectors in this quarter. As a result, we project a slight dip in India's GVA and GDP growth in Q2 FY2025 to 6.6% and 6.5%, respectively," she said.

Tata Power and Druk Green Power Corporation forge partnership to develop 5,000 MW of clean energy projects

Kolkata : In a landmark move to strengthen Regional energy security and support the clean energy transition, Tata Power Company Ltd (Tata Power) has entered into a strategic partnership with Druk Green Power Corporation Ltd (DGPC), a subsidiary of Druk Holding and Investments Limited, sole generation utility of Bhutan, to collaborate and develop at least 5,000 MW of clean energy generation capacity in Bhutan.

This is in keeping with Bhutan's vision for its energy sector which is to take its overall generation capacity to 25,000 MW by 2040 for its energy security and regional energy integration, according to a media statement here on Wednesday.

Bhutan plans to achieve this target through diversification in its energy portfolio beyond traditional hydropower, which would include solar and geothermal energy. This will extend to diversifying project structuring and financing through such strategic partnerships.

With the support of the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of India, this marks the largest partnership between two of the leading power companies of the two nations in Asia's clean energy sector. Both companies have a stellar track record in the energy sector and a long-standing relationship having worked together for over 15 years.

This strategic partnership signifies Tata Power's pre-eminence as the most preferred clean energy partner not only in India but also as a regional leader. This partnership will help unleash Bhutan's great potential for hydropower and its important role in ensuring energy security in the region.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed Wednesday at Thimphu in Bhutan between Dashed Chhewang Rinzin, MD - DGPC and Dr Praveer Sinha, CEO & MD - Tata Power, in the esteemed presence of Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dashed Tshering Tobgay; Minister for Energy & Natural Resources, Lyonpo Gem Tshering; Chairman -



Tata Sons, N. Chandrasekaran, Ambassador of India to Bhutan, Sudhakar Dalela; and other senior officials from the Royal Government of Bhutan, Embassy of India, DGPC and Tata Power.

Through the collaboration, at least 5,000 MW of renewable energy projects; including 4,500 MW of hydropower comprising the 1,125 MW Dorjilung HEP; 740 MW Gongri Reservoir; 1,800 MW Jeri Pumped Storage; and 364 MW Chamkharchhu IV will be developed in phases together. Another 500 MW of Solar projects will be developed by Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL), a subsidiary of Tata Power.

As a precursor to this collaboration, Tata Power recently acquired a 40 percent stake for Nu/INR 8.30 billion in the 600 MW Khorlochu Hydroelectric Project where an investment of over Nu/INR 69 billion will be made to develop the project.

Tata Power has had a long-standing relationship with DGPC since 2008 when the two companies joined forces to successfully develop the 126 MW Dagachhu Hydropower Plant as the first Public Private Partnership in Bhutan's hydropower sector.

Tata Power also has a transmission project of a 1,200 km long Tala transmission line that evacuates clean

power from Bhutan to India.

Dr. Praveer Sinha, CEO & MD, of Tata Power, said, "Tata Power's partnership with Druk Green Power Corporation reinforces our credentials as the most preferred clean energy partner in the region. Together, we are building 5000 MW of clean energy capacity that will help harness Bhutan's hydropower potential and support both countries' growing energy demands with reliable and round-the-clock clean energy supply. Together we are shaping a new energy era."

Tata Power has emerged as a leader in the renewable energy space, with a robust clean and green portfolio crossing 12.9 GW (6.4 GW operational, 6.5 GW under construction) which constitutes 42 percent of its total capacity, and is well-positioned to expand this to 70 percent by 2030. Tata Power has over 100 years of experience in hydropower generation and is emerging as a key player in pumped hydro storage projects. The Company is committed to supporting India's successful energy transition.

Dashed Chhewang Rinzin, MD, DGPC, said, "This strategic partnership with Tata Power is in keeping with Bhutan's aspirations to maximize benefits to the people of Bhutan through fast-tracking the harnessing

of its huge renewable energy resources for its economic development and long-term energy security. Bhutan places a lot of confidence in Tata Power and the partnership to deliver on these expectations."

With Bhutan's economy projected to grow by 7.2 percent in FY25, the country's energy requirements are bound to increase. Largely driven by hydropower—a vital part of Bhutan's economy, capitalizing on this national asset will ensure that its growing power demands are met while also ensuring economic benefits including green job creation and infrastructure development.

Bhutan's hydropower generation which peaks during the monsoon months complements India's demand patterns that also peak in the summer months. More importantly, Bhutan sees its hydropower as critical in ensuring round-the-clock availability of power with India's huge investments in renewables such as solar and wind and the plans to further accelerate investments in these renewables over the next two decades. With the recent agreement reached for Bangladesh to import power from Nepal through India, there are also growing opportunities for regional energy integration that would boost investments in Bhutan's hydropower.

India eyeing 10 pc of global space economy in next two decades: ISRO chief

Bengaluru : India is set to expand its share of the global space economy from less than 2% to at least 10% over the next two decades, with a focus on harnessing the full potential of the entire space value chain, ISRO Chairman S Somanath said on Wednesday.

Addressing the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2024, Somanath said the ambitious goal spans across three key segments: upstream (satellite manufacturing and launches), midstream (infrastructure and applications), and downstream (data-driven solutions).

The ISRO Chairman underscored the critical role of India's talented workforce in unlocking the potential of these segments. "Downstream activities, in particular, hold immense promise. By investing in skill development, we can catalyse advancements across all facets of space technology," he stated.

The Space Policy 2023 and ongoing reforms were highlighted as pivotal to this transformation. The policy clearly defines the roles of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), and private entities in driving innovation and growth.

Additionally, the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) framework is expected to attract global investments, further positioning India as a leader in the space industry. The Chairman also pointed to the government's Space Mission 2047 as a visionary initiative aimed at advancing space exploration in India.

Somanath emphasised the significance of international collaborations in India's space strategy, citing high-profile projects like the NISAR satellite with NASA, the LUPEX mission with Japan, and various climate monitoring initiatives under the leadership of the G20.

These partnerships, he stated, are essential in advancing India's position in the global space ecosystem.

India's recent achievements were also highlighted, particularly the historic landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon and the successful launch of the Aditya-L1 solar observatory. The ISRO Chairman announced ambitious future milestones, including human space flights by 2026, the establishment of an Indian space station by 2028, and plans for a lunar human landing by 2040. These developments



align with ISRO's broader roadmap to cement India's place as a key player in space exploration.

Reflecting on previous setbacks, such as the Chandrayaan-2 mission, the Chairman remarked: "Every setback provided invaluable lessons. Chandrayaan-3, developed entirely in-house, stands as a testament to India's resilience and ingenuity."

The collaboration between ISRO and over 400 private-sector companies was recognised as a critical factor in fostering the growth of India's space ecosystem. The Chairman highlighted the importance of privatisation initiatives, such as the PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) and SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle) programmes, in driving innovation and enhancing the commercial viability of space startups.

"Our work involves close collaboration with governments, ministries, departments, and user segments. Traditionally, our primary users have been government bodies, shaping demand aggregation across sectors like agriculture, climate, natural resources, and cartography.

This demand guides us in designing sensors, launching satel-

lites, and delivering critical data services," he explained.

Despite the ongoing transition of space-based communication infrastructure management to NSIL, the Chairman acknowledged that the penetration of space applications into daily life remains limited. This, he noted, represents an untapped opportunity for economic growth.

Despite operating with a relatively modest budget, India's space programme has consistently delivered world-class results. The Chairman affirmed that continued investment in research and development (R&D) and capacity-building initiatives will drive the next wave of growth, ensuring that India remains at the forefront of the global space economy.

"With focused efforts and collaborative frameworks, India's space sector is poised for unprecedented growth," he concluded.

India's space ambitions, fuelled by strategic collaborations, increased investments, and a commitment to innovation, are set to reshape its role in the global space economy, creating new opportunities for technological advancements and economic development in the years to come.