

OPINION 6
 HAMAS' RESOLVE MAY
 SURVIVE IDF ONSLAUGHT

NATION 4
 PLANS AFOOT TO SEND
 INDIAN ON MOON BY 2040

MONEY 10
 MARKETS REBOUND
 AFTER THREE DAYS OF FALL

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NZ AIMS TO KEEP
 THEIR UNBEATEN
 RUN INTACT
 12 SPORT

Nation Awards its Artists National Awards for Indian Cinema

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
 NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday conferred the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award upon famous actor Waheeda Rehman. She became the eighth woman artiste to receive the award, the highest recognition in the field of Indian cinema. The 85-year-old actor dedicated it to her "dear film industry" and its various departments.

The President presented the award to Rehman during the 69th National Film Awards ceremony, held at Vigyan Bhawan. The veteran, who received a standing ovation from the A-list gathering as she walked to the stage, said filmmaking is a collaborative process.

"I feel very honoured and humbled... But whatever I have achieved today, it is because of my dear film industry. Luckily, I got to work with top directors, producers, filmmakers, technicians, writers, dialogue writers, music directors and musicians," Rehman said in her acceptance speech.

"I got a lot of support, respect and love from them," she said, also crediting the make-up artists, hair and costume designers.

"...Which is why I am sharing this award with all the departments of the film industry. They gave me a lot of respect, support and love from the



President Droupadi Murmu after presenting the Dadasaheb Phalke Award to actor Waheeda Rehman during the 69th National Film Awards at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday

very beginning. A film is not made by just one person, we need each other," she added. President Murmu praised Rehman for championing women empowerment through her roles and life.

"I am elated to honour Waheeda Rehman ji with Dadasaheb Phalke award. I congratulate Waheeda ji. With her art and personality, she has reached on top in the film industry. She has made a name for herself as a woman of dignity, confidence and original-

ity in her personal life too," the President said. Murmu also spoke about how Rehman refused to change her name as a newcomer in the film industry when it was common for actors to opt for a different screen name.

"In her movies, she played roles of women who broke shackles. Waheeda ji has set the example that women have to take the initiative when it comes to women empowerment," she added. Rehman was selected for the

prestigious honour by a five members jury comprising close friend and last year's Dadasaheb awardee Asha Parekh, actors Chiranjeevi, Paresh Rawal, Prosenjit Chatterjee and filmmaker Shekhar Kapur.

The actor made her debut in Hindi films opposite Dev Anand in Guru Dutt's 1956 film "CID" and went on to build a stellar career of over five decades, including classics "Pyasa", "Kaagaz ke Phool" and "Chaudhvin Ka Chand",

"Guide" as well as later hits such as "Kabhi Kabhie" and "Khamoshi".

The announcement of the Dadasaheb Phalke honour coincided with the birth centenary of her "Guide" and "CID" co-star Dev Anand on September 26, 2023.

Rehman, who forayed in cinema with the 1955 Telugu films "Rojulu Maraayi" and "Jayasimha", has worked in more than 90 films across languages. In the 2000s, she appeared in "Om Jai Jagdish", "Rang De Basanti", "Delhi-6" and "The Song of Scorpions". Film actor producer Devika Rani was the first Dadasaheb Phalke awardee. Other female artists to have received the honour are Sulochana, Kanan Devi, Durga Khote, Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle and Asha Parekh.

Alia Bhatt made a fashion statement at the awards ceremony by repeating her ivory wedding saree as she attended the ceremony with actor husband Ranbir Kapoor. Alia won the best actress National Film Award for her performance in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's "Gangubai Kathiawadi".

Alia shared the best actress award with Kriti Sanon, who also wore a ivory saree. Kriti is receiving the award for her work in Hindi film "Mimi" while her co-star Pankaj Tripathi won the best supporting actor award for his role in the film.

SC says No to same sex marriage

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday unanimously refused to accord legal recognition to same sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act, ruling that it is within Parliament's ambit to change the law for validating such union.

The top court, however, recognised equal rights for queer people and their protection, while calling for sensitisation of the general public so they don't face discrimination.

The apex court, while passing four separate verdicts, was unanimous in holding that there is "no unqualified right" to marriage, and same sex couples can't claim it as a fundamental right under the Constitution.

The bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud was critical of the Centre's stand that the pleas for legal validation of same sex marriage was reflective of an urban elitist concept.

Queerness is neither an urban nor an elite concept or characteristic, said the apex court, which pronounced the verdicts on 21 petitions seeking legal sanction for same sex marriages. It, however, differed on certain aspects, especially on the applicability of adoption rules for queer couples.

The five judges bench comprising the CJJ, and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, S Ravindra Bhat, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha concurred on the main issue

that the court can't accord legal validation to same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act, agreeing with the views of the CJJ and Justice Kaul, Justice Bhat said the Constitution does not grant a fundamental right to marry. At the outset, Justice Chandrachud said there are four judgments — by himself, Justices Kaul, Bhat and Narasimha — in the matter.

Directing the Centre, states and Union Territories (UTs) to ensure the queer community is not discriminated against, the CJJ said queer is a natural phenomenon known for ages and is neither urban nor elitist.

Justice Kaul said he agrees with the CJJ on grant of certain rights to queer couples. "Non-heterosexual and heterosexual unions must be seen as both sides of the same coin," Justice Kaul said, adding legal recognition of non-heterosexual unions is a step towards marriage equality.

The CJJ said it is for Parliament to decide whether there is a need for a change in the Special Marriage Act regime. "This court can't make law. It can only interpret it and give effect to it," he said.

While reading out the operative portion of his verdict, Justice Chandrachud directed the Centre, States and UTs to take steps to sensitise the public about the rights of queer people and ensure that sex reassignment surgeries are not performed on inter-sex children at an age they cannot fully comprehend the consequences.

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TMC silent on its Party MP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress continues to remain tightlipped on the cash-for-queries charges brought against its MP Mahua Moitra with some senior leaders privately communicating party supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's views that she should be left to "clean the mess she has created, if at all she has created it".

And as a measure to do so, Moitra on Tuesday filed a defamation suit against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey who had written letters to two Union Ministers and Speaker Om Birla charging her with accepting bribes from one business conglomerate in lieu of asking questions against its rival group: In this case the Adanis.

A senior party leader and a State Cabinet Minister said all the party leaders were expected to follow the "austere lifestyle and valued principles of Mamata," and if anyone "deviates" from that then "it is for that person to explain her

conduct... the party will not take any responsibility".

Earlier Dubey had alleged that Moitra had taken bribes from a business house to ask questions in the Lok Sabha against its rival the Adani group. Dubey claimed "if the claims are found to be true," then it "constitutes a serious criminal breach of trust as well as a violation of India's national security."

The TMC MP, however, put up a brave front saying she is ready for any kind of probe and iterating that all the allegations leveled against her were malicious and untrue. The Speaker is known to have referred the matter to the Ethics Committee.

Moitra on Tuesday filed a defamation case against BJP Dubey before the Delhi High Court. A Supreme Court advocate has also been made a party in the suit.

The reason behind the top TMC leadership distancing itself from the Moitra case, or in the least not openly backing her are three-fold, insiders say.

Firstly, as a straight-talker, Moitra has often earned the wrath of senior TMC leaders most of whom have no sympathy for her now.

Even party supremo Mamata has on a couple of occasions rebuked her for crossing swords with other leaders or their supporters.

Secondly, the Chief Minister who is desperate to showcase some investment in Bengal post her Singur movement that drove away the Nano car factory of the Tata Motors from the State during the Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee regime is not willing to enter into an issue where the Adanis are involved.

"Remember the Adani group has offered to construct a deep sea port at Tajpur in East Midnapore district," a senior Bengal Minister said, adding Moitra had gone too far across asking questions against them in her bid to politically corner the BJP.

"If Mamata is not happy with her on certain issues this is perhaps the one of them," said the TMC leader, adding the

TMC has privately conveyed to the Adanis that Moitra's stance would not reflect on what the TMC thought about the group.

And finally when a number of its senior leaders are already in jail in connection with recruitment, coal and cattle scams the Bengal ruling outfit does not want to get embroiled in more number of such issues "particularly when Moitra is not a mass leader and a dispensable leader", a TMC sympathiser and a political analyst said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has referred the "bribe-for-query" complaint made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey against Moitra to the Ethics Committee of the lower House. Dubey alleges that Moitra accepted "bribes" from a businessman in exchange for posing questions in Parliament. He has urged Birla to establish an "inquiry committee" to thoroughly investigate these accusations. The Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha is presided over by BJP member Vinod Kumar Sonkar.



Netherlands captain Scott Edwards plays a shot during the ICC Men Cricket World Cup 2023 match between South Africa and Netherlands at HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala on Tuesday

Sabarimala continues to plead

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Sabarimala, the holy shrine of Lord Ayyappa, nestled amid the jungles in the Western Ghats, is back in the news and is expected to stir up a hornets' nest, even as the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court is getting ready to hear the plea demanding the restoration of the ban on women's entry into the temple.

Adding to the woes of Lord Ayyappa devotees is the demand by a section of MLAs and MPs of Kerala, belonging to a particular community, that the Centre should take up the task of laying a railway track to Sabarimala ostensibly to facilitate the transportation of cannabis from the Western Ghats to the rest of the State. The demand for women's entry to the shrine has been made by Ranga Hari, former All India Baudhik Pramukh of the RSS, the organisation that spear-

headed the agitation against the entry of women in the age group of 10 to 50 into the shrine.

"Off with Outgrown Customs", authored by Hari (93), states that reformation is inevitable in Hindu society. "Traditionalists have always opposed reformers, and it is a human phenomenon in human society. The great Indian poet Kalidasa has said that nothing is good only because it is old and nothing is bad only because it is new," Hari writes, quoting from Malaavikagnimithram, a play by Kalidasa.

Hari has also quoted Malayalam's mystic poet Kumaran Asan, who exhorted the society to reform and change the rules. "Else those very rules will be your downfall," the author has quoted Kumaran Asan's explosive poem Duravastha written immediately after the Mappila Rebellion of 1922.

The nonagenarian has called for the extension of the darshan period of Sabarimala from the present three months to a year-round event. "Sabarimala is a global Hindu pilgrimage Centre. Hence we have to consider the status of Hindu women globally, their psyche, knowledge, finance, inquisitiveness, scientific temper, jobs, etc. Today's woman is an entirely different person. Indian women have more adherence to things religion, and culture... Though both men and women have gone through a westernised public instruction system, it is the woman who transforms India into Bharat; it is the man who makes Bharat, India," Hari has written, and he calls for the establishment of a casteless and classless Hindu society in the country.

To substantiate his arguments, he draws the attention of the Hindus towards temples in Mauritius, Trinidad, Myanmar,

and Singapore. Hari points out in his book that though there are Hindus in these countries,



there is no caste or caste-related discrimination. The custom in Sabarimala,

which was in vogue from time immemorial, was not to allow women to worship in the temple, citing that the presiding deity at Sabarimala was an eternal Brahmachari.

The apex court had passed a landmark judgment on September 28, 2018, in which it allowed the entry of women inside the Sabarimala Temple. The petitioners, Indian Young Lawyers Association, had contended that denial of permission to women for worshipping in the temple was violative of the Right to Equality and liberty. The association argued that the custom violates the Right to Equality under Article 14 since it is "degeneratory to the dignity of women." Article 25 of the Constitution states that "all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice, and promote religion." The exclusion of female worshippers was a vio-

lation of such rights.

The verdict was pronounced by a Bench consisting of the then Chief Justice Dipak Misra, Justices Rohinton Nariman, DY Chandrachud, Indu Malhotra, and AM Khanwilkar. Following the Supreme Court verdict, the Kerala Government went all out to ensure the entry of women into the temple. Despite a massive agitation staged by hundreds of thousands of devotees across the State and the resistance under the leadership of Valsan Thillankeri, the top RSS leaders in the State, the Kerala Police ferried women activists to the shrine, masquerading them as women cops. Fatima and Bindu Ammini, the women activists who made it to the shrine, are Maoists. Valsan Thillankeri, who spearheaded the agitation against the Kerala Government's move to allow women into the shrine, told *The Pioneer* that there

was no change in the stance of the RSS. "The Sangh as well as the women themselves are unanimous in their opposition to women entering the holy shrine. What Hari has written are his personal views," said Thillankeri.

The book, written in Malayalam, has been translated into English by eminent journalist and author Rama Chandran. Many scholars with whom *The Pioneer* spoke expressed their anguish over the views of Hari. "It is an age-old custom and tradition, and there is a scientific reason behind the decision to ban women devotees. A pilgrimage to Sabarimala itself is a ritual that needs stringent regimen," said Unnikrishnan Panicker, a Vedic scholar in Kerala's Parappanangadi. Many lives have been lost in police action on devotees who had thronged the shrine in 2018 demanding a ban on women.

Congress promises Rs 25 lakh health insurance to all

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath on Tuesday released the party's manifesto for the upcoming state assembly polls, making a slew of promises including Rs 25 lakh health insurance cover to all the people in MP, 27 per cent reservation for OBCs, and to form an IPL team of the state. Congress has made maximum promises in the manifesto for farmers. The party has given a new slogan for the farmers of the state "Sewa Sangrash aur Balidan Jai Jawan and Jai Kisan" on the lines of former PM Lal Bahadur Shastri's slogan Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan.

In this manifesto, the party has announced plans to build Shri Ram Van Gaman Path and Sita Mandir in the state along with health and education for the farmers, government employees, youth-women, sports persons. Along with the release of the Manifesto, Congress has also announced its slogan. This time Congress will enter the fray in Madhya Pradesh with the slogan 'Congress Aayegi Khushali layegi'. Congress has issued separate letters for these seven sections: farmers, women, youth, employees, social justice, faith and belief. This manifesto of total 1290 words has about 59 topics, out of which there are 225 points. The party has said in its promissory note that Jai Kisan will continue the agricultural loan waiver scheme. Loans of farm-

ers up to Rs 2 lakh will be waived off. The outstanding electricity bills of farmers will also be waived. Farmers will be given Rs 2600 for wheat and Rs 2500 for paddy. Apart from providing 5 horse power free electricity, 50 percent discount up to 10 horsepower will be provided. Referring to the prosperity of cows and wealth, the party said that Congress has been associated with Indian culture and farmers. Initially the election symbol of Congress was a pair of bulls, then it was cow-calf, which symbolizes that Congress always follows the cow dynasty culture. In the manifesto, the party has talked about starting the Nandini-Gaudhan scheme in the state. Under this scheme, cow dung will be purchased from cow farmers and self-help groups at

the rate of Rs 2 per kg. Apart from this, Nandini mobile app will also be launched to provide facilities to the cattle farmers. The party has also talked about starting White Revolution Milk Mission in the state in the promissory note. For this, the slogan "Shewt Kranti layenge Doodh ki Ganga Bahayenge" has also been given. In the manifesto, Congress has promised to work on dam and canal projects to ensure utilization of the water of Narmada River, the lifeblood of the state. The party has talked about forming Maa Narmada Parikrama Parishad and stopping illegal sand excavation from the banks. The party has also given the slogan that calls for Mother Narmada, this time Congress government. Congress has tried to woo the

youth through the picture of former PM Rajiv Gandhi in the letter and promise. Congress has given the slogan that Congress's hand is with the youth. The party has talked about giving the youth the right to employment. The party has promised to make a law for government recruitment in the state, fill 2 lakh government posts and give 100 percent relaxation in competitive examination fees. Congress has promised that when their government comes to power, the recruitment of teachers, police, patwari, forest guard, nurses etc. which have been pending for the last 18 years will be done in the state. Under Yuva Swabhiman, needy educated unemployed youth will be given financial assistance of Rs 1500 to Rs 3000 per month for 2 years.



MP Congress President Kamal Nath and senior leader Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh and other leaders release the Vachan Patra (manifesto) ahead of the State Assembly elections, at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

HIV patient, suffering from serious heart ailment treated

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhopal Memorial Hospital and Research Center (BMHRC) has come forward to treat an HIV positive patient suffering from a serious heart condition of a hole in the heart. Dr Ashish Shankhadhar, Assistant Professor, Department of Cardiology, BMHRC and his team implanted an ASD closure device in his heart. The patient is now absolutely fine and has been discharged from the hospital. Dr. Ashish Shankhadhar said that the patient is suffering from congenital heart defects called Atrial Septal Defect (ASD). With increasing age, symptoms of ASD like shortness of breath, fatigue etc start appearing. This problem increases with

puberty. If treatment is not given on time, this condition can also be fatal for the patient. The patient wanted to get its treatment for the last several years, but failed to get it any. Disappointed everywhere, he came to BMHRC. Seeing the condition of the patient, we decided to perform surgery. I informed the entire staff about the patient's condition and explained to them how important this procedure is for his life. The entire staff decided to take up this responsibility as a team to achieve a larger objective. Following all the guidelines required for the treatment of HIV patients, the ASD device was implanted in the patient's heart. Since BMHRC has experienced staff, the procedure was completed

easily. Risk of infection: Dr. Shankhadhar said that in this procedure, the ASD device is implanted to the heart through a vein in the leg with a thin catheter. There is some bleeding during this entire process, due to which there is a possibility of infection. Complete precautions were taken: To avoid infection, the entire staff wore plastic disposable aprons along with gowns. Eyes covered with good quality goggles. Wear shoes that cover the entire foot. To minimize the number of items required to be disinfected after an operation, unnecessary furniture was removed from the cabinet. To reduce the risk of a syringe getting into your hands, we wear two good quality gloves. Dr Ashish Shankhadhar said, "During

my studies, I got a chance to know the plight of HIV positive patients. I understood how they were treated by society. They have to endure so much physical as well as mental pain while fighting this disease. If I didn't treat this patient, it would have been unfair to my profession. I explained the same to my staff also." "Being a specialist of Blood Transfusion medicine services, I understand the plight of HIV positive patients very well. They also have every right to receive treatment like normal patients. The doctors and staff of the cardiology department of BMHRC have set an example for the entire society," said Dr Manisha Shrivastava, Director-in-charge, BMHRC, Bhopal.

BJP for winning Churhat seat once again

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The elections to the 230 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh will be held in November this year. Polling in Madhya Pradesh will be held on November 17 and the counting and results will be announced on December 3. ECI announced that polls will be held in a single phase in this state. Madhya Pradesh currently has a Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led BJP government in the state. The Churhat is a state Assembly constituency in the state of Madhya Pradesh and is part of the Sidhi Lok Sabha/Parliamentary constituency. Churhat Assembly constituency falls under the Sidhi Lok Sabha constituency. In 2018, this constituency was won by the Bharatiya Janata Party. According to the Elections Commission's data in 2018,

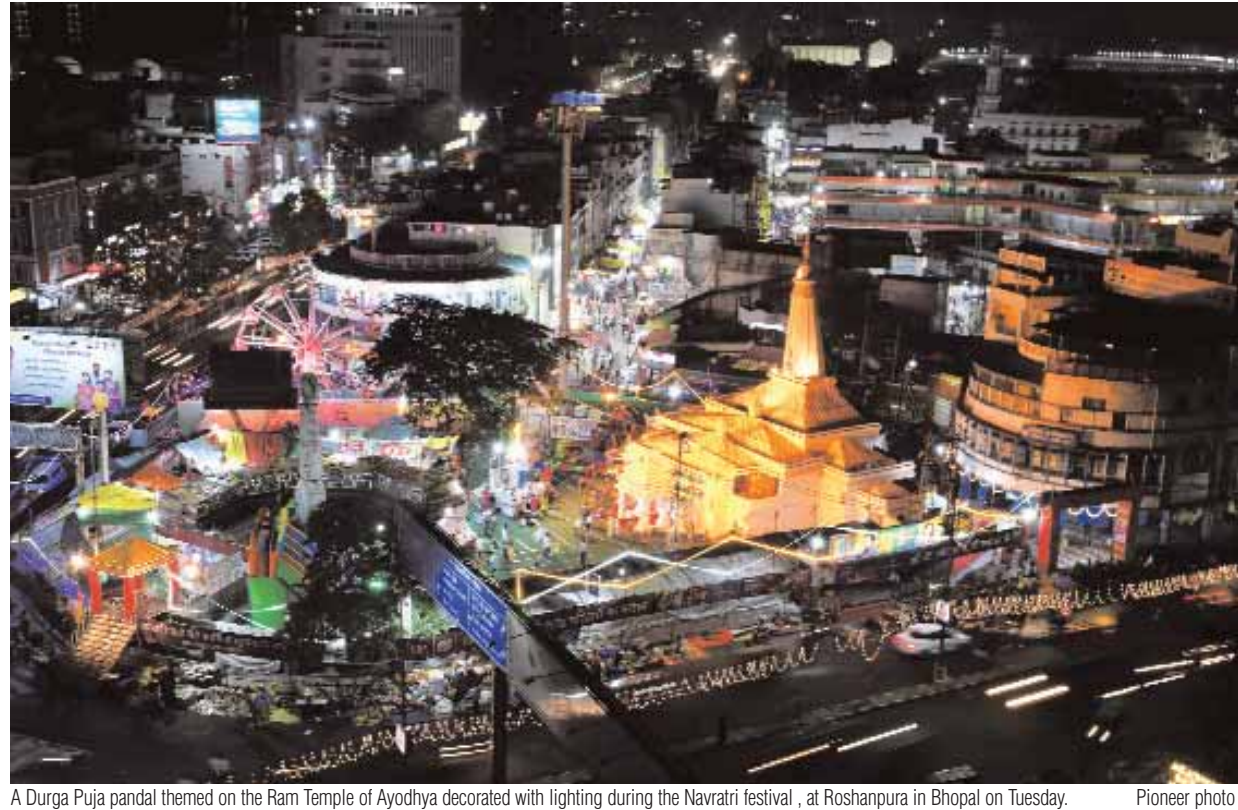
In the 2018 Madhya Pradesh elections, Churhat recorded a voter turnout of 68.83%. In 2013 the turnout was 68-67% and in 2008 it was 66.2%. In 2013, Ajay Arjun Singh of INC won the seat with a margin of 19,356 votes (13.19%)

there are a total of 2,31,577 voters in the seat, which includes 1,21,420 male voters, and 1,07,132 female voters. In the 2018 Madhya Pradesh elections, Churhat recorded a voter turnout of 68.83%. In 2013 the turnout was 68.67%, and in 2008 it was 66.2%. Sharadendu Tiwari of the Bharatiya Janata Party won the seat by defeating Ajay Arjun Singh of the Indian National Congress with a margin of 5343 votes, while, in 2013, Ajay Arjun Singh of the Indian National Congress won

the seat by a margin of 46,356 votes (26.33 per cent). Kailash Verma secured 57.34 per cent of the total votes polled. In terms of voter turnout, in the 2018 Rajasthan elections, Churhat recorded a voter turnout of 72.37 per cent. In 2013 the turnout was 72.7 per cent, and in 2008 it was 55.6 per cent. BJP has decided to make extra efforts this time too to win Churhat seat by campaigning in favour of its candidate Satyendu Tiwari.

IT searches at Trident Group premises in Budhni

Bhopal: Searches are underway at several locations of Trident Group in Budni including Punjab and NCR. More details are currently awaited on the raids. Trident Group operates in yarn, home textile, paper and stationary, chemicals and adaptive power having their manufacturing facilities located in Budhni, Madhya Pradesh, Barnala and Dhaura, Punjab. Trident Group, founded by Padma Rajinder Gupta, is a prominent player in multiple industries and operates manufacturing facilities in key locations. The raids are not limited to a single location, as authorities are simultaneously carrying out probes in multiple cities. More than 40 officials are currently involved in the raid at the Budhni plant located in Madhya Pradesh, officials said. This operation extends to various premises linked to the promoters and top officials of the Trident Group.



A Durga Puja pandal themed on the Ram Temple of Ayodhya decorated with lighting during the Navratri festival, at Roshanpura in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Villagers in 22 districts pledge to prevent child marriages

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In an almost never-before show of solidarity for a social cause under the direction of the government, hundreds of villages in 22 districts of Madhya Pradesh organized awareness programmes where an unprecedented number of men, women and children took pledge to eliminate child marriage from the state. Earlier this week, various government departments had written to the officials and other stakeholders for full-fledged participation in the 'Child Marriage Free India' campaign and take pledge to make Madhya Pradesh child marriage free. From police stations to courtrooms, panchayats and community centres, from young children to old women survivors of child

marriage, the entire country witnessed an overwhelming response with crores of people joining in and taking pledges to end child marriage. Child Marriage Free India is a nationwide campaign led by women activists and 160 civil society organizations in more than 300 districts to eliminate child marriage in India by 2030. Throughout the day, the scenes across the state were those of festivity and celebrations as the atmosphere filled with enthusiasm and commitment and the late evening candle marches, led by women survivors, saw the participation of an array of people cutting across all strata of the society, with the message that child marriage has no place in new Madhya Pradesh. As per the UNICEF estimates, if the progress continues at the current

rate, millions more girls across India will be forced into child marriages until at least 2050. A new book 'When Children Have Children: Tipping Point To End Child Marriage' by noted child rights activist and lawyer Bhuvan Ribhu, which was released as part of the campaign last week, gives a blueprint on how to achieve the tipping point of child marriage in 2030 itself, and has infused a fresh lease of hope and chalked out a strategy for the coalition of NGOs working as part of the Child Marriage Free India campaign. Shredding apart the reality of child marriage and its consequences, the book states, "Child marriage is child rape. It results in child pregnancy, which may result in child death." Expressing happiness over the overwhelming

response to the campaign, Ravi Kant, Country Head, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (KSCF), said, "Child marriage has been embedded in our social fabric for ages and despite it being a crime, child marriages haven't ceased to exist. However, witnessing the immense and almost unprecedented support from all quarters of society, I feel like India is on the anvil of creating history. This movement is spreading like wildfire and with the commitment shown by the state governments, our children may finally thrive in a country where their rights are ensured and protected. It is commendable that governments in all the states are on a mission to end child marriage and gives the entire cause a new momentum and confidence."

Ayodhya Nagar police nab four in murder of 30-year-old man

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Ayodhya Nagar police have solved blind murder and arrested four accused involved in the murder of a 30-year-old man at Saryu Sarovar Park on Sunday. The mobile phone looted from the deceased from the crime scene was seized from the accused. After the incident, the accused were trying to escape from Bhopal. Police said that on October 15 at about 07.30 am, the watchman of Saryu Sarovar Park located in Ayodhya Nagar police station area informed that a body was lying in the park, based on the information police registered case under section 302 of the IPC and started investigation. During the investigation deceased was identified as Mahendra Ahirwar (30) of Sharda Nagar who had come from his house yesterday evening towards Saryu Sarovar Park for a walk. He was murdered by slitting his throat with a sharp weapon by unknown accused. Police probe found that five men were in the park during the incident and were absconding after the body was found.

These men were caught from various places and interrogated after which they confessed killing and robbing Mahendra. The accused revealed that on Saturday at around 11.30 pm, all of them were in the park in an intoxicated state. After the completion of the Deepdan ceremony, a person was sitting on the bank of the pond, whom they abused and asked him to run away from the park, on which the dispute escalated when the deceased protested they killed Mahendra by stabbing him in the face and neck with a sharp weapon with the intention of killing him. They escaped from the spot with the mobile phone and Rs 600 cash to the deceased. To arrest them, three separate teams were formed by Ayodhya Nagar police, the accused were identified and raided at various places and 4 accused were arrested and the weapon used in the incident was recovered. One of the five accused, Suraj, is absconding since the date of the incident. The accused were identified as Deepak Valmiki (18) of Narela Shankari, Abhishek alias Mahakal (19) of Ayodhya Nagar, Sunny Turke (19), Vipul Gujarati (19) who have been arrested while Suraj Bansal is absconding.

12 alternative photo documents to vote

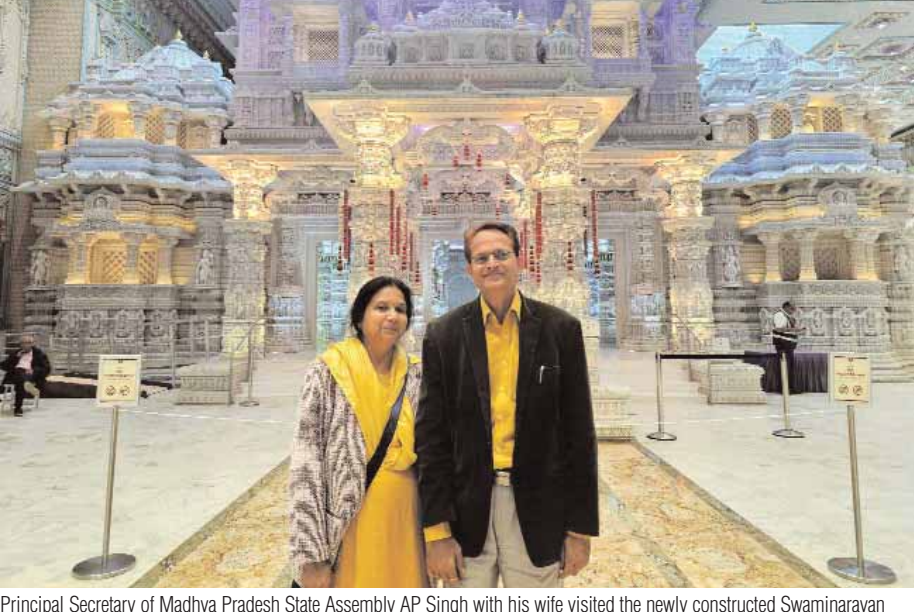
Bhopal: In compliance with the instructions of the Election Commission of India, voters in all constituencies, who have been issued Photo Identity Card, will have to produce Photo Identity Card (EPIC) for identification at the polling station before voting. Voters who are not able to produce photo identity card will have to produce any one of the 12 alternative photo identity documents prescribed by the Election Commission to establish their identity. If EPIC voting is not possible, these 12 alternative photo identity documents which include Aadhar Card, MNREGA Job Card, Driving License, PAN Card, Indian Passport, Pension documents with photo, photo issued to employees by Central/State Government/PSU/ Public Limited Companies. Service Identity Card, Passbook with photo issued by Bank/ Post Office, Smart Card issued by RGI under National Population Register, Health Insurance Smart Card issued under the scheme of the Ministry of Labour, official identity card issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs and Unique Disability ID issued to the disabled by the Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India can be shown.

Police arrest 3 miscreants involved in murder of class 10 student

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bagsewaniya police have arrested three absconding accused involved in the murder of class 10 student; the boy was stabbed in the night on October 14 at Amari area after having a dispute. After the attack a report of a fatal attack on a class 10 student was received on October 14 with the Bagsewaniya police. In view of the sensitivity of the matter, swift action was taken by Police Commissioner. In the night on October 14 Aditya Kumar reported at Bagsewaniya police station that his brother Vaibhav and Shubham Rajak were returning after having dinner with other friends when the accused Arun, Jammu, Rohit and Deepak stopped the two abused, beat and attacked with the intention of killing, threatened to kill. A case was registered under section 341, 294, 307, 506 and 34 of Indian Penal Code. Vaibhav Sankat and Shubham Rajak were admitted to AIIMS hospital in which Shubham died during treatment due to which sec-

tion 302 of Indian Penal Code was added in the case. The search for the accused was done at their residence, in which 3 minors involved in the murder were taken into custody while 3 accused absconded at the time of the incident, for whose search a team was formed and every possible search was done in the possible areas and technical research was conducted. On Monday information was received that the accused were hiding in Jail Pahadi area. Taking immediate action, all three accused were arrested. During which Jammu alias Sameer took out a knife and attacked Aditya, Vaibhav and Shubham which proved fatal for Shubham. The accused has been produced before the Honorable Court to get remand. The entire team has been announced to be rewarded with a reward of ? 10,000 by the Superintendent of Police. The arrested accused were identified as Jammu alias Jamir Khan (24), Arun Nayak (19) and Rohit alias Bhaiyyu (18).



Principal Secretary of Madhya Pradesh State Assembly AP Singh with his wife visited the newly constructed Swaminarayan Akshardham Temple in New Jersey, in the US on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Murder accused who fled police custody still at large

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Even four days after a 29-year-old murder convict, who fled from police custody at Hamidia Hospital, is still at large and the police officials are clueless. They claim that police are raiding several places in his search.

The CCTV footage shows the fugitive Rajat Saini walking out of the hospital around 6 am on Saturday and going towards Peer Gate locality in an autorickshaw, SHO Koh-e-Fiza Vijendra Marskole. Police have been scanning hours of CCTV clips from cameras on the likely route, and bus stands and railway stations to track fugitive

Rajat but without luck. DCP (Zone-3) Riyaz Iqbal said that the absconding murderer is still on the run. It takes time to closely watch CCTV footage and so far, police have no clue yet to where he went from the hospital or where he is hiding, said an officer. In spite of the heightened security for the elections, Rajat has not been found.

Delhi court pulls City police for further investigating 2020 riots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 Delhi court has come down heavily on the city police for conducting "further investigation" in a 2020 communal riots case after filing charge sheet in a "half-hearted manner" and asked the officer concerned to appear before it with a written explanation. Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala was hearing the arguments on charges against three accused in the northeast Delhi riots case, where the FIR was registered by the Gokalpuri police station. Noting that initially 25 complaints were clubbed in the case and the court in April last year had directed that only 17 complaints would be "enter-

ained" in the present case, the court said the Investigating Officer (IO) had filed a new supplementary charge sheet on May 17, 2023, for prosecuting 22 complaints. The IO's stand was based on the recording of fresh statements of some of the complainants to show that they had initially mentioned the wrong date and time of the alleged rioting incidents at their premises, the court noted in an order passed on Monday. It said, "This is a very disturbing trend of investigation, where after the filing of a charge sheet, IO records statement at any subsequent point of time as per his wish, even without seeking any permission from the court and in defiance of laws under Section 173(8) of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)."

"The lack of seriousness in the stand being taken by the prosecution is well reflected in the fluctuations in the same since the beginning till date," the court said

Section 173(8) of the Code of Criminal Procedure deals with further investigation in a case. "The lack of seriousness in the stand being taken by the prosecution is well reflected in the fluctuations in the same since the beginning till date," the court said. It said even according to the new statements, the com-

plainants did not claim to be eyewitnesses and while modifying the date and time of the alleged incidents, they referred to "some neighbours". "Who were those neighbours, are not known, courtesy the half-hearted investigation done by the IO," the court said. ASJ Pramachala said the case was earlier referred to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast district) for assessing the "IO's approach" and delay in the case. "The supplementary charge sheet being filed by IO with forwarding from Station House Officer (SHO) and Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), taking a contrary stand as taken by them in the past, cannot be accepted without seeking clarification and explanation from the investigating agency," the

judge said. He said the court wanted to know how further investigation without taking any permission from the court was conducted, "that too in a half-hearted manner, with probably a predetermined objective to show that all the incidents had taken place on a particular date and time". The judge underlined that for each incident, the date and time of the occurrence cannot be based on "hearsay evidence". "Copy of the order be sent to DCP (northeast) and it is expected that the DCP himself or some other responsible senior officer shall appear before the court with an explanation in writing," he said. The matter has been listed on November 20 for further proceedings.



Congress leader Prahlad Singh Raghuvanshi supporters from Ganj Basoda stage a protest in front of Congress State President Kamal Nath's residence after the leader denied ticket for assembly elections in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo



Minister for Medical Education Vishwas Kailash Sarang offers prayers at Khedapati Hanuman Temple, Chihola during an election campaign in his Narela constituency for the State Assembly elections in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

L-G assents FIR against PWD officials for corruption

New Delhi: Sending out a strong message against corruption, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has given his assent for lodging a case under the anti-corruption law against an assistant engineer and junior engineer of the public works department (PWD) in an alleged scam related to a road construction project in 2014-15. The approval was given despite the fact that the administrative department, PWD, had not recommended an inquiry against the duo. Giving details here on Tuesday, Raj Niwas officials said in the case of the accused Executive Engineer in the same matter, decision will be taken by the NCCSA, since he is a Group 'A' Officer. In giving his approval, the LG

has gone by the findings of the Anti-Corruption Branch, GNCTD and recommendation of the Directorate of Vigilance. Saxena also ordered action to be taken against the concerned officers of the PWD who tried to shield the accused Engineers, despite prima facie case being made out by the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) against them. Saxena accorded approval u/s 17A of Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018 for registration of case against J.S. Chauhan, Assistant Engineer and Devi Singh, Junior Engineer, on the allegation that they released payment to a contractor without proper verification of work done in a road construction project in south Delhi. The LG noted that on perusal

of the facts and records of the case he is of the considered view that it is in the interest of justice to investigate the allegations after registering a case. The allegations are based on the complaint dated 19.05.2017, filed by Rahul Sharma, founder of an NGO- "Roads Anti-Corruption Organization", that payments were made even as no work was done at the site of "strengthening of road and improvement of footpath, drainage system, central verge of EPDP Road (Malik Ram Issar Marg, New Delhi)" Kalkaji area, thereby causing loss to Government exchequer. The ACB, Delhi government after conducting preliminary enquiry has registered a complaint relating to the aforesaid work against three PWD Engineers.

IJM Toyota celebrates a milestone year

Gurugram: IJM Toyota Gurugram, a prominent name in the automotive industry, is elated to mark its first anniversary since inception in October 2022. In a significant celebration of this milestone, the dealership proudly announces the delivery of 51 cars to valued customers. Ankush Marwaha, Managing Director, and CS Marwaha, Chairman, have set forth a visionary goal of attaining the pinnacle of customer satisfaction. Their unwavering dedication to meeting customer expectations has been the driving force behind IJM Toyota Gurugram's exceptional growth. CEO, Himanshu Jaisinghani, expressed his ambitious wish to lead the industry in every

parameter, from customer satisfaction to transparent commitments and timely services, both in sales and after-sales service. Jaisinghani stated, "Our commitment to delivering an unparalleled customer experience remains at the core of our operations. We aim to not only meet but exceed the expectations of every Toyota consumer we serve." The dealership has made substantial strides towards enhancing its service capabilities. The newly expanded workshop, located at Hero Honda Chowk, now boasts the capacity to service up to 60 70+ cars per day. This development solidifies IJM Toyota Gurugram's position as a one-stop destination for all Toyota consumers.

Varanium Cloud reports net profit of Rs 96.25 cr

New Delhi: Mumbai based Technology Solutions Company, Varanium Cloud Limited has reported exponential growth in business operations with robust growth in the total income and net profit. Company has reported a stand-alone net profit of Rs. 96.25 crore for six months (H1) of FY23-24 ended September 2023 as against net profit of Rs. 26.37 crore in H1 of FY22-23, growth of 265% Y-o-Y. Total income from operations for H1FY23-24 was reported at Rs. 377.33 crore, higher by 205.4% Y-o-Y as compare to total income of Rs. 123.55 crore in H1 FY22-23. EPS for H1FY24 was at Rs. 22.44 per share.

Recently, EVLI Emerging Frontier Fund has bought total of 4.76 lakh shares in the company through bulk deal on 11 October and 12 October, 2023. The fund invested total of Rs. 10.45 crore in the company. In the board meeting dated 9 October 2023 company has approved to open subsidiary companies in USA and UAE to expand business operation. Mr. Vinayak Vasant Jadhav was appointed as Chief Financial Officer of the company with immediate effect. Company has recently completed its Rs. 49.46 crore rights issue successfully to meet the working capital requirements, fund company's expansion plans and for general corporate purposes.

Happiness session organised for Breast cancer survivor patients at AIIMS

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Centre of Happiness AIIMS Bhopal in coordination with Department of Surgery, AIIMS Bhopal conducted a session of happiness for Survivors of breast cancer and their families on Tuesday from 2:00pm to 4pm. Centre of Happiness AIIMS Bhopal is continuously trying to emphasize role of positive psychology in healing as well as in overcoming the stress of treatment among patients as well as their families/caregivers. Centre of Happiness has been established under the able

guidance of Prof. Ajai Singh, Director and CEO, AIIMS Bhopal to strengthen the zeal of an individual to overcome the struggle and stress, patients and their family members undergo during the procedure of treatment. The centre of happiness works to enhance the positivity among the patients as well as the caregivers. The month of October is observed as Breast cancer awareness month and on this occasion experts from department of surgery, psychiatry, physiology and yoga explained the role of positive thinking in overcoming the physical and mental stress of treatment procedures. The

Centre of Happiness has been established to strengthen the zeal of an individual to overcome the struggle and stress, patients and their family members undergo during the procedure of treatment.

breast cancer survivors shared the ups and downs of their treatment journey and what strengthened their emotions during this phase. Dr. Shyam Lal, professor Department of Surgery urged the patients and their caregivers to keep faith on their treatment and follow the directions/suggestions given by their treating doctors and never hesitate to ask queries. Dr. Swagata brahmachari,

additional prof. surgery explained that the fearless fight of patients against the disease helps them recover better and more strengthened. Dr. Ruchi Singh, additional professor, department of physiology emphasized that patients' caregivers too should seek out for support during the treatment of their dear one, and stay positive. Dr. Snehil Gupta, associate professor, department of psy-

chiatry made the patients realize that during this journey of diagnosis and treatment patients have emerged as knowing themselves better than ever before. Dr. Jyotsana Rai, yoga trainer taught stress-relieving techniques to patients as well as caregivers as they too pass through enormous stress during the patient's treatment procedure. It was followed by an interactive session and many patients enthusiastically shared their stories and their journey through the treatment which in itself gave a positive motivation to many patients present in the Outpatient department of surgery.

Unlocking potential of AI

New Delhi: Dell Technologies held a "Bringing AI to data" Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ) media briefing this week. The virtual briefing was hosted by Dell's John Roese, Global Chief Technology Officer and Peter Marrs, President, Asia Pacific and Japan. Together, they discussed the AI landscape against the backdrop of growing demand for AI innovation in the region and how Dell is helping customers capitalize on this opportunity. "The last time we had a dramatic change in the productivity of IT systems in business was around 20 years ago, when we adopted large scale systems like ERP and CRM that transformed how businesses used technology," said John Roese, Global Chief Technology Officer, Dell Technologies.

Special Cell of Delhi police arrest 2 wanted criminals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested two wanted criminals -- one of them a sharpshooter of the Neeraj Bawana gang -- carrying a collective bounty of Rs 75,000 on their head. The arrested accused has been identified as Dinesh (29), a sharpshooter of the Neeraj Bawana and Sunil Rath gang, and Gopal Tyagi (39), who was wanted in a cheating case. Dinesh alias Tappa was also declared a proclaimed offender in three different criminal cases in Delhi, including in the jail van murder case in 2015, police

said. "On October 11, we received a tip-off that Dinesh, wanted in more than 10 criminal cases in Delhi and Bagpat of Uttar Pradesh, will reach Crown Plaza Hotel in Delhi with illegal weapons. A trap was laid and he was arrested. One pistol and five live cartridges were recovered from him. Similarly, another accused Gopal Tyagi was arrested on October 15 from MP," said Special Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), HGS Dhaliwal in a statement. Police said that Dinesh is an active member of the Neeraj Bawana and Sunil Rath gang. He has been involved in more than 10 criminal

cases of murder, attempt to murder, carjacking, dacoity, Arms Act, and other criminal cases, they said. "Under the direction of his gang heads, Neeraj Bawana, Naveen Bhanja, and Sunil Rath, the accused was involved in the gruesome murder of rival gangsters Paras and Bhola Durmut in a jail van in August 2015. In July 2019, he was released on parole to look after his ill mother. However, he did not return to jail after his parole ended. Later he got involved in different gang activities," Dhaliwal said. In June 2020, he and other gang members allegedly committed the murder of Parambir Tugana at

Chaprauli, Bagpat of Uttar Pradesh. A court of Delhi had declared him proclaimed offender in three different criminal cases, police in their statement said. Police said Tyagi has been evading arrest for more than six years in a case of cheating. "Tyagi and his associates cheated a woman of Rs 2.45 lakh on the pretext of delivering a parcel received from the United Kingdom," the Special Commissioner of Police said. He made a fake PAN card, voter card, and driving license and opened bank accounts to cheat innocent people, he said. Police said further investigation is underway.



Students take part in an Induction Ceremony-2023 of Inter National Institute of Fashion Design, in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Donot involve in any activity which is under corrupt conduct and crime under law

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Model Code of Conduct for Assembly Elections-2023 is effective in Madhya Pradesh from October 9. The Election Commission of India has issued detailed guidelines for political parties and candidates regarding the Model Code of Conduct. As per the guidelines given by the Commission, as part of normal conduct, no political party or candidate should indulge in any such activity due to which existing differences between different castes and religious or linguistic communities may become more serious or may lead to mutual hatred or tension. If political parties are criticized, it will be limited to their policies and programmes, past records and work. Parties and candidates must refrain from criticizing all aspects of the private life of leaders or workers of other parties unrelated to their public activities. They must refrain from criticizing other parties or their workers on the basis of unsubstantiated

allegations or false statements. No appeal will be made on the basis of caste or sectarian sentiments to obtain votes. Temples, mosques, churches and other places of worship will not be used as election campaign platforms. All parties and candidates shall refrain from all such activities which constitute corrupt practices and offenses under the electoral law such as bribing voters, intimidating voters, impersonating voters, campaigning within a distance of 100 meters from the polling booths, holding public meetings and providing transport and vehicles for conveyance of voters to polling booths during the period of 48 hours ending with the time fixed for closing of poll. The right of every person to a peaceful and undisturbed domestic life shall be respected, regardless of the political views or activities of political parties and candidates. Under no circumstances will anyone resort to organizing demonstrations or picketing in front of individuals' homes to protest against

their opinions or activities. No political party or candidate will allow its followers to put-up flags, hang banners, paste notices, write slogans etc. on its land, buildings, premises walls etc. without the permission of any person. Political parties and candidates shall ensure that their supporters do not create obstruction or disrupt meetings and processions organized by other parties. Workers or supporters of any political party shall not create obstruction in a public meeting organized by another political party by asking questions orally or in writing or by distributing pamphlets of their party. No party should take out processions around the places where meetings of other parties are being organised. Workers of any party will not remove posters put-up by workers of other parties. Political parties or candidates shall inform the local police authorities about the venue and time of any proposed meeting well in advance so that the police can make necessary arrangements to control traffic

and maintain peace and order. The party or candidate shall ensure in advance whether any ban or prohibition is in force at the venue proposed for the meeting and if such orders exist, they will be strictly followed. If any relaxation is required from such orders, it shall be applied for and obtained in advance. If license or permission is required to be obtained for the use of loud-speakers or any other facility in connection with any proposed meeting, the party or candidate shall apply to the concerned authority in advance and obtain such license or permission. The organizer of the meeting shall invariably obtain the assistance of the police on duty in dealing with persons who disrupt the meeting or otherwise attempt to cause disorder. The organizers themselves will not take action against such persons. The party or candidate organizing the procession will decide in advance the place and time of starting the procession, the routes to be followed and the place and time of con-

cluding the procession. Generally there will be no change in the programme. The organizers will give advance notice of the event to the local police authorities, so that the necessary arrangements can be made. The organizers will ensure whether any restriction orders are in force in the areas from where the procession is to be taken out and will abide by the restriction orders unless specifically relaxed by the competent authority. Any traffic regulations or restrictions will also be carefully followed. The organizers will take steps to make arrangements for the procession in advance so that there is no disruption or obstruction in traffic. If the procession is very long, it shall be organized in several segments of appropriate length, so that the stopped traffic can be released in several stages at convenient intervals, especially at places where the procession has to cross a road intersection so that traffic disruption can be avoided. The procession will be regulated in such a manner that

as far as possible it will remain on the right side of the road and the instructions and advice of the police on duty will be strictly followed. If two or more political parties or candidates propose to take out the procession at the same time through the same routes or any part thereof, the organizers shall, to ensure that both the processions do not collide with each other or create obstruction in traffic, will contact in advance and decide on the measures to be adopted. Help from the local police will be taken to reach a satisfactory arrangement. For this purpose the team will contact the police as soon as possible. Political parties or candidates shall, to the maximum extent possible, control the possession of items belonging to people taking part in the procession which may be misused by undesirable people. Carrying effigies depicting members of other political parties or their leaders, burning these effigies in public and other such types of demonstrations will not be supported

by any political party or candidate. All political parties and candidates shall co-operate with the officers on election duty to ensure peaceful and orderly polling and complete freedom of voters to exercise their franchise without harassing them in any way or creating any hindrance. Candidates will provide appropriate badges and identification cards to their authorized workers. They will agree to it that the identity slip provided by them to the voters will be on plain (white) paper and will not have any symbol, name of the candidate or name of the party on it. They will refrain from giving or distributing liquor on the day of voting and 48 hours before it. Unnecessary crowd will not be allowed to gather near the camps set-up by political parties and candidates near the polling booths so that conflict and tension between the party workers and supporters and the candidates can be avoided. Everyone will ensure that the camps of the candidates will be simple.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
 ELECTRICAL BRANCH - OPEN TENDER
NIT Dated 14.10.2023
E-TENDRING
 The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS), West Central Railway, New Katni Junction for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender for the following work :- **NIT No. - NKJ-D-Dismantling-TM-T-23** dated 14.10.2023. **Name of work with location** - Dismantling, Cleaning, Baking and Becktolving of Tr. Motor parts of AC locomotives (WAG5 & WAG7) of Diesel Shed NKJ and TRS/NKJ for a period of 24 months. **Approx. cost of the work (In Rs.) - Rs. 16,05,191/-, Bid Security (In Rs.) - Rs. 32,100/-** **Completion period (In months) - 24 Months, Last date & time for submission of tender (up to 12:00) - 08.11.2023, The Complete information of the above E-tender are available in website "http://ireps.gov.in". Tenders other than in the form of e-bid shall not be accepted against above tenders.**
Sr. DEE(TRS)
WCR, New Katni Junction

Plans afoot to send Indian on Moon by 2040

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Chandrayaan-3 successfully landing spacecraft on the south pole of the moon and setting new bar for the Indian space enterprises, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked Indian Space Organisation (ISRO) to set up an Indian Space Station by 2035 and send the first Indian to the moon by 2040. India's first human space flight-Gaganyaan- is now expected to take off in 2025, a PMO statement said after the Prime Minister held a meeting with the ISRO Chairman Somanath here. The Gaganyaan mission entails sending two astronauts to low earth orbit. Modi's directions for future missions came during a briefing by the ISRO Chairman on the progress of the 'Gaganyaan mission', which is to have its first demonstration flight of the crew escape system on October 21, and other initiatives. During the meeting, the Prime Minister outlined the future of India's space exploration endeavours and urged scientists to work towards interplanetary missions, including a Venus



Orbiter Mission and a Mars Lander and also explore the moon in greater detail. "Building on the success of Indian space initiatives, including the recent Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya L1 missions, the Prime Minister directed that India should now aim for new and ambitious goals, including setting up the 'Bharatiya Antariksha Station' (Indian space station) by 2035 and sending first Indian to the Moon by 2040," the statement said. To realise this vision, the Department of Space will develop a roadmap for Moon explo-

ration, it said. ISRO's moon exploration plans will comprise a series of Chandrayaan missions, developing a new rocket - the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), building a new launchpad and setting up human-centric Laboratories and associated technologies. The Department of Space presented a comprehensive overview of the Gaganyaan Mission, including various technologies developed so far such as human-rated launch vehicles and system qualification. It was noted that around 20 major tests, including three

uncrewed missions of the Human Rated Launch Vehicle (HRLV3) are planned. First demonstration flight of the Crew Escape System Test Vehicle is scheduled on 21 October. Prime Minister Modi expressed confidence in India's capabilities and affirmed the nation's commitment to scaling new heights in space exploration. The Gaganyaan mission, which entails sending two astronauts to low earth orbit, was originally planned for launch in 2022. However, the Covid pandemic and the complexity of the mission led to delays and the first

human space flight was expected to take place in the second half of 2024. From Tuesday's meeting, it has emerged that the Gaganyaan launch will now take place in 2025. Besides Somanath, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P K Mishra and other officials were present during the meeting. The meeting chaired by the Prime Minister came after India's successful soft landing near the unexplored south pole of the moon on August 23. Within 10 days of the lunar landing on September 2, India launched a spacecraft to study the Sun from a place called the Lagrange Point (L1), situated about 1.5 million kilometers from the Earth. The Aditya L-1 mission will study the solar atmosphere, solar magnetic storms, and their impact on the environment around the Earth. The Department of Space presented a comprehensive overview of the Gaganyaan Mission, including various technologies developed so far such as human-rated launch vehicles and system qualification.

Army to buy military systems to boost capabilities along LAC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further enhance its operational capabilities in border areas, including Ladakh, where tension persists at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Army has rolled out a process to procure six fast patrol boats, eight landing craft assault (LCA) and 118 integrated surveillance and targeting systems. The fast patrol boats are being procured primarily for surveillance in large water bodies, including the Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh. The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year confrontation in certain friction points along the LAC in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. The Army has already issued the request for information (RFI) or initial tenders for procurement of the fast patrol boats, LCAs and integrated surveillance and targeting systems, sources said here on



Tuesday. The RFI for fast patrol boats said the vessels should be "rugged and versatile so as to facilitate seamless execution of small team insertion, surveillance, reconnaissance and patrolling" and that they should be capable of operating across a varying matrix of terrain and conditions. It said the indigenously-developed boats should have a maximum speed of 29 knots (at sea state level 2) with eight people on board. The initial tender for LCAs said they are planned to be deployed for search and rescue operations in Creek area

and river basins. It said the length of the LCAs should be between 13-14 metres and maximum speed not less than 20 knots. The LCAs are generally used for ferrying troops. The last date to respond to the initial tenders for fast patrol boats as well as the LCAs is November 28. The integrated surveillance and targeting systems are being procured for use by mechanised forces in border areas. According to the RFI, the systems are being procured under the 'buy Indian' category and they must have 60 per cent indigenous content.

Maharana Pratap's descendant, son of Karni Sena founder join BJP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vishvaraj Singh Mewar, a descendant of celebrated Mewar king Maharana Pratap Singh and Bhawani Singh Kalvi, son of Karni Sena founder Lokendra Singh Kalvi, joined the BJP on Tuesday, as the party gears up for the Rajasthan Assembly polls scheduled for November 25. They joined the party in the presence of Rajasthan BJP president CP Joshi, Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, its national general secretary Arun Singh and BJP chief spokesperson Anil Baluni. Both leaders after joining the BJP praised the party, with Mewar asserting that people should support the capable and foresighted leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Meghwal expressed confidence that people of Rajasthan will elect the BJP to power, voting



out the Congress. Kalvi has also been a well known polo player, while Mewar's father Mahendra Singh Mewar was elected to Lok Sabha on a BJP ticket from Chittorgarh in 1989. Both are from the Rajput community, which is an important voting segment in Rajasthan. The BJP has sought to reassure Rajputs after Narpat Singh Rajvi, a five-time MLA and son-in-law of party stalwart Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, hit out at the party leadership after he was denied a ticket this time.

Bagchi appointed India's permanent representative to UN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi has been appointed India's permanent representative to the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations in Geneva. He will succeed Indra Mani Pandey, who is set to return to New Delhi. Bagchi, a 1995-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) official, took over as spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in March 2021 and deftly handled a number of critical issues and developments including the eastern Ladakh border row, India's Covid-19 response and New Delhi's G20 presidency. "Arindam Bagchi (IFS:1995), presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External



Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador/Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva," the MEA said in a brief statement on Monday. "He is expected to take up the assignment shortly," it said. Earlier, Bagchi served as ambassador to Croatia and deputy high commissioner to Sri Lanka. He also had a stint in the Prime Minister's Office as a director as well as at India's permanent mission at the UN in New York.

Rajnath announces cash rewards to jawans who won Asian Games medals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Recognising the stellar performance of athletes from the Armed forces in the recently concluded Asian Games, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday announced cash reward of ₹25 lakh to Gold medal winners, ₹15 lakh to silver medal awardees and ₹10 lakh to bronze medal winners. He also said medals and performance will inspire the country's youth. The Defence Minister made these assertions here in a function to felicitate the medal winners, participants and support staff from the Armed Forces, who took part in the recently concluded 19th Asian Games at Hangzhou, China. He interacted with a total of 76 players and staff. On behalf of his Ministry, Rajnath announced cash prizes to the Armed Forces personnel, who brought laurels to the country and once again proved



their mettle at an international event, by bagging 16 individual medals (3 Gold, 6 Silver and 7 Bronze) and eight team medals (2 Gold, 3 Silver and 3 Bronze) at the Games. A contingent of 88 soldiers, including three sportswomen, participated in 18 disciplines at the Games. In his address, the defence minister lauded the efforts of the players, including those who gave their best, but could not win the medals. He reminded them of Flying Sikh Milkha Singh, who missed a medal in the 400-metre race in the 1960 Olympics in Rome by a whisker, but became a guid-

ing star of Indian athletics. Milkha Singh is an inspiration for all even today, he said. Rajnath exuded confidence that these medals and performance will inspire the country's youth to come forward in sports. You are not just representing a medal, but are also representing a narrative of excellence of Indian society. You are a great medium to provide inspiration to the youth," he told the players. Rajnath also pointed out that the performance of the players reflected the image of a rapidly growing and powerful 'New India.' "Many studies show that

the progress in sports of any nation is more or less proportional to the economic prosperity of that country. "In this context, as India is becoming an economically strong nation, our medals are also increasing in every field," he said. The Defence Minister asserted that the Government is making relentless efforts to develop sports culture in India. "On one hand, we have worked to increase awareness about sports among the youth through Fit India and Khel India campaigns; on the other, through the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, we are committed to increasing India's medal count in the Olympics. Today, our country is taking steps to host the Olympic Games in 2036. I am confident that with the support of the Government, our athletes will take India to the top of the medals tally through their hard work, dedication and passion," he said.

Nationwide survey suggests carbon neutral measures for hospitals

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian healthcare sector was responsible for more than 9 per cent of all India's commercial electricity consumption in 2019-20 fiscal, a first-of-its-kind nationwide Government survey of over 600 health institutions across the States has said and suggested a wide-ranging carbon neutral measures including mandating of green building bye-laws among others to make the hospitals climate smart to help achieve the country's net Zero target by 2070. Thousands of hospitals, health centers and entire health systems around the world are already implementing climate-smart health care strategies. Titled 'Towards Climate-Smart Hospitals: Insights From A National Hospital Energy Consumption Survey' it found that the penetration of on-site solar PV is 17 per cent in private and 11 per cent in public hospitals. In public hospitals the maintenance of the solar PV plant was not effectively conducted even as some of the healthcare facilities surveyed indicated that the solar PV plants' components needed detailed repairing and replacement. It was also observed that the healthcare facilities are not using solar PV systems as a source for backup and are relying only on diesel generators during the hours of power supply failure to provide critical services. Under the aegis of the National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH), the exercise in 18 states with diverse climate zones was conducted to understand the quantity and quality of energy consumption in different types of healthcare facil-



ities. It noted that there was a wide variation in hospital-level energy intensities (measured in Energy Performance Index (EPI) and Annual Energy Use per Bed (AEUB) between and within hospital typologies. "The large EPI diversity can be attributed to factors related to energy efficiency such as the energy efficiency of end-use equipment/appliances and behavioural energy efficiency, and factors unrelated to energy efficiency such as differences in air-conditioned areas, levels of medical services provided, hours of active use, the climate zone, the degree of outsourcing of services, and patient privacy." The survey spanning over two years has been conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry with technical support from Centre for Chronic Disease Control (CCDC) and Alliance for an Energy Efficiency Economy (AEEE). The survey pointed to several differences in end-use uptake and utilisation pathways between the public and private healthcare facilities. "For instance, while heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) use and type depended on the size and level of healthcare in the public health system, (sub-centres and health and wellness centres mostly shown absence of HVAC) there

is still immense scope to promote informed decisions in procurement of energy-efficient heating and cooling systems," it said. The study also suggested that the purchase of star-rated medical-use refrigeration even in rural health facilities where storage of vaccines and drugs is required can address both the cost factor and help mitigate the hospital's energy footprint. Similarly, the transition to energy-efficient lighting, medical equipment, and water-heaters (including solar-powered heaters) can be mandated within the NPCCHH. Other major suggestions included mandating Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) norms for new construction and major renovation. The ECBC has been notified in 18 states. Ensure effective operations and maintenance of renewable energy systems and enhancing awareness and building capacities were also part of the suggestions. To increase renewable energy deployment in public healthcare, the survey has recommended leveraging funding through global, national, and state-level funding mechanisms available through financial mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, and local and regional funding mechanisms including examples like Arogya Raksha Samiti (ARS).

Defence Ministry signs contract for construction of ship for ICG



Ministry of Defence on Tuesday signed a contract here for the construction of one training ship for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai at a cost of ₹310 crore under the Buy (Indian- IDDM) category. This is the first dedicated training platform with integral helicopter capabilities that will provide basic sea training to 70 Coast Guard and other international under-trainee officers to prepare these budding mariners on the multi-dimensional maritime aspects of Coast Guard life, officials said. This training ship with advanced and modern high-tech surveillance and monitoring systems will provide profound insight and expertise to the ICG cadets on the challenges at sea while ensuring the security of coastline and off-shore assets. The majority of equipment and systems will be sourced from indigenous manufacturers, including MSMEs. The project envisages to generate significant employment over a period of three years. While meeting the objectives of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', the contract would also boost the indigenous shipbuilding capability and help in bolstering maritime economic capabilities.

NHAI upgrades traffic system for advanced road safety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Central road making agency National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has upgraded the Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) for enhanced road safety and digital enforcement on national highways and expressways. The enhancements include replacing previous VIDS cameras with the newly introduced Video Incident Detection and Enforcement System (VIDES) to emphasise the digital enforcement of traffic rules. VIDES has the capability to identify 14 distinct incidents, including triple riding, helmet and seatbelt violations, wrong lane or direction driving, presence of animals on the highway, and pedestrian crossings, the statement said. According to a NHAI statement, depending on the detected incident, VIDES will alert route patrol vehicles or ambulances, generate e-challans, relay alerts to nearby Variable Messaging Boards, or send notifications through the 'Rajmargyatra' mobile app to nearby travellers. For comprehensive coverage, the statement said, these cameras are slated for installation every 10 km along national highways, with state-of-the-art command and control centres at every 100 km integrating various camera feeds. Apart from this, Vehicle Speed Detection System (VSDS) is now integrated into VIDES, optimising the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, it added. The Traffic Monitoring Camera System (TMCS) will also be upgraded, the statement said, adding that positioned every 1 km on the national highway, these cameras have been endowed with



advanced capabilities like automated detection of accidents and stalled vehicles. Strengthening collaboration with local traffic agencies, the statement said NHAI will allocate dedicated workstations in the command and control centre for traffic police representatives. Moreover, provisions have been made to share camera feeds over the network to enhance real-time coordination and response. ATMS deployment may also play an active role in disaster management by providing inputs for effective planning and implementation. It will also provide online sharing of highway status and other important information that will help both the agencies and the highway users. The statement said the policy also provisions implementation of Digital Highways by developing integrated utility corridors along the national highways to develop optic fibre cables (OFC) infrastructure. While the ATMS equipment will use OFC to communicate with the command and control centre, there are provisions in the policy for 5G-based communication in the future as the coverage increases, it said. Meanwhile Union Road Transport Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said the NHAI is facing difficulties in the preparation of detailed project

reports, as companies concerned are not ready to accept new technology. Addressing the 'CRISIL India Infrastructure Conclave 2023', Gadkari said big players in the steel and cement industry are indulging in cartelisation to jack-up prices. According to Gadkari, rating of companies that make DPRs is a big challenge. "The preparation of DPRs is a big problem for NHAI... There is no perfect DPR anywhere in any project," Gadkari, who is known for his frank views, said. "While making DPR, they (companies engaged in DPR making) are not ready to accept new technology, new innovation, new research and even the standard of DPRs are so low that everywhere (there is) additional scope of work," he said. The minister recalled that once upon a time, there were 50 big contractors who used to get contracts for road construction. "I felt that was not correct. (So) I liberalised the technical and financial norms, by which, today we have 600 big (road) contractors," he said. According to Gadkari, the problem is that some of them quote prices below 30-40 per cent for highway construction projects. "We need to maintain the equilibrium between the quality and the cost. And that is also a big challenge," he observed.

Centre told to upgrade private security to 'Para Police'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Keeping in mind the recent developments in Israel, the Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) has urged the Centre to upgrade the role of private security personnel to "Para Police" by imparting security skills and knowledge of international standards. "There are over one crore private security professionals employed in India to protect human and corporate assets. We are the largest security workforce in the World. It is the time to upgrade the role of private security to "Para Police" by imparting security skills and knowledge of international standards. "The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had already developed international standards for private security. These highly trained security professionals can be given new role in the internal security to ensure safe and secure environment," said Kunwar Vikram Singh, Chairman, CAPSI, the apex body of the private security industry. In a statement Singh said the Ministry of Home Affairs should consider grading private security guards and supervisors to the status of "Para Police" by upskilling them to effectively perform para police duties which would significantly increase overall security personnel available for maintaining law and order in the country. This could lead to a stronger and more visible security presence, instilling a sense of safety and deterrence, he added.

Shivaji made first attempt to stop attack on Hindutva: RSS leader

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Sah Vyavastha Pramukh (co-organisation head) of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Anil Oak said that Shivaji made the first attempt to stop the ideological, literary, cultural and physical attacks on Hindutva. He was addressing a dialogue programme organised before the staging of the historical Mahanatyia (grand drama) Janata Raja (visionary king), based on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, at Centre of Vedic Science in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Monday which was also attended by Union Minister Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey. The drama will be organised from 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm at Amphitheater grounds in BHU here from November 21 to 26.

Oak said that this great drama is being staged in Kashi to commemorate the completion of 350 years of 'Hindavi Swaraj' established by Shivaji. Elaborating Shivaji's war strategy, he said that as survival is necessary for the establishment of Swaraj so one must fight to win the war. "The war between Shivaji and Afzal Khan has been described as one of the seven major wars of the world by the London Military School," he said, presenting the description of this war in the form of a poem.

Regarding Shivaji's good governance policy, Oak said that in reality Shivaji fought only for seven years and worked for 'Suraj' (good governance) for 28 years. "The first pension scheme, compassion-



RSS leader Anil Oak addressing a programme at BHU in Varanasi on Monday.

ate appointment, food grain scheme for every family, navy and merchant navy were started during the reign of Shivaji. Aurangzeb has also praised Shivaji's character in a part of the play," he said, adding that to establish the Hindavi Empire, Shiva ji made such friends whose ideals are relevant even in the present situation.

Giving the example of Shivaji's Nai (barber), he said that despite not being expert in war, he did not worry about his life for Swaraj and went straight to the enemy's side. "To save the life of Shivaji, Bajji Prabhudesh Pandey, along with only 300 people fought with 4,000 Pathan horsemen and attained martyrdom," he said, adding that presently, that place in Maharashtra is famous by the name of Pavan Khind.

He further said that Shivaji was deeply imbued with the feeling of patriotism. "Shivaji had no desire to become a king but to establish the Hindavi Empire as he assumed the title of Chhatrapati. Shivaji also treated women with special

respect. He also sentenced his maternal uncle Mohite to life imprisonment for misbehaving with a poor woman. Taking quick decisions was the speciality of Shivaji, with only 60 soldiers he defeated one lakh soldiers in a guerrilla war in the palace of Shaista Khan." He said, adding that construction of new forts, establishment of navy, appointment of pant pradhans for good governance showed the vision of Ramrajya by Shivaji. According to him, Baba Saheb Purandare composed 'Mahanatyia' by penning down these ideals of Shivaji. He said that the money received from the tickets would be utilised for making residential arrangements for the attendants in front of the Cancer Hospital.

While presiding over the programme, Union Minister Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey said that the learned people of Kashi also had a contribution in the life of Shivaji Maharaj. "It was here that Pandit Gaga Bhatt performed the coronation of Shivaji. In fact, the present period is also passing

through such circumstances as were there during the time of Shivaji. In such a situation, staging Janata Raja Mahanatyia will provide us a solution to those situations. Shivaji's guru Samartha Guru Ramdas had called him Janata Raja which means far-sighted king," Dr Pandey said.

Renowned storyteller Shantanu Ji Maharaj said that by conspiring with Indian history, the characters of many great men were made to disappear from the pages of history. He said that the Seva Bharti (Kashi Prant) will work to teach, show and narrate one such character. "Just as all the Indians had made their own sacrifices for the construction of the grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya, similarly everyone's sacrifice should be made for this great drama also," he said.

At the beginning, the guests garlanded the statue of Mahamana and lit the lamp and it was followed by a presentation of BHU's Kulgeet by the students of the Faculty of Music and Stage Arts. Kashi Prant Pracharak Ramesh Chandra and Seva Bharti Kashi Prant chief Rahul Singh were also present on the stage. Dr Harendra Rai, co-secretary of Mahanatyia Organizing Committee, Prof Satya Prakash Pal, Prof DC Rai, Kashi Vibhag Pracharak Nitin and others were also present. The vote of thanks was given by Prof Upendra Nath Tripathi, Coordinator of Centre of Vedic Science and Prof Gyan Prakash Mishra of Journalism department conducted the function.

Fire claims lives of woman, two kids

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A woman and her two minor kids were charred to death after a fire broke out in their house due to leakage in LPG cylinder in Khatauli village in Fatehpur on Monday evening, the police said. The incident took place when the woman was preparing meal and the gas pipe of the cylinder caught fire.

The deceased were identified as Alka Devi (28), Gaurav (5) and Pari (2). The police said both the kids were sitting next to their mother when she was preparing the meal. After hearing their cries, neighbours and other villagers rushed to the spot and tried to douse the flames.

Upon being alerted, a team of police also reached the spot and took the trio to the district

hospital from where the doctors referred them to the LLR Hospital in Kanpur. However, the family members took them to a private hospital in Kanpur where they succumbed to their injuries, they said adding that the bodies have been sent for postmortem.

SUGGESTIONS INVITED: Under a nation wide campaign the Allahabad University Unit of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has invited suggestions from the students regarding education and other important subjects.

The ABVP is to pass resolutions on the basis of suggestions received from students in its national conference scheduled in Delhi.

The ABVP has invited suggestions from students studying in various educational insti-

tutions across the country on various issues pertaining to education, national subjects, environment and other contemporary issues. Students can send their views/suggestions on the aforementioned subjects through the Google Forms available on ABVP's Facebook handle, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram and other social media handles. They can also send their views/suggestions on the e-mail ID of ABVP national general secretary Yagyvalkyia Shukla which is abpyyagywalkya@gmail.com. The ABVP Allahabad University unit has also asked students to submit their suggestions through Google Form and e-mail.

The ABVP will prepare proposals based on suggestions received from students

across the country. After a thorough discussion with the students present in the conference, the ABVP will pass the aforesaid proposals in its national conference scheduled to be held from November 30 to December 3 in Delhi.

The ABVP in its national conferences and national executive committee meetings, passes resolutions on various topics, including education, environment etc. Based on these passed proposals, ABVP units across the country, along with students and youth, works relentlessly to achieve the set goals and brings an optimistic change in the society. After having a thorough discussion on the suggestions received from the students across the country in its Amrit Mahotsav conference, ABVP will finalise its future plans.

Students staging dharna go on rampage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A large number of students who were sitting on a dharna went on a rampage on the Allahabad University (AU) campus on Tuesday. The chief proctor allegedly got students protesting at the library gate lathicharged. After this the students closed the library gate and started creating a ruckus. Seeing the increasing commotion, forces from many police stations were called. This was followed by heated clashes between angry students, security guards and policemen.

The police then dispersed the students using mild force. After this the police arrested five protesting students.

2 MEMBERS OF ATIQ

GANG HELD: The Khuldabad police arrested two members of slain Atiq Ahmed gang from Chaufatka area and seized seven crude bombs from their possession.

Those arrested were Anees Akhtar alias Anees Kabari (46) and his son Mohd Rehman (21), residents of Chakia Kasari Masari. The police said the duo was associated with Atiq and his family members for a long time. They have been booked under Section 4/5 of the Explosives Act. The police have been compiling their criminal sketch.

During interrogation, the duo revealed that they had been carrying these bombs since the killing of lawyer Umesh Pal in February this

year. They have been evading police since then. They also told the police that they used to carry these bombs for their own security. The police said the duo was planning to hide these bombs under the dilapidated office structure of slain Atiq Ahmed.

POSTAL DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN:

The Postal department has launched a campaign 'Samridhhi Sukanya - Samridhhi Samaj' to take the benefits of 'Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana' launched by PM Modi under 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' scheme.

Postmaster General Krishna Kumar Yadav said that under Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana, account of girls up to

age of 10 years can be opened in post office. It offers 8.0 per cent interest, which is higher than small savings scheme. This account, can be opened with only Rs 250. There is provision of exemption of up to 1.5 lakh in income tax under section 80C of Income Tax. Postmaster general said three lakh Sukanya Samridhhi accounts have been opened so far in post offices of Prayagraj region. Senior superintendent of post office, Prayagraj division, Abhishek Srivastava said for opening Sukanya Samridhhi account, people may contact nearest post office with a copy of birth certificate of girl child, a copy of Aadhaar card of her mother or father along with two photographs.

Dastak Abhiyan launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In order to its efforts to prevent the transmission of communicable and vector-borne diseases, the Health department has launched Dastak Abhiyan under Special Communicable Disease Control Drive.

Under the Dastak Abhiyan launched by the Health department on Monday, the Asha-Anganwadi workers and health workers will identify the patients of communicable and vector-borne diseases by visiting from home to home and conduct the test of their health. They will also make the people aware of these diseases, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary informed and directed the health employees to work continuously with the coordination of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development department to avoid water logging and culminated ensuring the cleanliness of drainage and cutting of ambushes.

To ensure the availability of



The health employees making the people aware about communicable diseases under Dastak Abhiyan.

pure drinking water for the families, he directed the health employees and advised that the family members should use toilets. The choked drainages of the rural areas should be cleaned, anti-larva spray and

fogging should be endured cent per cent and the source of communicable diseases should be destroyed, he directed, adding that the drive should be monitored and its reporting should be made on e-portal on

daily basis.

Stickers, posters, etc should be affixed to aware the people of mosquito-borne diseases, he directed and added that the maximum people should be aware about this taking the help of Gram Pradhan in the rural areas and corporators in the urban areas. The Nodal Officer of Communicable Diseases and ACMO Dr SS Kannoujia informed that the Health department has been made the Nodal department of the drive which is working relating to vector-borne diseases making coordination with 10 other departments.

The District Malaria Officer Sharat Chand Pandey informed that the screening of the persons with symptoms of fever, influenza like illness (cough, nausea, etc) will be made during the visit from home to home by Asha-Anganwadi workers and they should also make the list of the persons with the symptoms of tuberculosis, leprosy, filaria, etc and ensure their test and treatment in case they are tested positive.

Five-day Regional Science Congress inaugurated

VARANASI (PNS):

The five-day Regional Science Congress-2023 kick started at Mahamana Hall of Institute of Science in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Tuesday. The event jointly organised by Navodaya Vidyalaya, Varanasi and Institute of Science, BHU, will offer a plethora of activities, sessions, lectures and visits to ignite young minds towards pursuing science. A total of 83 meritorious students from different Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand are attending the event. At the inaugural ceremony of the programme Prof Anil K Tripathi, Director, Institute of Science, elaborated on the significance of scientific discoveries and innovations. He shared with students insights on various revolutionary scientific innovations and how they impacted human civilization. He also talked about the difference between invention and innovation. Prof SM Singh, Dean, Faculty of Science, during his interaction with students attempted to cultivate the seed

of curiosity among the attendees. His simple delivery of words engaged students in the journey he was intended to take them through. He acquainted students with the significance of Gurukul system and its effect on Indian society by taking instances from the story of Raja Raghu, who once with his great dedication towards a disciple guru, filled his chariot with gold to greet his guru with Dakshina. Dr Amiya Kumar Samal, chairman, organising committee, briefed the participants about the activities planned for the programme. Nagesh Kumar Mishra, Principal, Jawahar Novadaya Vidyalaya, Varanasi, delivered the welcome address. Following the inaugural session, groups of students were taken on a visit to different departments of the institute where they got to see various scientific instruments and also witnessed their use in scientific research. A quiz round was also organised by two members of the organising committee, Atal Singh and Shubham Pradhan.

Pandal to take visitors on a journey to Nagaland

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

This puja season, when all barwaris (Durga puja samitis) of the city are using different themes to make their puja pandal stand out, the one being installed by the Bai-Ka-Bagh Durga Puja Committee is very interesting. This pandal will take visitors on a journey to the hilly state of Nagaland.

Inside the pandal, the artists have made several houses similar to those seen in villages of Nagaland. All structures of this pandal are made of bamboo, which is found in abundance in Nagaland. The small conical shaped houses, slanted roofs, bamboo ladder, solar power connection to harness solar energy etc have all been set up to make it look like an authentic Nagaland village.

Interestingly, every decorative item around the inner walls of the pandal is made exclusively by bamboo, i.e. without using any form of plastic or thermocol unlike other pandals of the city. "In this way, our pandal can also be

termed as an eco-friendly pandal of the city" says Shailendra Dwivedi, general secretary of this barwari. In the same way, the Durga puja pandal of Tagore Town barwari, which is being installed at the ground of Colonelganj Inter College gives a look of Kedarnath temple of Uttarakhand. "I had been to the shrine a couple of years ago and from there, I got an idea to make our pandal resemble the holy shine," says the general secretary of the barwari. The pandal will have a huge figure of Nandi in the second sitting posture, as is seen at the entrance of the Kedarnath shrine. The main stage of the pandal will have a replica of the shivling in Kedarnath and behind the Shivling, will be the statues of all the deities, including Goddess Durga, which will be worshipped for four days of the festival. The highlight of this pandal would be a selfie point, which is being made at the tank installed in one side of the school. This tank was donated to the inter college by the Indian Army.

Alumnus donates \$ 1.6 m to IIT (BHU)

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The IIT (BHU) Foundation, a US-based all volunteer, non-profit association of IIT (BHU) alumni, announced that Dr Raj Yavatkar, IIT(BHU) graduate and CTO of Mountain View, California based Juniper Networks, has donated 1.6 million US dollars which will be used to build the Student Academic Centre at the institute here, providing a transformational growth ecosystem for the students on campus.

"IIT (BHU) not only got me started on an excellent engineering path but the experience was truly transformative for someone who arrived on the campus at a young age. The institute helped me grow in many areas such as leadership, communication, and risk-taking," said Dr Raj Yavatkar. He further continued that he was excited to support building the Student Academic Centre which will help students pursue innovative R&D projects while also offering opportunities to showcase their cultural talents and build a strong community focused on collaboration.

Dr Raj Yavatkar graduated with B.Tech in Electronics Engineering from IIT-BHU, followed by a M.Tech in Computer Science at IIT Bombay, and a PhD in Computer Science from



Alumnus Dr Raj Yavatkar donates \$ 1.6 million for a Student Academic Centre in IIT (BHU).

Purdue University. He is a IEEE fellow and is recognised as a leading expert in the networking industry and holds more than 50 patents.

Raj has co-authored five Internet standards. Dr Yavatkar has also published more than 40 papers in academic journals and conferences and has co-authored the book, Inside the Internet's Resource Reservation Protocol (RSVP) published by John Wiley.

Currently, Raj is the Chief Technology Officer at Juniper Networks, a leading vendor for networking systems and services.

Juniper, Raj leads the corporate strategy and technology innovation to put the company on a growth path with

expansion in enterprise, data center, and mobile network segments. Raj also serves as an advisor to and is an early investor in many startups.

Sagar Bhimavarapu (ECE '88), CEO of the IIT (BHU) Foundation, noted that Dr Yavatkar is a proud example of what IIT (BHU) alums have accomplished. "We are grateful to Raj for supporting our efforts to help the IIT (BHU) community, and we look forward to working with other alums to help grow the Foundation's mission" Sagar said.

He further expressed his gratitude for this generous donation that supports creating a robust environment for global donations and endowment for the truly remarkable IIT (BHU).

Director of IIT (BHU), Prof Pramod Kumar Jain and the Board of Governors also expressed their gratitude for this generous donation. Prof Jain said, "This makes possible a state-of-the-art Student Academic Centre providing our students with the best amenities and will go a long way in molding technology leaders of tomorrow."

DEVOTEES OFFER PRAYERS AT CHANDRAGHANTA TEMPLE: Long line of devotees was seen at Chandraghanta Devi Temple located at Chandraghanta Gali near

Thatheri Bazar in Chowk area on the third day of Shardiya Navratra here on Tuesday. Right from the morning hours, there was a long line of devotees in the nearby narrow lanes. As the weather conditions turned pleasant after a good unseasonal rain during the night hours, the devotees did not feel inconveniences to wait for a long time to reach the temple and offer prayers. The city received over 14.4 mm rains during the night and as the hailstorm also hit the region, the same damaged the kharif crops badly at some places.

Heavy rush of devotees was also seen throughout the day at the famous Durga Mandir (Durga Kund) as usual. Rush was also seen at some other temples of goddesses. This holy city is a rare place where there are separate temples of all the nine Gauris and Devis where the devotees reach to offer prayers on different days during Basantik (Chaitya) and Shardiya Navratra respectively.

Besides, hundreds of devotees rushed to Vindhachal in Mirzapur district by Roadway buses or other vehicles to offer prayer on this auspicious occasion.

Rush was also seen at Old Durga Mandir at Ramnagar, Sheetla Mata Mandir at Adalpur (near Chunar, Mirzapur) and others.

DM reviews progress in works

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjani reviewed the progress in works costing more than Rs 50 lakh at the Collectorate on Monday.

During the review of works

neering college to complete the building in such a period that the next academic session could run in it. She directed the working agencies to carry out works with quality and complete it within stipulated time. The meeting was also attend-

leadership of Chairman NPP Shyam Sundar Keshari who was successful in completing the work before Navratra Mela. The chairman said with a budget of Rs 2 crore under Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Adarsh Nagar Panchayat Yojana more

general secretary of BJP Anoop Gupta in a workshop organised under 'Voter Chetna Mahabhiyan' on Monday said vote is one of the strongest way to fulfil our aspiration.

He said the party has decided to extend full cooperation to the upcoming electoral revision drive by the Election Commission. The workshop was attended by all people's representatives, party workers and others.

ANOTHER FEATHER IN SCHOOLS' CAP: It is a matter of pride for the district that the leading school of the city Daffodils Public School secured the top position in the country in maintaining high class academic performance as well as social activities.

Giving details director Amardeep Singh said an organisation 'Education World' conducted the survey throughout the country and after the marking done by experts the school was declared first in a programme held in Delhi. He said that the assiduous effort of the dedicated staff of the school was acknowledged by a reputed organisation working in the field of the education for long and it has fixed marks as per the quality of social activities. He congratulated other director of the school Aparajita Singh who led the team of teachers who worked hard and succeeded in securing the top position in India.



DM Priyanka Niranjani reviewing the progress in works at the Collectorate on Monday

related to National Health Mission she was informed that out of 67 Arogya centres, 64 have been completed out of which a letter has been sent to the department concerned for taking over building of 22 centres. The work of one centre was under progress while the budget of two centres was to be sent back due to non-availability of the land. The DM issued strict instruction to the working agency related to engi-

ed by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS and joint magistrate Alok Prasad.

FUNCTION: Union Minister State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel while addressing the inaugural function of a project carried out by the Nagar Palika Parishad Mirzapur on Monday said the government is performing very well for every section of life. She appreciated the

than 300 poles were erected in the outskirts of the city from Baraundha to Ojhala bridge which is one of the routes to Vindhachal. He said the poles were equipped with LED bulbs which will illuminate the entire road. The programme started with prayers by the minister amidst the chanting of Vedic shlokas. MLA Ratnakar Mishra, corporators and others were present.

WORKSHOP: MLC and

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Murder without killer

Nithari killing prime suspects win relief, justice for kin families goes abegging

This has become an intermittent habit with our justice delivery system, our judicial system and us as society. From Jessica to Arushi to now at least 19 underprivileged kids in the Nithari are of the NCR, there have been murders most foul discovered, but our learned courts at last tell us that the investigation does not prove that the suspects/accused did it. So they are let off with a rap on the knuckles. The investigators ---- transferred, promoted, retired or dead ---- face no accountability either. That seems to be the bane that has come to revisit us in the form of Allahabad HC's shocking decision on the Nithari murder accused, domestic help Surinder Koli and his master Moninder Singh Pandher. The incident, reported from Noida in 2005-06, took years for the horrifying details to come out. The Nithari murders were especially gruesome as they involved killing innocent children in cold blood; several dead bodies were recovered from a nearby drain. Many bodies had internal organs removed, hinting also at an organised organ racket. But a botched-up investigation along with loopholes in the judicial system made sure that the perpetrators could go scot-free. Though Koli and Pandher were found guilty in 2009, the High Court has recently overturned the guilty verdict ostensibly because of lack of evidence and the testimony of alleged witnesses.



In the annals of Indian criminal history, the Nithari serial killings stand as a chilling testament to the depths of human depravity. The case shocked the nation as young women and children fell victim to unimaginable brutality. The Nithari killings were a series of abductions, sexual assaults and murders. The victims disappeared without a trace, leaving their families in anguish and despair. As investigations progressed, the police unearthed gruesome evidence at the residence of Pandher and Koli. The house was a charnel house, revealing the ghastly remains of several missing persons. The CBI recovered many bodies and body parts from the nearby drain and it was thought that the case was foolproof against the prime suspects. But turns out that the scales of the blindfolded lady do not tilt equally for the influential and the underprivileged. Most victims were migrants from UP and Bihar, living on day's earnings and thus hardly had any say in the system or resources to pursue the case. The Nithari case is emblematic of the slow, convoluted and frustrating Indian justice system. The Nithari case is not just a local tragedy but a national shame. It epitomises the systemic issues that afflict India's criminal justice system, including lack of accountability, shortage of forensic resources and the inordinate delay in adjudication. It calls for immediate and comprehensive reforms within the Indian criminal justice system. Only then we can hope to prevent the travesty of justice from being repeated. This decision to acquit the prime suspects should stir society's collective conscience. If it does not, we are all as good as dead.

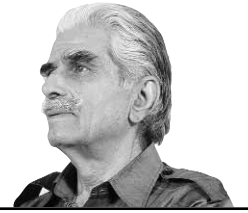
appeared without a trace, leaving their families in anguish and despair. As investigations progressed, the police unearthed gruesome evidence at the residence of Pandher and Koli. The house was a charnel house, revealing the ghastly remains of several missing persons. The CBI recovered many bodies and body parts from the nearby drain and it was thought that the case was foolproof against the prime suspects. But turns out that the scales of the blindfolded lady do not tilt equally for the influential and the underprivileged. Most victims were migrants from UP and Bihar, living on day's earnings and thus hardly had any say in the system or resources to pursue the case. The Nithari case is emblematic of the slow, convoluted and frustrating Indian justice system. The Nithari case is not just a local tragedy but a national shame. It epitomises the systemic issues that afflict India's criminal justice system, including lack of accountability, shortage of forensic resources and the inordinate delay in adjudication. It calls for immediate and comprehensive reforms within the Indian criminal justice system. Only then we can hope to prevent the travesty of justice from being repeated. This decision to acquit the prime suspects should stir society's collective conscience. If it does not, we are all as good as dead.

PICTALK



Artisans prepare effigies of demon King Ravana ahead of the Dussehra festival, in Rampur

Hamas's resolve may survive IDF onslaught



ASHOK K MEHTA

Hamas pulled off Pearl Harbour and 9/11 combined, on October 7, which shows its mettle and motivation. Annihilating it will not be easy for Israeli Defence Forces

On this page last week, a colleague expressed misgivings about the Israeli Defence Forces' (IDF) resilience and wondered if the steel was blunted. No one has ever doubted the will, fighting prowess and potential of Israelis given their history of conflict, survival and incredible prosperity. Israel has almost similar experience in its conflicted history as our own: war on creation in 1948, a second bigger round in 1956 and full-fledged regional wars in 1967 and 1973.

IDF, like now, was caught with its pants down when Egyptians executed a cross-Suez offensive that hesitated allowing the counter-Canal riposte led by Ariel Sharon's Centurion Tank division and Squadron and Troop leaders like Chaim Erez and Benny Taran. In the 1973 war on the Syrian front, the hero was Avigdor Kahalani who later became Mayor of Tel Aviv and Minister of National Security. His book Heights of Courage is a prescribed reading for the Israeli military. He was worshipped by Armoured Corps officers who used to take a second oath near Mount Hermon on Golan Heights where a UN Indian Mechanised force is currently located.

And who will not remember Moshe Dayan, the toast of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and Commander of Jerusalem Front? He became a legend: his eyepatch was replaced with the Jaffa orange in an ad proclaiming The Best. I was privileged to know Kahalani, Erez and Taran, all Armoured Corps, the sword in desert terrain. With the last two, we spent year-long training and friendship at Fort Leavenworth, US and Belgravia, UK. I visited Israel before India formally recognized it in January 1992. That travel is etched as the journey that commenced in Cairo where the Yom Kippur War was conceived. The taxi was driven by a retired Artillery Lieutenant Colonel from the Egyptian Army. We crossed the Suez and drove through Sinai still littered with debris from the 1967 and 1973 wars. The drive was punctuated with a vanquished Veteran's narration of victory turned into defeat. In 1991,



Israel had a string of pearls of UN/EU Peacekeeping Forces. Most are still there - Lebanon, Syria and Jerusalem. Before entering Israel on the border with Egypt, we were welcomed by Lt Gen Johannes Van Ginkle, the Dutch Force Commander of the EU PeaceKeepers. He like I was an Erez admirer who we were going to meet after nearly 20 years since Fort Leavenworth. Since then, I have been in Israel more than a dozen times including attending uninterrupted since 2010, the annual International Institute of Counter Terrorism conference in Herzilya till COVID paused it. So, I think I know the IDF pretty well. For anyone doubting its combat strength is a strategic error. Israel has signed peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt and the Oslo Accord in 1993. The most recent is the Abrams Accord which hopes to improve Israel's relations with Arab states. Except with Iran, Syria and Lebanon, there is peace including efforts to mend ties with Saudi Arabia. Since 1973, no Arab country has challenged de facto nuclear Israel. Tel Aviv is fighting internal wars against non-state actors Hezbollah in Lebanon, Islamic Jihad and Hamas which has been mis-governed since 2007 Gaza is the periodic source of Hamas rocketry against Israel.



ISRAEL HAS SIGNED PEACE TREATIES WITH JORDAN AND EGYPT AND THE OSLO ACCORD IN 1993. THE MOST RECENT IS THE ABRAMS ACCORD WHICH HOPES TO IMPROVE ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH ARAB STATES

The West Bank, which was infiltrated by Islamic State last year, has opened a third front for the IDF where more than 300 Palestinians and 50 Israelis have been killed this year. But Hezbollah appears to be only shadowboxing. Iran is external enemy no 1. Both Iran and Israel have vowed to destroy each other and do not recognize the other's right to exist. Iran backs Syria, Lebanon and Gaza. Hamas has a stockpile of 130,000 rockets and missiles. It was only in 2012 that their accuracy improved and Israel decry the Iron Dome whose launch I witnessed. It is an expensive antidote to missiles but can distinguish which missile will hit populated areas. Its discrimination capacity makes it valuable. The current ground offensive against Hamas will be the fifth large-scale operation with the first launched in 2008 after Hamas took control of Gaza. Similarly, Israel has invaded Lebanon thrice - in 1978, 1982 and 2006. IDF has failed to deter Hamas and diminish Hezbollah. Its punitive strikes only degrade capability till their next rocket attack. This time IDF is tasked to permanently destroy Hamas and rescue the 199 hostages hidden in an underground web of tunnels. This cordon and search operation can take months and become an abattoir. Taran says the

operation is not the reoccupation of Gaza. Israel is known to have exchanged 1,200 Palestinian prisoners for one soldier. Iran says Hamas will release hostages if air attacks cease. Ultimately the safety of hostages will constrain operations with IDF fighting on enemy terrain. Hamas's daring incursion into Israel is a brilliant strategy but the barbarity and brutality of tactics shaming Chengis Khan. Hamas achieved total surprise and horrendous gains. This time they did 9/11 and Pearl Harbour combined, inflicting on Israel their highest losses since the Yom Kippur war. It has already become the world's largest man-made humanitarian catastrophe that you and I watch on TV. But no one can stop the mauled Israelis from retaliation and the IDF from wreaking retribution by reducing Gaza to the stone age. Fingers crossed the Gaza Front does not spark Lebanon and the West Bank. IDF may destroy Hamas's capability to fight; but not its will to fight another day. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SWINE FEVER OUTBREAK IN MANIPUR

Sir—The Manipur's Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department has confirmed an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the state, with the Pig Farm of the Central Agriculture University (CAU) in Imphal West District declared as the 'epicenter' of this contagious disease. Measures have been taken to prevent, control, and eradicate the infectious disease, including prohibiting the movement of pigs from the affected areas.

Reports indicate that ASF might have been introduced through pigs or pork from neighboring countries like Myanmar and Bangladesh. The outbreak has already caused significant damage to the region's pork industry, affecting thousands of families and causing financial losses. The northeastern region's annual pork business is substantial, and this outbreak poses a severe threat to the livelihoods of many. **Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai**

IN BAD TASTE

Sir—MakeMyTrip's recent advertisement, aimed at Pakistan cricket fans during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, has faced backlash for its lack of sensitivity. The ad begins with an "Open Invitation to Pakistani Fans," encouraging them to put aside rivalries when visiting India. It goes on to offer discounts based on Pakistan's performance: a 50% discount if they lose by 10 wickets or 200 runs, with the code "BoysPlayedWell"; a 30% discount for a 6-wicket or 100-run loss, using the code "EkShaheenHaar"; and a 10% discount for a 3-wicket or 50-run loss with the code "NoMaukaMauka." India has a historical record of victories over Pakistan in World Cup matches, having won in 1992, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2015, and 2019. Nevertheless, the ad has faced criticism for its tone and the way it ridicules the Pakistani team. **Manzur Hasan | Howrah**



Two distinct eras

The four decades before and after 1990 mark two distinct eras in India, accompanied by differing social and economic philosophies. The 1950s represented a shift from agricultural deficiencies, with the Green Revolution transforming India from a nation living hand-to-mouth to a self-sufficient one. The Nehruite philosophy emphasized technology, economic growth, and progress, leading to the

establishment of the first IIT before the nation's first general elections. The present day reflects a thriving middle-class that emerged from this transformation and ushered in the era of aspirational India. While the 1990s witnessed economic liberalisation, the current leadership is focused on leveraging India's political and economic standing. This progress has, however, led to social strain and disproportionate wealth distribution, exacerbated by jobless growth from disruptive technologies. The next generation of leaders faces the challenge of optimising multiple factors, using technology to promote inclusiveness and bridge socio-political divides. This requires statesmen with vision and foresight, and it's essential to trust in India's ability to produce such leadership through the electoral process. **R Narayanan | Mumbai**

CHECK ELECTION SOPS

Sir—Election dates have been announced for five states. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar has pointed out that freebies offered by political parties have a "tadka" of populism, and voters have every right to ask the parties how they intend to fulfill these promises if elected to power. He is correct, and the promises made by these parties are often extravagant, unrealistic, and outright absurd. However, these promises are still made because there are certain sections of society that are susceptible to such grandiose assurances. As long as there are segments of the population ready to be exploited, there will be political parties willing to offer free rations, direct money transfers to women's accounts, monthly cash incentives for women, free electricity up to a certain unit consumption, specific annual allocations of free

gas cylinders, and the list goes on. It appears that the Election Commission (EC) can do little to curb this practice. So, who else can put an end to this unsavory practice? The courts, of course. Politicians find courts easy to approach and convenient to evade the issue, which would otherwise be their own responsibility. The Supreme Court had, on a previous occasion, criticized the "freebie culture," noting that offering freebies disrupts the level playing field in an election, with the party making such promises standing to gain. The Supreme Court suggested the formation of a committee of experts to address this issue. Indeed the country must decide a policy on freebies that are offered by the political parties so that there is no confusion on the issue. **Ganapathi Bhat | Akola**

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Development census serves our goals better

A census on the educational and professional profiles of citizens would help the government devise policies to plug in gaps that impede our development



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

Even though scientifically we are one species of Homo sapiens, human beings continue to show discrimination based on religion, race and caste. It's a shame for our country in particular and humanity as a whole when people kill each other in the name of caste, religion and race in different parts of the country. Most of the so-called developed countries have reached the level that we see today as they were able to do away with this social mischief. Unfortunately, in our country caste is a dominating player in our social set-up. To preserve the dignity of one's caste even parents are killing their children who try to move away from the clutches of caste rules. People make relationships, friendships and even helping hands based on caste factors.



However, the colonial British rule, as part of their policy of divide and rule, reinstated the social divisions. They introduced census operations that classified people into various castes and communities. This had the effect of reinforcing existing social divisions. The great spiritual philosopher from Kerala Sree Narayana Guru advised people to follow the "one caste, one religion, one god" philosophy for the betterment of humanity. Unfortunately, even in his home state, no one is following this in true spirit. The Christian missionaries who converted native people on the belief that Christianity does not follow a caste system and gives respect to everyone are also bereft of a culture of oneness. Few Christian sects in Kerala are more fanatic than any other community in

the country. It seems that caste is a deeply ingrained aspect of Indian society, its reflection can be seen in every religious group in the country. Even after 75 years of independence despite efforts to dismantle the formal caste system through legal means, caste-based discrimination and social stratification continue to be significant challenges in contemporary India. It is at this juncture, that the demand by the opposition parties in "INDIA" pushing for a nationwide caste census comes as a retrogressive step. What do our political parties expect from this? Do they want to reinstate the caste sentiments in the mindset of our youngsters? Are they promoting the historical wrongs our predecessors have done and want our youngsters to fight against one another along caste lines? Are they not interested in seeing our country as a developed nation? Politicians should not play petty electoral politics by fooling people. What is the ultimate objective of pushing for a caste census? If it is for the upliftment of a community/ caste by providing reser-

ervations, previous experience shows that it has failed miserably as the community that receives reservations remains backwards even today. What is the use of giving reservations to the children of government servants based on caste lines? Government support can be provided for one generation for their upliftment. There is no meaning in providing reservations to the next generation, as these people have been lifted from the marginalized category. Many communities that had been the dominant earlier are becoming marginalized now. Irrespective of caste, governments should support every citizen who is marginalized based on their financial status. Instead of a caste-based census, our political parties should take steps to conduct a census on the educational profile and professional profiles of citizens. This can help devise policy measures to identify gaps that impede our development. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, views are personal)

FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL LITERACY IS A MUST

Our real enemies are not our rivals but suspicion, fear, hatred and violence



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ

It's a proven fact today that disharmony in human relations gives rise to not only wars but to almost all other problems directly or indirectly related to us. The phenomenon of split in families, the rising number of cases of divorces, and even most of the psycho-somatic diseases which are caused by stress or mental tension are due to disharmony in human relations only and nothing else. In the past few days, we all have witnessed how extreme conflict between 2 countries over a border issue resulted in a mass exodus of people from their homeland as well as deaths of innocent people in massive bombings during night time. Hence one cannot deny the fact that the forces that are leading to the disintegration of nations, communities and political parties crop up primarily from disharmony. Most problems of law & order and even the commotions and disturbances in major Legislatures also are due to disharmony in relations between political parties or various linguistic groups, religious communities, etc. It is, thus, very much essential to find a solution to eliminate this problem lest it will eliminate us. But what is the way out? How does one move ahead? Well!! It is quite clear from some of the examples that have been given of the world-events that these problems are mainly the creations of our minds, our attitudes and our negative thinking. Hence, to create harmony, we need to first of all disarm our minds to dismantle the forces of disharmony. It is estimated that world over approximately two trillion dollars are spent every year by various countries on what is called 'Defence' or 'Security' and yet it's quite surprising that insecurity is increasing rather than decreasing. What's more saddening is that all the diversion of resources to war purposes deprives the poorer sections of society of the help that they need or deserve. In this respect, it is essential to redefine security and to break the link between security and military force. We need to understand that our security lies not in an armed state of readiness for war but in friendliness, love and peace with others.



Our real enemies are not men and women but suspicion, fear, hatred, violence and feeling of revenge and these enemies cannot be eliminated by military means. It has, therefore, rightly been said in the Gita: 'Arjuna, the soul is its own best friend and it is its own worst enemy'. A deep study of the history of human civilization would reveal that presently, there are prevalent certain wrong beliefs that have led us to this kind of a negative culture, negative lifestyle and negative attitudes, one of these wrong beliefs is that there has always been disharmony in the world and there was no time in the history of mankind when there was total harmony. If that were so, then why today do we have a greater number of wars that are more devastating and which result in mass killings? Why are we today inventing more and more deadly weapons? It shows that there was a time in the distant past when there were less and less wars and there was also the earliest era which was free from all kinds of disharmony. Thus, there must have been a time when the world population was small, the environment was clean and there were no wars and people lived in amity and peace. Such an era was known as the Golden Age. That was the time when there was Universal Harmony. It is that new world which we wish to usher in again. And, we want those attitudes and that thinking which can restore harmony in human relations. So, how can we bring about that change? It's very simple, for that we need to realize that most of our problems arise from our spiritual illiteracy which has to be eradicated. If, therefore, we can get rid of this kind of illiteracy and have a new lease of consciousness beyond war and enmity, then we can open to a new paradise, otherwise, we will end in eternal darkness.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

State doles can put discoms at risk



UTTAM GUPTA

Discoms will be profitable only when they are unshackled from state controls and electricity distribution is deregulated



Even as the Central government is making all-out efforts to remove the financial distress of power distribution companies or discoms (situated at the core of the power supply chain, they procure electricity from power generating companies or genscos and distribute it to the consumers) and restore them to robust health, actions of the state governments undermine these efforts. The financial distress of discoms arises fundamentally due to their inability to generate enough revenue to pay for the electricity they buy. For over two decades, they have been incurring losses year after year. They have funded these losses by borrowings from banks and other FIs apart from keeping bills pending. At the end of FY 2021-22, their total debt was Rs 620,000 crore. Discoms' inability to generate required revenue has to do primarily with two factors viz. aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses - a jargon for power theft - and shortfall in the average revenue realisation from the sale of electricity vis-a-vis the average cost of supply (cost of purchase, wheeling and distribution), or the ACS-ARR gap. During 2020-21, AT&C losses were 22.32 percent while the ACS-ARR gap was Rs 0.54 per kWh. Both maladies arise due to constant meddling in the running of discoms by their owners namely the state governments. Power theft on such a massive scale is unthinkable without the complicity of the political establishment. People living in slum settlements/jhuggi clusters being a big vote bank, the party in power encourages unauthorized connections to enable their access to free power. As for the second malady, the political brass orders discoms to sell a major slice of electricity to households (HHs) and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of supply or even free (the state electricity regulatory commissions or SERCs which are mandated to fix tariff merely act as rubber stamps). Even as the state government promises to reimburse the differential amount to discoms, most states don't reimburse or do it partially and after considerable delay.



REPORTEDLY, MORE THAN 100,000 METERS HAVE BEEN BIFURCATED OR TRIFURCATED ENABLING EVEN HIGH-END CONSUMERS TO AVAIL OF THE FREE BONANZA

(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)

Given nearly a quarter of the revenue lost due to power theft and a substantial amount in subsidies remaining unpaid, the financial stress of discoms is inevitable. The politics of freebies now deeply entrenched in the system has exacerbated the already grim situation. Let us look at the developments in Punjab. Last year, amongst a host of freebies promised by AAP the most prominent was free electricity to households (HHs) for consumption up to 300 units per month. Going by sheer common sense, the State should give help only to those HHs who can't afford to pay cost-based tariffs. The way to go is to identify households whose income is below a threshold. AAP hasn't gone by this. Could it be presumed that only low-income HHs have consumption of fewer than 300 units? So, in essence, the assistance reaches only to those who can't afford it. A closer scrutiny would reveal that the approach adopted by the AAP government is mischievous. Its real intent was to give the dole to 'all and sundry'. If a household consumes less than 300 units a month, it doesn't necessarily follow that it is a family with low income. For instance, there would be umpteen number of well-off/high-income old-age couples living alone who consume less than 300 units a month. Even for others, who consume more than this threshold, we see a dastardly trend of consumers applying for multiple connections within the same HH. For instance, a household consuming 900 units a month, gets three meters installed to keep consumption of each under 300 units thereby ensuring zero bill. Reportedly, more than 100,000 meters have been bifurcated or trifurcated enabling even high-end consumers to avail of the free bonanza. As a consequence, cur-

rently almost over 95 per cent of power consumers in Punjab avail of subsidies. The swelling number of connections has increased the subsidy by Rs 125 crore per month on average. As a result, the total domestic subsidy for the current FY is now expected to be Rs 8,813 crore - Rs 1,500 crore higher than the initial estimate of Rs 7,313 crore. In Delhi, where there is no charge for HHs consuming up to 200 units (HHs consuming between 200 and 400 units get a deduction of Rs 800 from their bill), the possibility of the majority of households availing of access to electricity - free of any charge - is not ruled out. The situation in other states won't be different. Given almost the entire population of the State - including the rich, millionaires, billionaires and so on, getting to enjoy the free bonanza, the burden of power subsidy is bound to gallop. Faced with budget constraints, the states will take increasing recourse to underpayment and delayed reimbursement of subsidy dues to discoms. Meanwhile, the Centre is dealing with discoms under a two-pronged strategy (i) forcing them to make timely payments and (ii) helping them cut AT&C losses and reduce the ACS-ARR gap. Under (i), implemented late payment surcharge (LPS) and related matters Rules, in 2022. The LPS rules made it mandatory for discoms to clear their legacy dues as existing on June 3, 2022, in a time-bound manner in 12 equal monthly instalments (EMI) with the benefit of non-applicability of the LPS after its implementation date. The same rules are also provided for time-bound clearance of current dues failing, which will attract a power supply cut. The pressure tactics have worked. The legacy dues of all stakeholders in the electricity supply chain viz.

power generating companies (genscos) and transmission companies (transcos) from discoms decreased from Rs 1,39,747 crore in June 2022 to Rs 69,957 crore in July 2023. Faced with the threat of LPS, the latter could have used loans taken from PFC and REC (out of Rs 130,000 crore sanctioned under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan') to make payments to the former. As for (ii), under the 'Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution' (RLRBSD) launched in July 2021, the Centre has undertaken a massive investment of Rs 300,000 crore to improve the reliability and quality of the power supply and enhance the efficiency of discoms. It has compulsory pre-paid and smart metering components to be implemented across the power supply chain, including in about 250 million households. The Scheme has yielded results. The AT&C losses of discoms have gone down from 22.32 per cent during 2020-21 to 13.5 per cent during 2022-23. The ACS-ARR gap has also reduced from Rs 0.54 per kWh during 2020-21 to Rs 0.15 per kWh in 2022-23. A 9 per cent cut in AT&C losses is a stupendous achievement. It seems that pre-paid and smart meters have been installed, and power theft is almost eliminated. The Centre is keen that the ACS-ARR gap should be reduced to 'zero' by March 2025. This will require making power theft 'nil' and timely recovery of all subsidy dues from the States. But, this won't be possible if states continue with business as usual; it could even lead to erosion of the gains made in 2022-23. Modi's efforts would deliver only when (a) discoms are unshackled from state controls; (b) States give subsidies directly to the beneficiaries and (c) electricity distribution is deregulated.

The Israel-Hamas war: Where does India stand?

India's diplomatic stance, which supports a two-state solution, may necessitate a revision in light of the evolving dynamics of the conflict

When the global economy is reeling under the crisis, the current geopolitical crisis in the Middle East has doubly heightened the level of inflation. This crisis emerged following the unexpected offensive launched by the Hamas against Israel, which subsequently led to Israel declaring war. Since Israel is a significant trading partner for India, the effects could be escalating. With sheer surprise, the week-end's unexpected strike by Hamas on Israel has triggered a huge armed war in the Middle East. More than 2300 people have been killed in the fighting so far, and hundreds more have been held prisoners. Israeli Prime Minister has warned of a harsh response, so the situation is unlikely to



UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

(Chakraborty is HoD-Digital Marketing and associate professor at the School of Management, Presidency University, Bangalore; views are personal)

improve very soon. In this context, India, one of Israel's oldest and greatest allies, has expressed its support for the Jewish state and has pledged to assist in the time of crisis. India's Prime Minister has timely expressed shock and condemnation of the terror incident. Inflation throughout the world is possible if the terror attack and retaliation between Israel and Palestine escalate into a full-scale war. This might be economically comparable to the beginning of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. **Consequences on India's Trading** At present, Israel is India's third-largest Asian trading partner and India's 10th-largest trade partner globally. Military trade between India

and Israel is valued at approximately Rs 74,000 crore, making it the second largest supplier of military equipment to India after Russia. India's goods exports to Israel constitute 1.8% of India's overall exports, mostly driven by the sale of petroleum products. Israel imports between \$5.5 to 6 billion worth of refined petroleum products from India. During the fiscal year 2023, the aggregate value of India's exports to Israel amounted to \$8.4 billion. Hence, there exists a significant likelihood of rupee devaluation, necessitating intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In such a scenario, the currency range is expected to increase to the 783-84 bracket. In contrast, India engages in the importation of equip-

ment, pearls, diamonds, and other valuable gemstones, including both precious and semi-precious varieties, from Israel. Israel's primary exports to India are the essential materials and machinery used in India's major industries and factories, such as precious stones and metals, electronic equipment, fertilisers, machines, engines, pumps, medical and technical equipment, organic and inorganic chemicals, salt, sulphur, stone, cement, and plastics. Currently, Israel exports items and equipment to India valued at more than \$3 billion. If bilateral commerce between the two nations is halted due to the terror strikes and the conflict, India might miss out on commodities worth Rs 25,000

crore, resulting in a surge in the prices of several common household items. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has caused a sense of unease in financial markets worldwide, leading investors to redirect their investments towards safe-haven assets. Investors maintain a cautious stance and exhibit vigilance in response to global developments, as a risk-averse mentality pervades the market. Investors may tend to exercise caution when considering high-risk ventures. **Indian stock market** Last week, the Indian stock market had a notable decline, along with the performance of other global stock indexes. This decline was influenced by the unexpected multifaceted assault carried out by the ter-

rorist group Hamas, involving land, air, and sea operations, resulting in the loss of more than 1,000 lives in Israel. The aforementioned trend has resulted in an escalation of geopolitical tensions, accompanied by an increase in crude oil prices and heightened volatility in global stock markets. **Only predictions** There are only predictions with conclusions. The right-wing politics in Israel and Palestine exhibit a disinclination towards embracing compromise. This hinders the process of negotiation. India's diplomatic stance, which supports a two-state solution, may necessitate a revision in light of the evolving dynamics of the conflict. Indian citizens stuck in Israel may need to be

evacuated as quickly as possible to avert loss of lives. The Indian diaspora residing in these nations may also experience repercussions in their life. In the context of the broader Israel-Palestine conflict, India has always advocated for a peaceful resolution that upholds the rights of all involved parties. The persistent war has resulted in heightened geopolitical tensions. The attainment of a peaceful resolution of the issue necessitates the collaborative endeavours of the global community. A balanced approach is of utmost importance, as it not only facilitates the cultivation of positive ties with Arab nations but also ensures a productive and meaningful interaction with them.

Belgian cops shoot suspect accused of killing two Swedes

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Police on Tuesday shot dead a suspected Tunisian extremist accused of gunning down two Swedish soccer fans in a brazen assault on a Brussels street that sent shockwaves through Belgium and Sweden. Hours after the suspect disappeared into the night and a manhunt was launched in the Belgian capital, Interior Minister Annelies Verhulst posted on X, formerly Twitter, that "the perpetrator of the terrorist attack in Brussels has been identified and has died."

She thanked Belgium's intelligence and security services, as well as prosecutors, "for their swift and decisive action." The man was shot in the Schaarbeek neighbourhood near where the rampage took place. The weapon used in the assault was recovered.

Amateur videos posted on social media of Monday's attack showed a man wearing an orange fluorescent vest pull up on a scooter, take out a large weapon and open fire on people getting out of a taxi.

He chased them into a building to gun them down. He was also filmed calmly loading his weapon as cars drove slowly by.

Questions remain unanswered over how a man who was on police files, thought to be radicalised and being sought for deportation was able to obtain a military weapon and launch such an attack.

"Last night, three people left for what was supposed to be a wonderful soccer party. Two of them lost their lives in a brutal terrorist attack," Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said at a news conference just before dawn. "Their lives were cut short in full flight, cut down by extreme brutality."

"The attack that was launched yesterday was committed with total cowardice," he said. Security was beefed up in

Brussels, particularly around places linked to the Swedish community, and at Belgium's southern border with France.

Not far from the scene of the shooting, the Belgium-Sweden soccer match in the national stadium was suspended at halftime and over 35,000 fans were kept inside as a precaution while the attacker was at large.

Caroline Lochs, a fan from Antwerp, said the alarm left her feeling "frustrated, confused, scared. I think everyone was quite scared."

At a news conference in Stockholm, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said that "everything indicates this is a terrorist attack against Sweden and Swedish citizens, just because they are Swedish."

He said the suspect had occasionally stayed in Sweden but was not on police files there.

"It's not an unusual pattern to move around," Kristersson added. "We have an openness in Europe, which is one of the important reasons why we need to keep an eye on the EU's external border because otherwise people can easily move between European countries."

Kristersson has been invited to Brussels to mourn the victims and pay tribute to the work of police at a commemoration ceremony on Wednesday, De Croo announced on X, saying: "We wish the people of Sweden strength and courage to get through these difficult times."

Sweden's foreign ministry said the two fatalities were men aged in their sixties and seventies. A third man, also in his seventies, was wounded and remains in hospital.

De Croo said the assailant was a Tunisian man living illegally in Belgium who used a military weapon in the attack. Federal prosecutors said later that the suspect was found after a witness spotted him in a Schaarbeek cafe.

EU leaders seek harmony at virtual summit

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union leaders are trying to overcome the cacophony of different opinions and voices over the Israel-Hamas war into one single political hymn in an attempt to have a bigger diplomatic impact on the global stage.

Even if their summit on Tuesday is by virtual video conferencing only, the attack in Brussels that left two Swedes dead last night further underscored the need to show a unified stance in the face of common threats.

Ever since the attack of Hamas on Israel on October 7, the EU has shown it is a group of 27 different nations and even their common institutions have sent out different messages, sowing confusion about the bloc's intentions and reaping international criticism.

Many member states feel that EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen overstepped her authority by visiting Israel on Friday without a pre-agreed political message and then toed what many saw as an excessively pro-Israeli line.

"Foreign and security policy remains a responsibility of the member states," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Tuesday ahead of the virtual summit. Von der Leyen's executive Commission maintains she is free to travel as she wants and express solidarity with a nation in need as she pleases, and will do so again if need be. Still, the unease was compounded because, for some, an EU insistence that Israel respect international law in its fight against Hamas was not expressed explicitly enough by von der Leyen.

"The position is clear: Israel has the right to defense, but this defense has to be developed in compliance with international laws and in particular humanitarian laws - because war also has its laws," Borrell said.

He insisted that it would be the main common message coming out of the summit.

On Tuesday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz travelled to Israel for an impromptu visit. French President Emmanuel Macron said that he will travel to the region "as soon as I consider that we have a useful agenda and very concrete actions to drive forward."

Few other international crises divide the bloc like the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Just last week in the wake of the Hamas attack, a commissioner at the bloc's executive branch announced that development aid meant to help the Palestinian Authority reduce poverty would be immediately suspended. Hours later, the European Commission's position changed. It announced an urgent review of the assistance to ensure that no money is being misused. Since it is listed by the EU as a terror group, Hamas does not receive any such funds anyway.

Then on Saturday, the commission said it was tripling humanitarian aid to Gaza - money meant to be used in times of crises or disasters.

Macron, a key player in Tuesday's summit, said that beyond supporting Israel's right to defend itself, he also has been able "to pass on warning messages calling for respect for humanitarian law, international law and civilian populations in Gaza and the West Bank, and for non-escalation of the conflict in Lebanon."

"We remain extremely vigilant and committed," he added.

EU Council President Charles Michel said in announcing the summit that "the conflict could have major security consequences for our societies." He said that the leaders would look at ways to help civilians in Israel and Gaza caught up in the war and to work with other countries in the Middle East and Persian Gulf regions to try to prevent the conflict from spreading.



In this photo released by an official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks in a meeting in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday. Khamenei warned that Israel's continuing offensive in Gaza would cause a violent reaction across the region.

MOTHER OF ISRAELI WOMAN HELD BY HAMAS APPEALS FOR HER RELEASE

Jerusalem (AP) - The mother of a young Israeli woman held by Hamas appealed for her release on Tuesday, calling the seizure of some 200 hostages by the Palestinian militant group "a crime against humanity." A day earlier, Hamas' military wing released a video showing a dazed Mia Schem, 21, having her arm wrapped with bandages. It was the first sign of life from any of the hostages since Gaza-based gunmen smashed through border fortifications on October 7, killing more than 1,400 people in Israel. "I didn't know if she's dead or alive until yesterday," her mother, Keren Schem, said at a news conference. "All I knew is that she might be kidnapped. I'm begging the world to bring my baby back home. She only went to a party, to a festival party to have some fun. Now she's in Gaza." Mia Schem was seized at a desert rave just over the border from Gaza that became the site of what is believed to be the worst civilian massacre in Israeli history.

Medics in Gaza struggle to save lives

AP ■ GAZA CITY

For hours and hours, Moen Abu Aish digs through the rubble of demolished homes to find survivors of Israeli airstrikes, toiling in a vast and desperate search complicated by the shortage of critical supplies and the sheer scope of destruction across the Gaza Strip.

Even as rescue worker Abu Aish, 58, and his colleagues struggle to pry lifeless bodies from the concrete and twisted metal where residential towers once stood, the death toll keeps rising.

Gaza's Health Ministry has reported that Israel's bombardment - launched after Hamas mounted a bloody, unprecedented attack on Israel on Oct 7 - has killed more than 2,700 Palestinians, many of them women and children.

But far more Palestinians have been killed than have been officially reported, with 1,200 people, among them around 500 minors, believed to be trapped under the rubble awaiting rescue, or recovery,



Health authorities said they based their estimates on distress calls they received.

"So many times medics say they hear victims scream, but they cannot do anything about it," said Mohammed Abu Selmia, general director of Shifa Hospital, Gaza's biggest medical centre. The untold scores of victims buried beneath destroyed buildings shed light on the struggles of rescue teams in Gaza trying to save lives, while cut off from the internet and mobile networks, running out of fuel and exposed to unceasing

health authorities said. They based their estimates on distress calls they received. "So many times medics say they hear victims scream, but they cannot do anything about it," said Mohammed Abu Selmia, general director of Shifa Hospital, Gaza's biggest medical centre. The untold scores of victims buried beneath destroyed buildings shed light on the struggles of rescue teams in Gaza trying to save lives, while cut off from the internet and mobile networks, running out of fuel and exposed to unceasing

Palestinian Civil Defence, which provides emergency service, his voice cracking as he fought back tears.

"Where are the Arab countries? Where is the rest of the world? We are begging you, please, save us from this madness."

At dawn Monday, Israeli warplanes struck the headquarters of the Civil Defense in Gaza City, killing seven paramedics as they prepared for a rescue mission, the Interior Ministry said. In widely shared videos of the aftermath, medics, shellshocked and exhausted, crouched on the back of their blood-smeared ambulance with their heads in their hands. "They targeted a centre for ambulances," one of them cried out, his voice frantic.

"There are no weapons. There are no militants. There is nothing, nothing but civilians." The Israeli military didn't immediately comment on the airstrike, but has alleged in the past that Hamas militants use hospitals and rescue services as protective cover.

'Alleged attacker in French school stabbing declared allegiance to IS'



Paris: France's anti-terror prosecutor said Tuesday a suspected Islamic extremist declared allegiance to the Islamic State group before fatally stabbing a teacher in school attack last week.

The prosecutor, Jean-Francois Ricard, said, in a press conference, an audio recording was found by police investigators in the suspect's phone. In it, the alleged attacker declared allegiance to the Islamic State and expressed "his hatred of France."

Ricard took no questions. A teacher was fatally stabbed in the neck and three other people injured in the school attack Friday in the northern town of Arras. AP

Legal challenge to dethrone Zulu king heads to court

Johannesburg (AP) - The battle for the throne of South Africa's ethnic Zulu nation has reached the courts as a faction of the royal family seeks to dethrone the king after less than a year. The North Gauteng High Court in the capital Pretoria is hearing legal arguments this week in the royal succession battle between King Misuzulu kaZwelithini and his half-brother, Prince Simakade Zulu, who believes he is entitled to be king. The Zulu nation is the largest ethnic group in South Africa with an estimated 12 million Zulu-speaking people, predominantly in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

They are acknowledged for resisting British colonialism in the early 1800s and the Zulu king is arguably the most influential traditional leader in South Africa. Prince Simakade wants the court to overturn President Cyril Ramaphosa's recognition of King Misuzulu as the rightful heir. He is disputing the traditional and legal processes followed to appoint Misuzulu, and his lawyers have told the

court that Ramaphosa's decision to recognise Misuzulu and grant him the relevant certificate was rushed.

Previous attempts to stop the coronation of the king were unsuccessful last year. Misuzulu ascended to the throne last year after the 2021 death of his father, King Goodwill Zwelithini, who ruled for over 50 years, making him the longest reigning Zulu monarch.

He is the oldest son of King Zwelithini and Queen Mantfombi of the royal house of eSwatini. The late king had six wives and several sons. After the king died last year, Misuzulu's mother served as the regent for just a month before she died, but in her will she named her son to be the next king. Addressing the court on Tuesday, Ramaphosa's lawyer, Marumo Moerane, argued that the president's issuance of the certificate recognising Misuzulu as the heir to the throne followed consultations with the Zulu royal family, which confirmed him as the king.

Polish election winner urges prez to move quickly to form new govt

AP ■ WARSAW

The opposition leader who won Poland's parliamentary election, Donald Tusk, appealed to the nation's president Tuesday for "energetic and fast decisions" so that a new government could be formed quickly.

Three opposition parties that vowed to restore democratic standards in Poland together won over 54 per cent of the votes in the nation's weekend parliamentary election, putting them in a position to take power, according to a complete ballot count reported Tuesday. Poland's constitution now requires President Andrzej Duda to assess the new political alignment of forces and to appoint a new prime minister who is tasked with forming a government that will need parliament's approval, all within a set timeframe.

In a video statement, Tusk appealed to Duda, saying, "I would like to ask for energetic and quick decisions" and stress-



ing that "the winning democratic parties are ready to take over responsibility for governing the country any moment."

"People are waiting for the first decisions that will be the result of the elections" that took place Sunday, Tusk said.

Duda is an ally of the conservative Law and Justice party, which has been in power since 2015. His term runs until 2025.

Law and Justice, which governed the country for eight

turbulent years, won slightly over 35 per cent of the votes, making it the single party with the most votes. But the party and its leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski lost their majority in parliament and appeared to have no way to hold onto power.

Turnout was nearly 75 per cent, the highest since Poland's return to democracy, surpassing even the level of 63 per cent in 1989, a vote that triggered

the collapse of the oppressive Soviet-backed communist system. Law and Justice had been leading the country down an illiberal path, taking control of courts in a manner that violated the country's constitution. The party politicised state institutions, including taxpayer-funded public media which it used as a propaganda tool to praise itself and vilify opponents.

The election result was a huge victory for Tusk, the head of the largest opposition group, Civic Coalition. He appeared likely to return to his past role as Polish prime minister, a job he held from 2007-14. He also served as European Council president, a top job in the EU, from 2014-19.

Tusk's success is all the more remarkable given that state media went into overdrive to portray him as a stooge of Germany and Russia. That portrayal, which appeared baseless, also won him much sympathy.

Greta Thunberg among detained climate activists

London (AP) - Greta Thunberg was detained by British police on Tuesday alongside other climate activists who gathered outside a central London hotel to disrupt a meeting of oil and gas company executives. Thunberg was among dozens of protesters who chanted "only money out" and attempted to block access to the InterContinental Hotel on Park Lane, which is hosting the Energy Intelligence Forum.

The conference is hosting speakers, including the chief executives of Saudi Arabia's Aramco and Norway's Equinor, as well as the UK's energy security minister.

An Associated Press photographer saw Thunberg being led away by officers and taken into a police vehicle, along with about 10 other activists.

Earlier Tuesday, London's Metropolitan Police said five people were arrested on suspicion of obstructing a highway during the protest.

Protesters attempted to block access to the conference venue by sitting on the sidewalk by the entrance. They held aloft banners and chanted "only money out" and "cancel the conference," while some lit yellow and pink smoke flares.

Greenpeace activists absented down from the roof of the hotel to unfurl a banner reading "make big oil pay."

The protesters accuse fossil fuel companies of deliberately slowing the global energy transition to renewables in order to make more profit.

"The world is drowning in fossil fuels. Our hopes and dreams and lives are being washed away by a flood of greenwashing and lies," Thunberg told reporters before she was detained. "It has been clear for decades that the fossil fuel industries were well aware of the consequences of their business models, and yet they have done nothing." "We cannot let this continue. The elite of the oil and money conference, they have no intention of transition," she added.

"We have no other option but to put our bodies outside this conference and to physically disrupt. And we have to do that every time, we have to continue showing them that they are not going to get away with this."

Sikh teen assaulted in NY for wearing turban

New York (PTI) - In a suspected hate crime, a 19-year-old Sikh was assaulted and injured in New York for wearing a turban while travelling in a shuttle bus, the police said.

The attack took place early on Sunday when the Sikh teen was riding a shuttle bus in Queens, a borough of New York City, CBS News channel reported.

According to the police, the suspect approached the victim, asking him to remove his turban and said, "We don't wear that in this country and take that mask off!" The attacker then repeatedly punched the teen in his face, back, and the back of his head, causing minor cuts. He also tried to remove the victim's turban from his head before getting off the bus and leaving the scene on foot, the report said. Police described the suspect as "a male, 25-35 years of age, dark complexion, slim

build, approximately 5'9" tall, with brown eyes and black hair," and sought the public's help to find him.

The New York Police Department hate crime unit is investigating the incident, and the police department is calling it a hate crime assault, NBC New York TV channel reported. No arrests have been made in the case yet. The Messenger news portal reported. The victim, who was not named, refused further medical treatment at the scene, police said in the statement sent to The Messenger. "Right now, the victim is very traumatised," community activist Japneet Singh was quoted as saying by ABC7 television station. "The family is very scared for him," Singh added. Though he refused treatment at the scene, Singh says the victim was injured badly enough that he won't be able to work for the next few days.

Amazon to battle fake reviews

AP ■ NEW YORK

Some of the most used platforms for travel and online shopping said Tuesday they're going to team up to battle fake reviews. Amazon, reviews site Glassdoor and Trustpilot as well as travel companies Expedia Group, Booking.com and Tripadvisor said in an announcement they're launching a coalition that aims to protect access to "trustworthy consumer reviews" worldwide.

The companies said the members of the group, which will be called Coalition for Trusted Reviews, will look for best practices for hosting online reviews and share methods on how to detect fake ones.

That will include developing standards for what constitutes a fake review and sharing information about how bad actors operate.

Phony reviews have long plagued online marketplaces despite their efforts to eradi-

cate it. Much of the problem is fueled by brokers who solicit fake customer reviews through social media platforms, encrypted messaging apps and other channels in exchange for money, free items or other benefits. Brokers can solicit positive reviews to boost sales for businesses or sellers. They can also solicit negative reviews for competitors in order to tank their sales.

Last month, Amazon said two review brokers in China were sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison and three years of probation after using messaging apps to advertise and sell fake reviews to Amazon selling accounts.

The company has filed a flurry of other lawsuits in the past year against operators that it says were doing similar things. Last year, it also sued the administrators of more than 10,000 Facebook groups that it alleged were coordinating bogus reviews in exchange for money or free products.

Facebook groups trading reviews for Google and Trustpilot, which allows users to leave feedback for businesses, were also discovered earlier this year by the British consumer watchdog group "Which?"

Federal regulators have also been aiming to crack down on bogus reviews aiming to deceive consumers. In June, the Federal Trade Commission proposed a new rule that, among other things, would prohibit businesses from selling or obtaining fake reviews, suppressing honest reviews and selling fake social media engagement.

Businesses would also be prohibited from creating or controlling a website that claims to provide independent opinions about its products and employing other practices like "review hijacking," which makes reviews for one product appear like they were written for different ones. If the proposal is adopted, violators can be face penalties.

US updates policies to stop China from getting advanced computer chips

Washington (AP) - The US Commerce Department on Tuesday updated and broadened its export controls to stop China from acquiring advanced computer chips and the equipment to manufacture them.

The revisions come roughly a year after the export controls were first launched to counter the use of the chips for military applications that include the development of hypersonic missiles and artificial intelligence.

"These export controls are intended to protect technologies that have clear national security or human rights implications," Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said on a call with reporters. "The vast majority of semiconductors will remain unrestricted. But

when we identify national security or human rights threats, we will act decisively and in concert with our allies." The updates stemmed from consulting with industry and conducting technological analyses.

There will now be a gray zone that will be monitored for chips that could still be used for military aims even if they might not meet the thresholds for trade limitations. Chip exports can also be restricted to companies headquartered in Macao or anywhere under a US arms embargo, preventing countries of concern from circumventing the controls and providing chips to China.

The updates also introduce new requirements that make it more difficult for China to manufacture advanced chips abroad.

Putin begins China visit

AP ■ TAIPEI

Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Beijing on Tuesday for a visit that underscores China's support for Moscow during its war in Ukraine as well as Russian backing for China's bid to expand its economic and diplomatic influence abroad.

The two countries have forged an informal alliance against the United States and other democratic nations that is now complicated by the Israel-Hamas war. China has sought to balance its ties with Israel against its relations with Iran and Syria, two countries that are strongly backed by Russia and with which China has forged ties for economic reasons as well as to challenge Washington's influence in the Middle East.

Putin's plane was met by an honour guard as the Russian leader began his visit that is also a show of support for Chinese leader Xi Jinping's signature 'Belt and Road' initiative to build infrastructure and expand China's overseas influence. In an interview to

Chinese state media, Putin praised the massive but loosely-linked BRI projects.

"Yes, we see that some people consider it an attempt by the People's Republic of China to put someone under its thumb, but we see otherwise, we just see desire for cooperation," he told state broadcaster CCTV, according to a transcript released by the Kremlin on Monday. Putin will be among the highest profile guests at a gathering marking the 10th anniversary of Xi's announcement of the BRI project, which has laden countries such as Zambia and Sri Lanka with heavy debt from contracts with Chinese companies to build roads, airports and other public works they could not otherwise afford. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has praised the Chinese policy as bringing development to neglected areas.

Asked by reporters Friday about his visit, Putin said it would encompass talks on Belt and Road-related projects, which he said Moscow wants to link with efforts by an

economic alliance of former Soviet Union nations mostly located in Central Asia to "achieve common development goals."

He also downplayed the impact of China's economic influence in a region that Russia has long considered its backyard and where it has worked to maintain political and military clout. "We don't have any contradictions here, on the contrary, there is a certain synergy," Putin said.

Putin said he and Xi would also discuss growing economic ties between Moscow and Beijing in energy, high-tech and financial industries. China has also grown in importance as an export destination for Russia.

Alexander Gabuev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre, said that from China's view, "Russia is a safe neighbour that is friendly, that is a source of cheap raw materials, that's a support for Chinese initiatives on the global stage and that's also a source of military technologies, some of those that China doesn't have."

'Russia sending more forces to eastern Ukraine city after assault slows'

AP ■ YIV

Russia is throwing more units into its effort to take a key eastern Ukraine city, Western analysts say, after apparent setbacks that have slowed its dayslong onslaught.

The attempt to storm Avdiivka, a heavily defended city that stands in the way of Moscow's ambition of securing control of the entire Donetsk region, is Moscow's most significant offensive operation in Ukraine since the start of the year, the UK defence ministry said Tuesday.

The Kremlin's push to claim Avdiivka comes after months of fending off Ukraine's counteroffensive, which Kyiv launched some 16 months after Russia's full-scale invasion. Both sides are looking for battlefield advantages ahead of winter. They are also looking to secure future weapons supplies for what is shaping up as a protracted war of attrition.

The Kremlin's forces deployed to Avdiivka are like-



A Ukrainian soldier in his position in Avdiivka, Donetsk region, Ukraine, on August 18, 2023. Russia is throwing more units into its effort to take this key eastern Ukraine city, Western analysts say, after apparent setbacks that have slowed its dayslong onslaught

ly making slow progress and sustaining high casualties in what is proving a costly effort, the UK defence ministry said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

The pace of Russia's attack on the heavily fortified target

has reportedly slowed in recent days since its launch last week, a Washington-based think tank said. Citing the Ukrainian General Staff, the Institute for the Study of War said Ukrainian forces pushed back 22 Russian attacks on Monday,

down from 30 reported assaults the previous day. Kyiv officials said Russia mounted up to 60 attacks per day in the middle of last week.

The Ukrainian defence ministry said Tuesday that Russia is nevertheless still attempting to encircle the city, with 10 attacks over the previous 24 hours. The UK defence ministry said Russia's effort to overrun Avdiivka "looks increasingly unlikely in the short term."

More widely, Russian forces launched six Shahed drones and one Kh-59 cruise missile over southern regions of Ukraine late Monday, Kyiv authorities said.

The Ukraine Air Force of Ukraine claimed to have intercepted all the targets, with no casualties or destruction reported. Ukraine struck two helicopter airfields near the Russia-controlled Luhansk and Berdyansk regions, the Air Force claimed. It was not immediately possible to verify the two sides' battlefield claims.

Ukraine uses ATACMS missiles against Russian forces for the first time

Washington (AP): A US official says the longer-range ballistic missiles long sought by Ukraine have been delivered quietly by the US and are being used on the battlefield against Russia nearly a month after President Joe Biden promised them to his Ukrainian counterpart.

The official was not authorised to publicly discuss the matter before an official announcement and spoke Tuesday on the condition of anonymity. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other Ukrainian leaders have been urgently pressing the US to provide the Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS. Their delivery to the war front was shrouded in secrecy, with the expectation that the first public acknowledgement would come when the missiles were used on the battlefield.

Pakistan court adjourns Imran Khan, Qureshi's indictment till October 23

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

CIPHER CASE

A special court in Pakistan on Tuesday adjourned till October 23 the indictment of former prime minister Imran Khan and his close aide Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case for allegedly violating the secret laws of the country. The case pertains to a secret diplomatic document that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Khan used to criticise his opponents for allegedly orchestrating his ouster from power in April last year.

The document reportedly went missing from his possession. Khan's party alleges that the document contained a threat from the US to oust Khan from office.

The special court set up by the government held the in-camera hearing at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail after the Islamabad High Court on Monday reject-

ed a plea by Khan against holding his trial in jail.

Judge Abual Hasanat Zulqernain adjourned hearing till October 23 with the remarks that Khan and former foreign minister Qureshi would be indicted on that day.

Barrister Salman Safdar and Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry were present as 71-year-old Khan's counsels, the Dawn newspaper reported. Qureshi's wife and daughter also reached the court. However, it was not confirmed whether they were allowed to attend the hearing, it said. Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) special prosecutor Shah Khawar, Khan, Qureshi and their legal teams were all present during the hearing.

Khawar told journalists that the indictment proceedings will take place next



Monday (October 23), Geo News reported. "On October 23, the charges will be framed and the indictment will be filed. After the indictment, the regular trial of the cipher case will begin," he said.

As per the court's orders of October 9, both PTI leaders were expected to be indicted in the case on Tuesday.

However, the indictment could not take place on Tuesday with the court only distributing the copies of the challan (charge sheet) among the suspects.

Speaking to the media after the hearing, lawyer Sher Afzal Marwat said that Khan and Qureshi will now be indicted during the next hearing.

Khan was ousted through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022. He was incarcerated on August 5 this year, after an Islamabad court sentenced him to three years in prison in the Toshakhana case. The PTI chief was lodged in the Attock District Jail to serve his prison term.

Later, his sentence was suspended by the Islamabad High Court, but then he was arrested in the cipher case.

Pak Army backs govt's decision to deport illegal foreigners

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's powerful army on Tuesday extended its full support to the government's decision to repatriate and deport all illegal foreigners, including Afghan refugees, from November 1 onwards. The caretaker government has set October 31 as the deadline for thousands of undocumented immigrants, including around 1.7 million Afghan refugees, to leave the country or risk imprisonment, deportation and forcible expulsion from November 1 as it intensified its crackdown against those involved in militancy and smuggling. Pakistan's decision has drawn widespread criticism, with organisations such as the UNHCR for Refugees and Amnesty International calling on the government to rethink its plans. The Taliban-led government in Afghanistan has also expressed its reservations over the move. At the 260th Corps Commanders' Conference held at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, top brass of the Pakistan Army resolved to fully support the federal government's decision to repatriate and deport all illegal foreigners from November 1 onwards, the military said in a statement.

'40 places of worship of Ahmadis destroyed in 2023 in Pakistan'

PTI ■ LAHORE



At least 40 places of worship of the Ahmadi minority community have either been attacked by radical Islamists or partially demolished by police in different parts of Pakistan during the first 10 months of this year, a body representing the persecuted group said on Tuesday. Ahmadis in Pakistan are usually referred to as Qadianis, which is considered a derogatory term for them. Pakistan's Parliament in 1974 declared the Ahmadi community as non-Muslims. A decade later, they were banned from calling themselves Muslims. They are banned from preaching and from travelling to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage.

"At least 40 incidents of desecration of our worship places have taken place this year between January and October in various parts of Pakistan. Of them, 11 occurred in Sindh and the remaining in Punjab province," Amir Mahmood, an official of the Punjab chapter of Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan, told PTI.

In Sindh, some Ahmadi worship places came under attack by religious extremists who committed the offence with impunity as police remained silent spectators, he

Pakistan said the situation is becoming worse day-by-day for the already marginalised community.

"Ahmadis are facing persecution at the hands of the evil elements. The acts of desecration of the places of worship in various areas of Pakistan continues unabated. It is a new norm and the authorities are doing nothing," it said.

Earlier, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said the destruction of part of Ahmadiyya sites of worship is a brazen violation of the recent Lahore High Court judgment regarding the protection of Ahmadiyya sites of worship.

"It demonstrates yet again that the community is being hemmed in systematically and deliberately by law enforcement and the religious far right alike. According to the 2014 Supreme Court judgment, the police are supposed to protect the community's right to practice its faith. The government must hold the perpetrators accountable, repair the damage and ensure that this does not recur again," the HRCP had said.

Although the number of Ahmadis in Pakistan is around a million, unofficial figures put their population much higher.

Child killed, 9 injured in hand grenade explosion

Karachi (PTI): A child was killed and eight others injured on Tuesday when a hand grenade exploded in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province.

According to police, a group of children belonging to a religious seminary were playing with the hand grenade when it exploded in the Zarchain area of Wadh city.

The injured were immediately transported to a local hospital. Police and law-enforcement agencies cordoned off the area and launched a detailed investigation.

"This is not the first time such an incident has taken place. Militants and separatists leave behind or drop such dangerous explosives and when children find them they end up being killed or injured," Wadh DSP Abdul Manaf said.

He said hand grenades were left behind by the militants and separatists operating in the province and in some cases even rocket launchers had gone off when found and children tried to play with them.

Indian former chief priest fails in appeal to cut jail term

PTI ■ SINGAPORE



A former Indian chief priest at one of Singapore's oldest Hindu temples has failed in his bid for a lighter jail term for pawning the temple's gold jewellery for more than SGD 2.3 million.

Kandasamy Senapathi, 39, was sentenced to six years in jail by a district judge in May after he pleaded guilty to two charges of criminal breach of trust (CBT) and two charges of removing the benefits of his criminal activities from jurisdiction. Six similar charges were taken into consideration during his sentencing.

The Indian national was employed by the Hindu Endowments Board as a priest at the Sri Mariamman Temple in the central business district here from December 2013 until he resigned on March 30, 2020.

He would pawn a piece of jewellery that adorned statues of deities at the temple for cash and then return on another day to redeem the first piece of jewellery using a second piece of jewellery, according to The Straits Times newspaper.

On Tuesday, his lawyer,

Disagreeing with the lawyer, Justice Vincent Hoong pointed out that when Senapathi pawned the jewellery pieces, he received the proceeds, as reflected in the charges. The amount represented the value of the items misappropriated.

"How the appellant chose to use the pawn proceeds subsequently is irrelevant to determining the sum misappropriated in each of the CBT charges," the report quoted the judge as saying.

Noting that sums owed to the pawn shops resulted from Senapathi's unlawful acts, the judge said, "This is simply a disingenuous argument."

Between 2016 and 2020, Senapathi pawned 66 distinct pieces of jewellery at various pawn shops on 172 occasions. He was caught when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, throwing the regular audit timing off and revealing the missing jewellery.

All the pieces of jewellery he pawned have since been returned to the temple. However, the sum of SGD 141,054.90, which was remitted, still needs to be recovered.

Afghan mob attacks Pak Customs, police and paramilitary rangers

Karachi (PTI): A mob of Afghans residing in Pakistan's biggest city attacked a team of Customs accompanied by police and paramilitary rangers after they carried out a raid to seize smuggled goods from a market in a main commercial area of the city.

A video, which has gone viral, shows dozens of Afghans armed with sticks running after the Customs officials and vehicles of the Police and Rangers on Tariq Road as they tried to carry out a raid during nighttime on Monday.

Tariq Road is one of the busiest commercial centres of Karachi and has numerous fabric and clothing shops in shopping malls and markets which are generally owned by Afghans, who have now settled down in the city after fleeing from their country. A source in the Customs vigi-

lance confirmed the incident and said the team had gone with police and rangers back up after confirmed intelligence reports that smuggled cloth and fabrics worth millions of rupees were being sold by Afghan shop owners on Tariq Road.

Many of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan have established successful businesses in Karachi and other parts of the country and mostly focus on clothes, fabrics, carpets, curtains, and rug businesses. They own or rent shops in nearly all the major commercial centres and malls of Karachi. A police official said the raid had nothing to do with the government announcement that Afghans living illegally in Pakistan had to return home by November 1 or would be sent back to Afghanistan forcibly after the deadline.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Ved Prakash S/o Late Mr. Jugendra Singh is Recorded owner of the Residential House of area measuring (Undivided) 3/4 Share, i.e., 55.1775 Sq. Mtrs., out of total area 88 Sq. Yds., i.e., 73.57 Sq. Mtrs., out of Kharsa No. 1393, situated at Ward No. 3, in the area of Village Dundaheera, Pargana Loni, Tehsil and District, Ghazabad vide Sale Deed dated 19/07/2023-Vide Doc. No. 7467, SRC-IV Ghazabad, And same to be finance & mortgage by Unmeed Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd. That the Surviving Member Certificate (SMC) of Late Mr. Jugendra Singh S/o Mr. Nathi Singh is Lost/Misplaced/Not available. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim right/lien/interest/crediting mortgage over the said property may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.

Lucam Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 2, Noida, UP-201301, Contact: 0120-4269379

To be known to all, ASHA JULKA W/o LATE SH. MOHIT KUMAR JULKA R/o 7266-D-7, VASANT KUNI, NEW DELHI-110070 Mutatee/ Owner of DDA LIG FLAT NO.57-C, FIRST FLOOR, POKHET-K, SHEIKH SARAA PH-II, DELHI-110017 have applied for certified copies & conversion from leasehold to freehold in DDA. The original documents i.e. Demand-cum-allotment Letter, possession Letter, NoC For Water And Electricity Connection & Other Documents of the above said flat has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR No. 1026313/2023 dated 16/10/2023 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9818023230 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAB-Housing)/LG or Director (LAB-Housing)-LIG, Delhi Development Authority/Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

verka

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Notice Inviting Tender

e tender is hereby invited for the supply of following item:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Head Office, Sector- 34 A, Chandigarh Freezer Or Wheel i. 100-110 Ltr ii. 200 Ltr.	Annual/ 15 Units 85 Units

NOTE:

- For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
- Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Incharge (Purchase)

Baidu unveils Ernie 4.0 AI model, claims that it rivals GPT-4

AP ■ HONG KONG

Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu on Tuesday unveiled a new version of its artificial intelligence model, Ernie 4.0, claiming that it rivals models such as GPT-4 in the U.S.

Baidu's CEO Robin Li demonstrated Ernie 4.0 at the company's annual Baidu World conference in Beijing. He said the model has achieved comprehension, reasoning, memory and generation, which uses algorithms to produce and create new content.

Li said that Ernie 4.0 was able to understand complex questions and instructions and apply reasoning and logic to generate answers to questions. "It is not inferior in any aspect to GPT-4," Li said, stating that the latest model was "significantly autonomous driving and more recently, improved" compared to its original Ernie Bot model.

In a live demonstration, Li prompted Ernie 4.0 to generate advertising materials including advertising posters and a marketing video. He also asked Ernie 4.0 to come up with a martial arts novel complete with characters with various personalities. Baidu is a frontrunner among a slew of Chinese companies racing to come up with artificial intelligence models, after OpenAI's ChatGPT took the world by storm last year. Beijing sees artificial intelligence as a key industry to rival the United States and aims to become a global leader by 2030.

Beijing-based Baidu started off as a search engine firm and over the past decade has invested heavily in artificial intelligence technology such as the latest model available to the public. Ernie 4.0 is not yet available to the general public but



shares fell 1.7 per cent Tuesday following the announcement. Baidu introduced its Ernie Bot in March. In August, it made the model available to the public. Ernie 4.0 is not yet available to the general public but

some people have been invited to try it.

Li said Baidu plans to incorporate artificial intelligence technology into its search engine, maps and cloud drive services, and its business intelligence offerings for enterprise customers. He did not give a timetable for that.

The technology can transform how certain products work. Baidu's search engine might generate a customized answer to a query instead of just providing a list of results and links.

China has recently sought to regulate the generative AI industry, requiring companies to carry out security reviews and obtain approvals before publicly launching their products. Companies that provide such AI services must also comply with government requests for technology and data. The US does not have such regulations.

KAMA HOLDINGS LIMITED
CIN : L92199DL2000PLC104779

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Tel. No : (+91-11) 49482870 • Fax : (+91-11) 49482900
Email: info@kamaholdings.com; Web: www.kamaholdings.com

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificates pertaining to shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) in form of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company.

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert.No.	Dist.No.	Lost Shares
1	SPP0003916	NANDESH SETHI RAVI PARKASH SETHI	4389	298879-915	37
2	SPP0001699	RAVI SETHI	1749	65274-310	37
3	SPP0005091	ATUL JAYANT SHAH	6318	446431-61	31

Any person having any claim /objection in respect of the above requests should lodge such claim /objection with the company at its Corporate Office within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which the company will consider to give effect to the above requests.

Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates.

for KAMA HOLDINGS LIMITED
Sd/-
EKTA MAHESHWARI
WHOLE TIME DIRECTOR, CFO & COMPANY SECRETARY

Place : Gurugram
Date : 17.10.2023

Markets rebound after 3 days of fall

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices bounced back on Tuesday after three days of fall amid recovery in global markets and buying in HDFC Bank post its quarterly earnings. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 261.16 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 66,428.09. During the day, it jumped 392.89 points or 0.59 per cent to 66,559.82. The Nifty gained 79.75 points or 0.40 per cent to 19,811.50. Among the Sensex firms, Power Grid, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, ITC, Bharti Airtel, Nestle, NTPC, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Infosys and HDFC Bank were the major gainers. HDFC Bank ended nearly 1 per cent up after the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 16,811 crore for the September quarter, its maiden quarterly earnings announcement after merging parent HDFC with itself. Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, JSW Steel and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the laggards. "The market's gap-up opening today, offsetting the losses of the past three days, indicates an optimism over the ongoing Q2 earnings despite concerns about the Middle East and subdued start by the IT sector. The



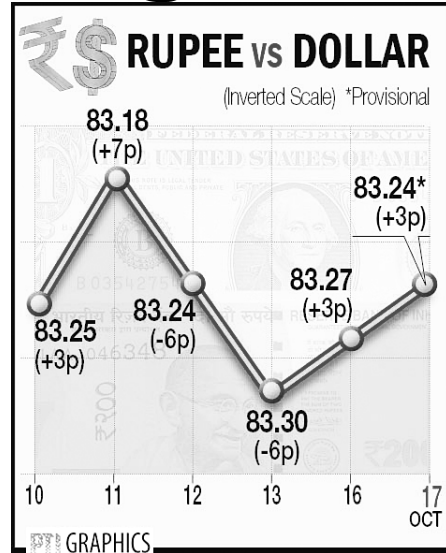
upward trend was broad-based with particular upside in banking, oil & gas and FMCG sectors. "However, some profit-taking was evident as the day concluded. FIIs continue to withdraw funds due to rise in the US bond yields. An insight about the future direction of

interest rates is expected from the Fed chair's upcoming speech on October 19th. While the market will also closely monitor the developments in the Israel-Hamas conflict, with a consensus emerging that the geopolitical risk will not elevate," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE small-cap gauge jumped 0.70 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.39 per cent. Among the indices, utilities rallied 1.21 per cent, power jumped 0.98 per cent, energy (0.94 per cent), oil & gas (0.80 per cent), financial services (0.66 per cent) and telecommunication (0.64 per cent). Capital Goods and realty were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the positive territory. European markets were trading in the green. The US markets had ended with gains on Monday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.48 per cent to USD 90.08 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 593.66 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark had declined 115.81 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 66,166.93 on Monday. The Nifty slipped 19.30 points or 0.10 per cent to 19,731.75.

Rupee rises 3 paise to close at 83.24 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 3 paise at 83.24 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday amid a positive trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the rupee is trading with a slight positive bias on positive domestic markets. However, a strong US dollar and concerns over the ongoing conflict in the Middle East capped sharp gains. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.24 against the US dollar and moved in a range of 83.22 to 83.26 in the day trade. The rupee finally settled 3 paise higher at 83.24 (provisional) against the previous close. On Monday, the rupee settled at 83.27 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on the rise in risk appetite in global markets and decline in crude oil prices. Diplomatic efforts to contain the Middle East conflict may also support the risk assets," said Anuj Choudhary — Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, elevated US dollar and any further escalation on geopolitical tensions between Hamas and Israel may cap sharp gains. "Selling pressure from FIIs and RBI's maturing of dollar/rupee swap transactions may pressurise the rupee at higher levels. Traders may take cues from retail sales and industrial production data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 82.90 to Rs 83.70," Choudhary added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the



greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.09 per cent to 106.33. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.41 per cent to USD 90.02 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex closed 261.16 points or 0.39 per cent higher at 66,428.09. The broader NSE Nifty advanced 79.75 points or 0.4 per cent to 19,811.50. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday as they sold shares worth Rs 593.66 crore, according to exchange data.

RBI imposes penalty on ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank for violation of norms

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 12.19 crore on ICICI Bank and Rs 3.95 crore on Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance of certain regulatory norms. The penalty on private sector lender ICICI Bank has been imposed for contravention of norms related to 'Loans and Advances-Statutory and Other Restrictions' and 'Frauds classification and reporting by commercial banks and select FIs'. In another statement, the RBI said the penalty on Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited has been imposed for contravention of directions related to "Managing Risks and Code of Conduct in Outsourcing of Financial Services by banks", "Recovery Agents engaged by Banks", "Customer Service in Banks", and "Loans and Advances - Statutory and Other Restrictions". In both cases, the RBI said the penalties are based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their customers.



Vedanta explores tieup with Japanese tech firms as it plans to set up chip plant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian conglomerate Vedanta Group on Tuesday said it is exploring collaborations with Japanese technology companies as it continues with its plan to set up a semiconductor fab in Gujarat. Vedanta's semiconductor and display business Global Managing Director Akarsh K Hebbur during Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit roadshow in Japan had said that it is a USD 80-billion opportunity for companies willing to come and invest in the electronics manufacturing hub in Gujarat. "He (Hebbur) outlined Vedanta's ambitious plans to establish semiconductor and display fabs in Dholera SIR, Gujarat, and invited Japanese companies to partner with Vedanta in helping build the country's first electronics manufacturing hub in the state," the statement said. Hebbur also pointed out that the hub has the potential to attract hundreds of SMEs and create more than one lakh jobs. "There is a USD 80-billion opportunity for companies willing to come and invest in this electronics manufacturing hub, and Vedanta will be the anchor

for Japanese companies interested in investing in India," Hebbur said. Vedanta group firm AvanStrate Inc is headquartered in Japan. Late last year, the company signed agreements with 30 Japanese technology companies to foster the development of India's semiconductor and glass display manufacturing ecosystem. Japan is also the second Quad partner after the United States to sign an agreement with India for the joint development of the semiconductor ecosystem and maintain the resilience of its global supply chain. With around 100 semiconductor manufacturing plants, Japan is among the top five countries to have a semiconductor ecosystem. Earlier, Vedanta had formed a joint venture with Taiwanese electronics manufacturing giant Foxconn which announced plans to invest USD 19.5 billion in setting up a semiconductor wafer fabrication plant. Both the firms have announced that they will invest in setting up electronic chip plants in India separately, but they are yet to announce the name of their technology partner.

GPT Healthcare refiles IPO papers with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

GPT Healthcare, which operates and manages mid-sized multispecialty hospitals under the ILS Hospitals brand, has refiled draft papers with capital market regulator Sebi to raise funds through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating to Rs 40 crore, and an offer for sale of up to 2.6 crore equity shares by BanyanTree Growth Capital II, LLC, a Mauritius-based structured private equity, according to the draft red herring prospectus filed on Monday. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for payment of debt and general corporate purposes. Kolkata-based GPT Healthcare had in January 2021 filed preliminary papers with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to raise Rs 450-500 crore through the



replacements, interventional cardiology, neurology, neurosurgery and paediatrics, as per the DRHP. The company competes with listed industry peers, including Global Health Ltd, Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences Ltd, Jupiter Life Line Hospitals Ltd, Yatharth Hospital & Trauma Care Services Ltd, Kovai Medical Center & Hospital Limited and Shalby Ltd. Its total income increased 7.11 per cent to Rs 366.73 crore in FY23 from Rs 342.40 crore in FY22. The company's net profit declined to Rs 39.01 crore for FY23 from Rs 41.66 crore a year ago. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 9.98 crore in the June quarter while the total income was at Rs 97.63 crore. JM Financial is the sole book-running lead manager to the issue. The equity shares are proposed to be listed on the BSE and the NSE.



India to spend nearly ₹143 lakh crore on infrastructure between FY24 and FY30: Crisil

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will spend nearly Rs 143 lakh crore on infrastructure between fiscals 2024 and 2030, more than twice the Rs 67 lakh crore spent in the past seven financial years starting 2017, rating agency Crisil said on Tuesday. Of the total, Rs 36.6 lakh crore will be green investments, marking a five times rise compared with the amount spent during fiscals 2017-2023, it added. "India's infrastructure spending will double to Rs 143 lakh crore between fiscals 2024 and 2030, compared with 2017-2023," Crisil said in its Infrastructure Yearbook 2023. Crisil Ltd managing director and CEO Amish Mehta said the agency expects India's gross domestic product to grow at an average 6.7 per cent through fiscal 2031 to be the fastest-expanding large economy. "Per capita income is seen rising from USD 2,500 now to USD 4,500 by fiscal 2031, creating a middle-income country," he said, adding that this growth will be underpinned by massive all-round infrastructure development, with sharp focus on integrating sustainability. While releasing 'CRISIL Infrastructure Yearbook 2023', which includes a unique national index CRISIL Infralnvex, Mehta said policy interventions and a conducive investment climate have aided the uptrend in the CRISIL Infralnvex scores across sectors. "Four of these — roads and highways, power transmission, renewable energy and ports — have an overall score of 7-plus (out of 10), which underscores the pace of reforms and developments of the past few years," he added. The rating agency noted that the next phase of infrastructure development will be marked by growth in the average ticket size of projects and a significant number of mega-scale projects. Appropriate and consistent policy and regulatory interventions and focus on timely execution build an attractive case for various stakeholders to accelerate investments across infrastructure sectors, Crisil said. The rating agency predicted that prominent sectors such as roads and power are expected to remain major contributors, while relatively nascent ones such as EVs, solar, wind, and hydrogen will pick up pace. "The share of EVs in India's overall automobile sales is likely to reach 30 per cent by 2030. "Two-wheeler EV sales are expected to outpace other segments up to 2028, while demand for EV buses will be driven by state transport undertakings," it said. According to Crisil, favourable total cost of ownership and total cost of acquisition, as well as model availability for two- and three-wheelers will support EV uptake in coming years. It said the share of renewable energy in total capacity is estimated to grow 4x between fiscals 2023 and 2030.



CCI approves merger of IDFC Ltd with IDFC FIRST Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fair trade regulator Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Tuesday approved the merger of IDFC Ltd with IDFC FIRST Bank. IDFC FIRST Bank is in the business of providing banking services, while its parent IDFC Ltd (IDFCL) is an RBI-registered non-banking financial company. The deal is subject to conditions, including the merger of IDFC Financial Holding into IDFC Ltd in the first step and subsequently, the amalgamation of IDFCL with IDFC FIRST Bank. Further, CCI also approved the cancellation of the existing shares held by IDFC Financial Holding in IDFC FIRST Bank and then the issue of new shares of the bank to IDFCL's shareholders. IDFC Financial Holding is a non-operative financial holding company registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Competition Commission said it has

approved the deal under the green channel route. "There are no horizontal overlaps or vertical/complementary linkages between the business activities of the parties in the country. "Given the absence of any horizontal overlaps or vertical or complementary linkages between the parties, the transaction is being notified under the green channel route," CCI said. Under the green channel route, a transaction which does not raise any risk of an appreciable adverse effect on competition is deemed to be approved on being intimated to the CCI. In July, IDFC FIRST Bank announced the merger of its parent IDFC Ltd with itself in an all-stock transaction. Also, boards of IDFC FIRST Bank and IDFC have approved the reverse merger and said the composite scheme of amalgamation includes the merger of IDFC and IDFC Financial Holding Company with IDFC First Bank.

Bajaj Finance Q2 profit up 28 per cent at ₹3,551 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bajaj Finance Ltd (BFL) on Tuesday reported a 28 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 3,551 crore for the second quarter ended September 30. The non-banking finance company had posted a net profit of Rs 2,781 crore in the July-September quarter a year ago. Its total consolidated income increased to Rs 13,382 crore during the July-September period against Rs 9,974 crore a year earlier, BFL said in a regulatory filing. The Pune-headquartered company's total expenditure rose to Rs 8,624 crore compared to Rs 6,222 crore in the year-ago period. Its consolidated assets under management (AUM) as of September 30, 2022, grew by 33 per cent to Rs 2,90,264 crore from Rs 2,18,366 crore a year ago. Capital adequacy ratio (including Tier-II capital) as of September 30, 2023, was 23.19 per cent. The Tier-I capital was 21.88 per cent, it said. The board at its meeting held on October 5 has approved raising of capital through a qualified institutions placement (QIP) for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 8,800 crore by issue of equity shares of face value of Rs 2 each. Besides, the board has also approved preferential issue (PI) of up to 15,50,000 warrants convertible into equivalent number of equity shares to Bajaj Finserv Limited, the promoter and holding Company, for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 1,200 crore in accordance with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018, it said.

IN BRIEF

GOLD REMAINS FLAT; SILVER DIVES ₹300
New Delhi: Gold remained flat at Rs 60,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to HDFC Securities. However, silver declined Rs 300 to Rs 73,700 per kilogram. In the previous trade, silver had settled at Rs 74,000 per kg.

GOVT TO SELL UP TO 7 PER CENT STAKE IN HUDCO
New Delhi: The government will sell up to 7 per cent stake in Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) at a floor price of Rs 79 per share. The Offer For Sale (OFS) for over 14.01 crore shares or 7 per cent stake will open for institutional investors on Wednesday.

MALABAR SHOWROOM COUNT REACHES 333
New Delhi: Malabar Gold and Diamonds, the world's leading gold jewellery retailer, has taken the global showroom count to 333 with the simultaneous launch of four showrooms located at Rajouri Garden in Delhi, Ambala in Haryana, Bhavnagar in Gujarat and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. Our design versatility which perfectly meets the evolving customer sensibilities and commitment to offer quality, transparency and top-class customer services make us the favourite jeweller among jewellery buyers in India and beyond, said MP Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group.



Delhi Metro's first Managing Director E Sreedharan, popularly known as Metroman, visited Metro Bhawan on Tuesday. He was received by the present Managing Director Dr Vikas Kumar and Principal Executive Director, Corporate Communications Anuj Dayal. Sreedharan interacted with the senior officials and wished the Phase 4 of the project all success.

SUV segment to see intense competition among players: Tata Motors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors on Tuesday said it plans to keep updating its SUV range as it expects the robustly growing segment to remain highly competitive with presence of all leading players. Sports utility vehicles are driving the overall growth of the domestic passenger vehicle segment. As per the latest SIAM data, SUV sales account for 60 per cent of the overall passenger vehicle sales in the country. In an interaction with PTI, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said the company has a leadership position in some of the SUV sub-segments and is looking to consolidate in others. "The SUV segment is going to be an intensely fought segment.

The top three-four players will have just a few thousand (units) here and there. At some point someone will be number one, sometimes somebody else will become number two," he said. He noted that in such scenarios it is more important to focus on the individual products and whether they are in the top two consideration for buyers. Chandra said Punch and Nexon are market leaders in their respective segments while Harrier Safari combo was number two in its vertical. Tata Motors on Tuesday rolled out new versions of Harrier and Safari with price starting at Rs 15.49 lakh and Rs 16.19 lakh, respectively. "Going beyond this, we are coming with two more models — Curvv and Sierra — in 2024



and 2025, respectively," he stated. So the company's SUV portfolio is going to further strengthen from where it is now, Chandra noted. "We have been number one for quite some time. There have been few new launches by other players. The ranking will keep changing... There is no clear

number one here. "Important thing is that we are doing excellent in all these four SUVs that we have. More importantly, we are adding to this portfolio, so our strength in SUV is going to always remain very strong going forward," he added. The updated versions of both Harrier and Safari have received top safety ratings from the vehi-

cle safety group Global NCAP. "With their 5-star GNCAP rating and highest scores by any Indian vehicle to date, our SUVs are the safest spaces on Indian roads," Chandra said. In a separate statement, Global NCAP said it has given five-star safety ratings to the new versions of Tata Safari and Harrier SUVs. Both models have achieved the

highest ever score for adult and child occupant safety in the crash tests done by Global NCAP on Indian cars so far, it stated. Global NCAP rates vehicles from zero to five based on their safety features and automobiles with a higher rating are considered safer for occupants. "This is a very strong result... The top adult and child safety score in our testing to date confirms the manufacturer's strong commitment to developing safer vehicles, which we warmly welcome and applaud," Global NCAP Secretary General Alejandro Furas said in a statement. Global NCAP's crash test protocols assess frontal and side impact protection for all models, as well as electronic stability control.

SABITZER'S PENALTY, SENDS AUSTRIA TO EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP



Sweden players take overnight flight home, returning to clubs

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Sweden players were returning to their clubs on Tuesday after taking an overnight flight home from Brussels following the suspension of their European Championship qualifier against Belgium at halftime because a gunman killed two Swedish nationals before kickoff.

The squad went directly to the airport and flew back to Sweden once they were allowed to leave King Baudouin Stadium, which was locked down for 2½ hours for security reasons before officials began an evacuation process around midnight local time.

It was around 4 am local time when the last of the Swedish supporters — totaling about 650, according to the Swedish Football Association — left the stadium under police surveillance, along with some staff from the federation.

All hotels where Swedish supporters were staying were also guarded by police, the federation said.

The Swedish FA confirmed to The Associated Press that the national-team players were now making their way back to their clubs.

The suspect in the shooting was shot dead by police on Tuesday, Belgian Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden said, and the weapon believed to have been used by the man has been recovered.

Authorities had been searching for a 45-year-old suspected Tunisian extremist who was known to police and was living in Belgium illegally.

Swedish FA officials said information about the shooting incident, which also led to another Swedish national getting seriously injured and taken to hospital, reached them just before the match began and that Belgian authorities and police considered the game should be played because the stadium was viewed as the safest place for the Swedish fans.

A decision was made to halt the match at halftime. Martin Fredman, the federation's head of security, said about 400 Swedish fans "received help during the evening and night."

"The cooperation between supporters, federations and authorities has worked very well in an extremely stressful situation," Fredman said.

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Substitute Marcel Sabitzer scored from the penalty spot shortly after entering the game to secure a 1-0 win for Austria at Azerbaijan and send his country to next year's European Championship in a day overshadowed by a deadly shooting in Brussels which saw Belgium's game against Sweden halted at halftime.

"Due to the incidents in Brussels earlier tonight, play is suspended. Our thoughts are with all those affected," a post from the

Belgian national team read on X, formerly known as Twitter. European soccer governing body UEFA confirmed the Group F match had been called off following consultation with both teams and local police. The score was 1-1 at the time. Viktor Gyokeres gave Sweden a 15th-minute lead, but Romelu Lukaku had Belgium level just after the half-hour. Belgium had already qualified for Euro 2024 while Sweden's chances of a top-two place had been ended by Austria's victory earlier.

AUSTRIA ADVANCES

After losing 3-2 to Belgium in Vienna last week in the fight for Group F supremacy - Austria's only defeat in seven qualifying games so far - Sabitzer and his teammates knew a win in Baku would secure a spot at the tournament hosted by Germany. With several key players sidelined because of injuries, Austria struggled to create real chances in the first half. It was awarded a penalty just minutes into the second half after a hand ball. Sabitzer was clinical in converting with a strike into the corner

in the 48th. Sabitzer, who plays for Borussia Dortmund, recently returned to competition after recovering from an adductor injury he picked up last month in a Champions League match against PSG. Austria finished with 10 men after striker Guido Burgstaller was sent off in stoppage time for a second yellow card. Austria became the seventh team to qualify after Belgium, France, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Turkey, along with host Germany.

RONALDO SCORES 2

Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice for Portugal in a 5-0 demolition of host Bosnia in Group J. Bruno Fernandes, Joao Cancelo and Joao Felix also scored with all goals coming in the first half. Iceland routed Liechtenstein 4-0 and Slovakia won 1-0 at Luxembourg in the same group. Netherlands came away from Greece with a 1-0 win in Group B to revive its hopes. Virgil Van Dijk's penalty in second-half stoppage time sent the Netherlands above their oppo-

nents and into second in their group. Both have 12 points. Wout Weghorst earlier failed to convert his penalty. "We do not have a specialist for penalties, corners and free kicks," said Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman. "When Virgil was behind the ball for the second one, I suddenly thought Surely it won't be one of those evenings when this one goes wrong too." But Virgil took it well and decided the match.

Ireland thrashed Gibraltar 4-0 in the group's other game.



India men's hockey plays compactly at Asian Games: Somaya

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Olympic gold medalist M M Somaya feels the Indian men's hockey team produced one of the most "compact" performances to win its fourth yellow metal at the recently-concluded Hangzhou Asian Games. Somaya, who was the Indian contingent's deputy chef de mission at Hangzhou, said it was mostly an unblemished performance from the Harmanpreet Singh-led side, who directly qualified for Paris Olympics by winning the gold.

"I think they (India) played outstanding in all the matches, barring a few lapses of concentration against Japan and Korea, but otherwise, overall, I think one of the most compact and sound performances we have seen," said Somaya, a member of India's 1980 World Cup-winning team in Moscow.

With next year's Paris ticket secured, the Indian team can focus on its preparations now. "Now that the burden of qualifying is gone, they can concentrate on making a strong program up to Paris. So just because

they're not playing in the tournament for qualification doesn't mean that they will be complacent. They can now engage in preparatory camps and tours with Paris in mind," Somaya said.

The 64-year-old also lauded the women's team, who bagged the bronze at the Asian Games but missed out on a direct ticket to Paris.

"The women also played very well, barring that game against China in the first half where they were a little overwhelmed. And then in the second half they opened up, but it was too late. Overall, it was an excellent performance from both the teams."

Somaya also had words of appreciation for the Odisha government for its overwhelming support to Indian hockey. "Odisha have stood out because of their support for hockey, I don't remember any other sport where a state has supported the national team. It's always been a corporate, but in this case the state itself has supported the national team, which is a big thing."

AITA actions against Sasi for not wearing official jersey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The AITA is contemplating action against Sasi Mukund for not wearing the official jersey during the Davis Cup tie against Morocco and has also introduced a players' code of conduct to ensure 'discipline' in future.

In the opening singles of the World Group II play-off tie against Yassine Dlimi on September 16, Mukund wore the jersey provided by his personal sponsor and not the one made available by official Indian team sponsor 'OOK' after taking "permission" from skipper Rohit Rajpal. To make matter worse, the jersey that Mukund wore had 'INDIA' spelt wrongly and the matter was brought to AITA's notice by the team sponsor. The team name printed on the back had an extra 'I'.

It may be mentioned that the official sponsor only provided the kit and no sponsorship money was given to either All Indian Tennis Association (AITA) or the players who were part of the tie that India won 4-1 in Lucknow last month.

AITA issued a showcause notice to Mukund on September 28, asking him to explain within seven days why action should not be taken against him for not wearing the official jersey and playing with a jersey that had India written wrongly.

On October 3, Mukund sent his reply to the national federation, saying that "shorts received from OOK were not comfortable".

Mukund also wrote that he had taken prior permission from both captain Rajpal and coach Zeshan Ali to wear the jersey that had his sponsor's



name printed. Explaining the spelling fiasco, Mukund wrote that he had received eight T-shirts from his sponsor and unfortunately he picked the only one that had printing mistake. He also lamented that neither the captain nor his teammates noticed when he stepped on to the court.

"I have immense respect for my country and I would never do something intentionally to tarnish its image," he wrote and also apologised for the inadvertent mistake.

On October 13, the AITA communicated to Mukund that his explanation was not acceptable since the captain has denied giving him any permission and further asked him to clarify his stand. When contacted by PTI,

Mukund said captain Rajpal had indeed allowed him. "There was no money involved. The players were not given any sponsorship fee for this tie. Only the kit was provided by the official sponsor. Captain Rajpal had understood this and allowed me," Mukund, who had lost his match to Dlimi, said.

"Usually the players are asked to sign a contract with the AITA for that one week if they are being paid for wearing that official kit. In this case, we did not sign any contract. My personal sponsor 'Indian Tree' pays me, so what's wrong in it. The pockets of the shorts were such that the ball were coming out. "These are the reasons that the players lose interest in playing for the national team," he said.

AITA Secretary General Anil

Dhupar said they have introduced a players' code of conduct for clarity and all players will be bound by it.

"The players code of conduct is before the Executive Committee members. It will come into effect immediately. It is for all players, be it men's, women's, boys or girls," he said.

Asked if they will indeed take action against Mukund, Dhupar said, "Mukund has apologised but we are still discussing the matter".

Asked for his viewpoint, Davis Cup coach Zeshan Ali said, "All players should be wearing only the official kit. During the Asian Games all the players and support staff wore the official kit only. Procedure has to be followed by all".

It is not the first time that an Indian player has preferred

playing with the kit that has his personal sponsor's name written. They do get paid for wearing the sponsor's name. If the match is telecast live, the amount increases.

"The AITA had also introduced the system of paying the players for official sponsor's name. The initiative was taken by captain Rohit Rajpal. If you have to stop players from wearing the name of their personal sponsor during the Davis Cup, then you have to compensate," said a team source.

"In this case (Morocco tie), no sponsor was willing to pay any sponsorship money to the players and the AITA. Just the kits had arrived through OOK, it is difficult to even arrange for kits for Indian Davis Cup team," the source said, summing up the state of Indian tennis.



Contrasting results for Indian sub-junior hockey teams

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian boys' and girls' sub-junior (U-16) hockey teams endured contrasting results on the final day of their maiden tour to the Netherlands.

While the boys beat the Netherlands' U-16 side 4-0, the Indian girls lost 1-4 against the Dutch.

Rohit Irengbam Singh, Ketan Kushwaha, Rahul Rajbhar and captain Manmeet Singh Rai scored for the Indian boys team.

"This is a great way to finish off such a historic tour. The boys showed immense character and grit and the efforts that have been put in are unmatched. It's a matter of pride to have produced such a fine show especially in overseas conditions," Indian sub-junior boys' team coach Sardar Singh said.

In the girls' game, Kajal Jr scored the lone goal for India. Former India captain and sub-junior girls' team coach Rani Rampal, said, "The girls played their hearts out and that is exactly what is expected of them every time they step out on the field.

"There are a few areas for us to work on and this tour has given us exactly what we needed to identify our strengths and shortcomings."

Kusale now aiming for gold at Asian Championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rifle marksman Swapnil Kusale's dream of winning an Asian Games medal in Hangzhou might have gone sour, courtesy one poor shot, but that has not stopped him from aspiring for gold at the Asian Championships, scheduled to commence in Changwon, South Korea on October 22.

One of the best 50m rifle 3-positions shooter in the country, the 28-year-old Kolhapur marksman was leading by a huge margin in his event at the Asian Games recently before a rank bad 7.6 on the third-last shot in the finals saw him take a mighty tumble from No.1 to 5.

That effectively ended his hopes of winning even a bronze medal in the quadrennial continental showpiece as he finished fourth.

However, as the shooting team leaves for the Asian Championships, Kusale has put the disappointment on the back-burner and wants to concentrate on the next assignment.

"That shot... How did it go that way, I have absolutely no idea. It's a game basically. I still had two shots remaining and I focused on them. I just forgot that had I shot a poor score," said Kusale, one of the early birds to secure a Paris Olympic quota place.

Initially, I was a bit shocked how it

could happen to me. But without bothering about it much, how and why it happened, I prepared myself for the next two shots," said Kusale, who had bagged the 2024 Olympic quota by finishing fourth at the World Championships in Cairo last year.

"Yes, it did strike me that I had missed the gold medal because of that one shot, but then I thought it can happen in this sport and I will concentrate on the next championship."

A similar last shot in the finals at the 2022 World Championships in Cairo had robbed him of a medal, but that disappointment was masked by the Olympic quota place



he won there.

"It had happened to me at the World Championships in Cairo last year as well, but yes, I bagged an Olympic quota there and finished fourth, so that was the saving grace," said Kusale on the sidelines of a function organised by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) to felicitate the Asian Games medal winners.

India returned home with 22 medals in shooting, their best ever performance at the Games.

"I was very deeply concentrating on the moment, too much focused and because of that, maybe, my entire process (went for a toss). It's something which I never anticipated I

could do. I tried my level best to come back, but I still missed an individual medal.

Kusale, though, won the team gold along with Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Akhil Sheoran.

Kusale, a junior TC with the Railways, says that world champion rifle shooter Tejaswini Sawant has helped him handle tricky situation while competing.

Sawant, who also hails from Kolhapur but now resides in Pune, had become world champion in 2010 in women's 50m rifle prone.

"Teju di (Tejaswini) has taught me how to handle different situations, etc. I have learnt from her and she has inspired me a lot over the

years," said Kusale.

Kusale is also not surprised that his "best pal" Akhil Sheoran too has bagged the second Olympic quota for the country at the World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan just before the Asian Games.

The two have been competing together since 2012, when they were juniors, and Kusale said he cannot remember a national camp when they have not been roommates.

"Akhil has been my roommate and best pal since 2012 since the time we were competing as juniors. We are like brother and both have won (Olympic) quota, albeit one year apart."



NZ AIMS TO KEEP THEIR UNBEATEN RUN INTACT

PTI ■ CHENNAI
 Afghanistan's upset win over defending champions England has given the side a new stature and New Zealand would underestimate Hashmatullah Shahidi's side at their own peril when the two sides clash in their World Cup match here on Wednesday. While the Kiwis would look to keep their unbeaten run going in the tournament, Afghanistan, who shocked England by 69 runs, would be keen to create another big upset and put their campaign firmly on track in the showpiece event. New Zealand are going great guns in the tournament, having won all three matches so far and are currently placed second on the points table, trailing India on net run rate. On the other hand, Afghanistan had an inauspicious start to their campaign losing to Bangladesh and India before leaving Jos Buttler's England in a tizzy with a victory to be cherished for long in New Delhi on Sunday. New Zealand will again be led by wicketkeeper-batter Tom Latham after their charismatic skipper Kane Williamson suffered a fracture on his left thumb during the match against Bangladesh and was ruled out for a few games. Williamson, who had missed the opening two matches — against England and the Netherlands — due to an ACL



injury suffered during IPL 2023, was looking good to strike a century after being out of action for more than five months. But the skipper's innings was cut short at 78 when he was struck on the thumb by a throw from the outfield. Despite the huge setback, the Kiwis would be banking on their success so far to win their fourth game on the trot against an unpredictable Afghanistan, who played their guts out against England. It would be interesting to see if pacer Tim Southee finally gets a chance against Afghanistan, having recovered from a thumb injury, though his match fitness has remained an issue. The Kiwis will rely heavily on their top order comprising Will Young, Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell, while all-rounder Rachin Ravindra, with his impactful performances across departments, will also be the player to watch. The Kiwi batters would certainly have watched the video footage of Afghanistan spinners Rashid Khan and Mohammed Nabi many times over to counter the slow-bowling threat, given that the duo accounted for five England wickets. With the meeting happening at the Chepauk, where the pitch has traditionally assisted spinners, New Zealand will have their hands full when they take on the trio of Rashid, Mujeeb Ur Rehman and Nabi. As for the Afghanistan batting, opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz is the man in form, having scored 50-plus in two matches so far, while the likes of skipper Shahidi, Azmatullah Omarzai and Ikram Alikhil could come in handy as well. While Trent Boult and Matt Henry's searing pace will be feared by the Afghan batters, their main challenge could unexpectedly come from the spin duo of Ravindra and Mitchell Santner, with the latter being the most successful slow bowler in the competition so far. The two teams have clashed in this format only twice with New Zealand winning on both occasions.



Rohit best man to lead India to third WC title

PTI ■ DUBAI
 Australian legend Ricky Ponting believes a "laid-back" Rohit Sharma is the ideal captain to lead India to their third ODI World Cup title, the second on home soil after the 2011 triumph. With three convincing wins under their belt, India have made a perfect start to their World Cup campaign. India defeated Australia by six wickets in their tournament opener, before registering emphatic eight and seven-wicket wins over Afghanistan and Pakistan to sit on top of the points table. "He's very laid back, Rohit. Very laid back with everything he does. You can even see that by the way that he plays. He's a pretty laconic sort of batsman as well, and that's the way he is both on and off the field," Ponting told the ICC on Tuesday. Rohit took the captaincy reins from Virat Kohli in both the white-ball formats in December 2021. And Ponting believes Rohit's character fits perfectly for the India job, allowing Kohli to focus on his batting. "Someone like Virat, who is a bit more heart-on-the-sleeve, and probably listens to the fans and plays up with the fans a little bit more, someone with his personality would probably find it a bit harder," the two-time World Cup winning Australia skipper said. "But I think Rohit will be fine with it. He's a terrific bloke and has been a great player for a long time, and he's done a great job as leader of India." The Men In Blue last won the World Cup when the tournament was jointly hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in 2011. So, the extra pressure of performing in front of home fans would definitely be there, but Ponting feels Rohit is the best man to deal with that. "We can't sit back and say that the pressure won't get to them (India) at some stage, or it won't affect them, because it will, just with the enormity of the tournament. "But he'll (Rohit) take it and cope with it as well as probably anyone," he said. Ponting said that with all bases covered, India are the team to beat in the ongoing showpiece. "I said from the start that I think they're going to be the team to beat. They've got a very talented team," he said. "They've got all bases covered with their fast bowling, their spin and their top-order, middle-order batting. They're going to be extremely hard to beat. But we'll see how they hold up under extreme pressure as well," Ponting concluded. India will next play Bangladesh in Pune on Thursday.

We regret squandering promising: Nissanka

PTI ■ LUCKNOW
 A disappointed Pathum Nissanka said anything close to 300 would have been a challenging total but Sri Lanka failed to sustain a promising start against Australia in a World Cup match here. Nissanka (61) and fellow opener Kushal Perera (78) gave Sri Lanka an ideal start on Monday, stitching a 125-run partnership but the Island nation suffered an unexpected batting collapse, losing all 10 wickets for just 84 runs to put up a below-par 209 on the board. The Australians grabbed the opportunity with Josh Inglis (58) and Mitchell Marsh (52) scoring half-centuries each to take their side to a five-wicket win in 35.2 overs, their first victory in three matches. "Despite our promising start, we deeply regret not being able to sustain it, resulting in us being limited to a score of 210



runs," Nissanka said at the post-match press conference. "On a wicket like this, I believe we should aim for a total closer to 300 runs, and this was a contributing factor for our defeat." Nissanka's 61 off 67 balls was his second successive half-century in the tournament. "I believe I've given my best for the team. I'm hopeful that I can contribute significantly by scoring substantial number of runs and playing substantial innings in the upcoming matches," he said. Sri Lanka have lost three games they have played so far and need to win all their remaining six matches for a shot at the semifinals. They next face the Netherlands here on Saturday. "Our focus now is to learn from our mistakes and strive for strong performances in the upcoming matches. Our mental level is good. We hope to play well in these matches and win the remaining matches," Nissanka said.

Shami's role is clear still no place in 'Perfect IX'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 At times, the greatest of actors don't fit the character of a particular film and in director Rohit Sharma's 70 mm World Cup panorama, Mohammed Shami is that protagonist who is missing out on a meaty role. Unlike the 2019 World Cup campaign, the Indian team management seems to have absolute clarity on the role of each squad member, leaving a world class operator like Shami on the bench for the first three games of the ODI showpiece. With the team ticking all the boxes so far, Shami, who is among the best in the business and ended with a five wicket haul against Australia ahead of the World Cup, might just have to keep warming the bench in the coming fixtures. Mohammed Siraj is Jasprit Bumrah's new ball partner at the moment while all-rounder Hardik Pandya is performing the role of a third pacer effectively. Shardul Thakur, who has bowled a total of 8 overs in two games, is the fourth fast bowling option on a flat deck and if



it is a spin friendly track like the one in Chennai, R Ashwin comes in to the eleven in place of Thakur to complement Kudejra Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja. There seems to be crystal clarity even on the batting front. Unlike the 2019 edition, the lead up of which saw the number four position become a game of musical chairs, Shreyas Iyer, if he is fit, is the clear choice in that position. Even though he oozes X factor, Suryakumar Yadav has to wait for his return. Rohit Sharma has led from the front thus far and India look the team to beat in the World Cup. However, there are a few questions that need to be answered. Can the team rely on Hardik as the third seamer? Should Shami not play in place of Thakur as the latter has not yet been required with the bat at number 8? Speaking to PTI, former chief selector MSK Prasad lauded the team's horses for courses approach. "They are using horses for

courses and it is working fantastically well for the team. If you see they used Ashwin in Chennai and Shardul for the other two games (in Delhi and Ahmedabad). Last game, Shardul was not required as the others did the job (he bowled only two overs)," said the former India wicketkeeper. "Shami will come into picture if they want to rotate Siraj. Replacements are very clear right now, Sky will replace Shreyas if there is a need, Ishan will replace Gill at the top and Shardul will play if it is a flat deck. Ashwin will come in his place if it is a turning track." Hardik lends a critical balance to the playing eleven but considering his fitness issues in the past, can he be expected to bowl 10 overs game after game as the third seamer if the need arises? "With Hardik, you can't expect him to bowl 10 overs in every game. The job that he is doing. Of bowling 5-6 overs per game, that is good enough. Team management seems to have absolute clarity on the role of every individual," added Prasad.



Gurbaz reprimanded for breaching ICC's Code of Conduct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 Afghanistan batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz has been handed an official reprimand for breaching level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during their epic World Cup match against England. Gurbaz was found to have breached Article 2.2 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during an International Match." In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Gurbaz's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period. The incident occurred in the

19th over of Afghanistan's innings, when after his dismissal, Gurbaz slammed his bat on the boundary rope and a chair. Gurbaz admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Jeff Crowe of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing. On-field umpires Rod Tucker and Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, third umpire Paul Reiffel and fourth umpire Paul Wilson levelled the charge. Level 1 breachers 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. Afghanistan had defeated England by 69 runs to create one of the biggest upsets in World cup history.

Want to take more wickets: Zampa

PTI ■ LUCKNOW
 Panned for his poor show in the opening two World Cup matches, Australia's sole frontline spinner at the World Cup Adam Zampa said that expensive figures don't bother him as he bowls to get wickets. Australia found themselves in a precarious situation after suffering back-to-back losses against India and South Africa before notching up a five-wicket win over Sri Lanka on Monday. Zampa, who has enjoyed a lot of success during the 2019 World Cup and the start of the ongoing edition, flattered to deceive in the opening two games, going for plenty of runs. "I'm very good at self-reflection. I look back on the first two games and I'll probably look at the last game as one where I could have made a difference there and made it easy for those other guys," Zampa said after Australia's win. "But yeah, the Indian game, I mean, we're under the pump defending 200 and I'm always going to be the guy who tries to get wickets. I'm not going to try and let the game peter out and let it go into nothing. So



yeah, figures, whatever." He registered figures of 0/53 and 1/70 against India and South Africa respectively for a combined figure of 1/123 in 18 overs. "It's more about my attitude and reflecting on that too. Did I bowl the ball where I wanted it to? Did I make the right decisions? Did I put my game on the line to try and make a difference? And that's how I think about it. "I don't really care about combined figures. It's just doing what I can to try and help win the game," Zampa added. Against Sri Lanka too Zampa looked sluggish at the beginning, giving away 22 runs in his first three overs but he roared back to form with a match-winning spell of 4/47. "It took me a lot longer than I wanted to get into the game today. Bowling to set batters as well, trying to build some pressure, I just wasn't really able to do that. "I won't make any excuses. I think I should be good enough to kind of play that role as well." The wrist spinner revealed that he suffered "random back

spasm" and had to undergo a fitness test before the game against Sri Lanka. "I did a gym session a couple of nights ago and I don't know if you've ever had a back spasm, but I was worse for over the last couple of days. "I had to do a fitness test before the game today. Yeah, I felt like adrenaline was going to get me through and a bit of Panadeine Forte (medicine). It was a tough one to get through today, but as I said, one of those random ones that will wear off in the next day or so." we get backed into a corner and guys step up and we get on a roll, then anything can happen. It's a World Cup, so get on a roll. "Obviously, really big game against Pakistan in Bangalore, and if we can put it all together and play a good game there, you go 2 and 2 and the feeling's much better," he added.

नाम परिवर्तन
मैं लक्ष्मी केवट (Laxmi Kewat) पत्नी स्व श्री गोलू केवट सर्वसाधारण को सूचित कती हूँ मेरे सभी शासकीय/अर्धशासकीय दस्तोजों में मेरा नाम लक्ष्मी केवट (Laxmi Kewat) है जो की सही है परु मेरे आधार में त्रुटि से मेरा मायके का नाम भगवती नोरिया (Bhagvati Noriya) और लक्ष्मी केवट देनो मेरे ही नाम है इस विज्ञापित के बाद मुझे लक्ष्मी केवट (Laxmi Kewat) के नाम से ही जाना पहचाना और पुकारा जाए।
पहलाना नाम: भगवती नोरिया (Bhagvati Noriya)
नया नाम: लक्ष्मी केवट (Laxmi Kewat)
पत्नी स्व श्री गोलू केवट (Golu Kewat)
पोस्ट पिपारिया जैसवाल निवास नेहरू वार्ड क्र: 13 पिपारिया नर्मदापुरम एम पी 461775