

OPINION 6
THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR
IN PERSPECTIVE

MONEY 9
INDIA EXPECTED TO GROW AT 6.3
PER CENT IN FY24: FICCI

WORLD 10
NOBOA WINS PRESIDENCY
IN ECUADOR

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY OCTOBER 17, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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SOUTH AFRICA LOOKS
STRONG AGAINST
NETHERLANDS
12 SPORT

THEATRE OF WAR EXPANDS IN WEST ASIA

Humanitarian aid stalled as Israeli siege strains hospitals, water supply

AP ■ RAFAH (GAZA STRIP) / WASHINGTON

Palestinians in besieged Gaza crowded into hospitals and schools on Monday, seeking shelter and running low on food and water. More than a million people have fled their homes ahead of an expected Israeli ground invasion aimed at destroying Hamas after its fighters rampaged through southern Israel. As the enclave's food, water and medicine supplies dwindled, all eyes were on the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, where trucks carrying badly needed aid have been waiting for days as mediators press for a cease-fire that would allow them to enter Gaza and allow foreigners to leave. Rafah, Gaza's only connection to Egypt, was shut down nearly a week ago because of Israeli airstrikes. Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said Israel "has not taken a position to open the crossing from the Gaza side". The Israeli government did not respond to a request for comment. With a ground invasion of Gaza expected, Israel was preparing for the potential of a new front opening on its northern border with Lebanon, where it has exchanged fire repeatedly with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group. The

military ordered residents from 28 Israeli communities to evacuate. Speaking to the Israeli Knesset on Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Iran and Hezbollah, "Don't test us in the north. Don't make the mistake of the past. Today, the price you will pay will be far heavier," referring to Israel's 2006 war with Hezbollah. Meanwhile in Hamas' horrific killings, Israeli trauma over the Holocaust has resurfaced. Women, children and older adults hiding in safe rooms gunned down mercilessly. Homes set ablaze with terrified residents still inside them. Children, some bound, forced into a room and slaughtered. Jews, helpless. For many Israelis and Jews around the world, the horrors committed by Hamas militants during their stunning onslaught on southern Israeli communities is triggering painful memories of a calamity of a far greater scale: the Holocaust. "I have been strict about not using the word Shoah' in any context other than the Holocaust," political commentator Ben Caspit wrote in the daily Maariv, referring to the Holocaust by its Hebrew name. "When Jewish children hide in a protected room and their anguished parents pray that



Israeli armored personnel carriers head toward the border with the Gaza Strip in southern Israel

AP/PTI

they won't cry, so that the marauders won't come in and set the house on fire, it's a Shoah." At present, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians sheltering in UN facilities are on less than 1 litre (1 quart) of water per day. Hospitals warn they are on the verge of collapse, with

emergency generators that power machines like ventilators and incubators down to about one day of fuel and supplies of medicine almost exhausted. Israeli airstrikes have pulverized entire neighbourhoods as Palestinian militants continue to fire rockets into Israel. Israel is widely expected to

launch a ground offensive in order to kill Hamas leaders, recover captives and destroy the group's military infrastructure, much of which is in residential areas. Street-by-street fighting would likely cause mounting casualties on both sides. Israel has ordered more than 1

million Palestinians — almost half the territory's population — to leave Gaza City and the surrounding area for the enclave's south. The military says it is trying to clear away civilians ahead of a major campaign against Hamas in the north, where it says the militants have extensive net-

works of tunnels and rocket launchers. Hamas has urged people to stay in their homes, and the Israeli military on Sunday released photos it said showed a Hamas roadblock preventing traffic from moving south. For a third day, Israel's military announced a safe corridor for people to move from north to south between the hours of 8 am and noon. It said more than 600,000 people have already evacuated the Gaza City area. Hospitals in Gaza are expected to run out of generator fuel in the next 24 hours, endangering the lives of thousands of patients, according to the UN. Gaza's sole power plant shut down for lack of fuel after Israel completely sealed off the 40-km (25-mile) long territory following the Hamas attack. The World Health Organisation said hospitals are "overflowing" as people seek safety. "We are concerned about disease outbreaks due to mass displacement and poor water and sanitation," it said. Four hospitals in northern Gaza are no longer functioning and 21 have received Israeli orders to evacuate. Doctors have refused, saying it would mean death for critically ill patients and newborns on ventilators. The WHO said water shortages caused by Israel's decision to cut off water supplies, com-

bined with a lack of fuel for pumps and desalination stations, put thousands of hospital patients at risk. "Water is needed to ensure sanitary conditions on inpatient wards, in operation rooms, and emergency departments. It is essential for the prevention of hospital associated infections and for the prevention of outbreaks in hospitals," the WHO said. The UN health agency said life-saving assistance for 300,000 patients is currently awaiting entry through Rafah. On the Gaza side, crowds of Palestinians with dual citizenship waited anxiously, sitting on suitcases or crouched on the floor, some comforting crying infants. Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden is considering a trip to Israel in the coming days but no travel has been finalised, a senior administration official said on Sunday. It would be a powerful symbol of sympathy and support following the brutal attack by Hamas. Biden also made his strongest public statements yet to restrain Israel. "I think it'd be a big mistake," Biden said. "Look, what happened in Gaza, in my view, is Hamas, and the extreme elements of Hamas don't represent all the Palestinian people. And I think that it would be a mistake for Israel to occupy Gaza again."

India's first RRTS to debut on Friday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's inaugural Regional Rapid Transit System is set to debut in the National Capital Region on Friday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating the 17.5 km segment linking Sahibabad in Ghaziabad to the Duhai Depot of the 82.15 km Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut section. In a symbolic tribute to the spirit of "Shakti" (women), the first train will be operated by a woman pilot, a fitting gesture that coincides with the auspicious occasion of Navratri. The initial phase of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor will commence operations, encompassing five key stations: Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Guldhar, Duhai, and Duhai Depot. This milestone will revolutionise travel between the National Capital and Meerut, as the RRTS corridor will traverse 17 km in just 12 minutes, a journey that typically takes

over 35 minutes by road. Upon full implementation, the project will boast two multi-modal transport transit systems. Preparations for this historic event are in full swing, with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath personally inspecting the Ghaziabad site to oversee the project's progress. The Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System initiative is spearheaded by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), with the complete 82.15 km Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS slated for full operational status by June 2025. The RRTS trains are equipped with a range of commuter-centric amenities including overhead luggage racks, WiFi, and charging facilities for mobiles and laptops at every seat. Additionally, each train will feature a premium class car, offering wider seats, increased

legroom, and coat hangers, along with vending machines for added convenience. Officials have indicated that ten trains will ply this route, accommodating up to 1,700 passengers. The subsequent phase, extending from Sahibabad to Meerut South, will span 42 km and introduce four new operational stations. RapidX, boasting a maximum speed of 180 km an hour, is poised to be India's fastest train, whisking commuters from Delhi to Meerut in just 55 minutes. The service frequency will be every 5-10 minutes, providing a modern, sustainable, swift, secure, and comfortable mode of travel. Upon the corridor's full completion, the RRTS is expected to slash travel time between Delhi and Meerut by a substantial 40 per cent. For convenience, a dedicated 'Lost and Found' centre has been established at the Ghaziabad RRTS station to

expedite the retrieval of misplaced belongings. If passengers inadvertently leave their items on RAPIDX trains or within station premises, they can promptly seek assistance from station staff. Further inquiries and support regarding lost items can be directed to the RAPIDX Customer Service Centre at 08069651515. Passengers will have a 24-hour window to claim their lost belongings from the station where they were misplaced or left. Following this period, any unclaimed items will be transferred to the designated "lost and found" centre at the Ghaziabad station, operational from 8 am to 8 pm daily. The RRTS trains have been designed with an aerodynamic profile, featuring long noses and plug-in doors to minimize air resistance at higher speeds. Passengers will relish panoramic views through expansive window panes, enhancing their travel experience.



Australia's batter Marnus Labuschagne plays a shot during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 match between Sri Lanka and Australia at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Monday. Australia beat Sri Lanka by five wickets in their ICC World Cup match here on Monday. Sent in to bowl, Australia dismissed Sri Lanka for 209 in 43.3 overs and then returned to overhaul the target in 35.2 overs, scoring 215 for five in a match that was briefly interrupted by rain. This was Australia's first win of the ongoing tournament. PTI

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Drug addict killed 90-year-old grandma for refusing money

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a major breakthrough, the Aliganj police claimed to have arrested the grandson of a 90-year-old woman, who was found murdered at her house in Triveni Nagar on Sunday evening.

The police claimed that the nonagenarian was killed by her own grandson for money which he had demanded from her. "Manas Sashwat wanted money from his grandmother to purchase drugs, as he was an addict, and he lost his cool after she refused," DCP (North) Qasim Abidi claimed.

"The accused was arrested on Monday and the police recovered gold ornaments and Rs 1,850 in cash from his possession," the DCP said, adding that a case of murder under IPC Section 302 was registered against him.

The police also booked the accused under IPC sections 394 (robbery) and 411 (dishonesty) and Arms Act.

Shail Kumari (90) was found murdered at her house in Triveni Nagar, where she lived alone. Her son lives in Jankipuram.

She was hit on the head with some heavy object and later, her throat was slit with some sharp-edged object. She was found lying in a pool of blood on Sunday evening.

On Sunday, one of Shail Kumari's granddaughters called her uncle Mukesh Chand and told him that she was not attending calls. Mukesh thought she could be asleep as

SP ex-MLA, former Cong leader among others booked for land fraud

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party ex-MLA Rajendra Yadav, former president of Lucknow University Student Union and former leader of Congress Ramesh Srivastava and 20 others were booked in a case of land fraud in Chinhat.

The complainant, Surendra Kumar Bajrai of Chinhat tri-section, alleged that the accused illegally occupied the land at Lucknow-Ayodhya using forged documents. The Chinhat police registered an FIR in this regard on October 11 under IPC sections 406 (criminal breach), 420 (cheating), 467 & 468 (tampering with government documents), 471 (dishonesty), 447 (criminal trespass), and 506 (criminal intimidation).

The complainant alleged that the accused also threatened to kill him and his father when he tried to confront them.

he had visited her house in the morning and given her fruits, vegetables and flowers for puja.

Mukesh, who is the complainant, said he got another call from his niece and was told that his mother was not responding to neighbours' calls either. "I reached there around 8 pm and found the doors lying ajar. When I entered the house, I found my mother lying in a

PROPERTY ATTACHED

The Lucknow police have attached property worth over Rs 137 crore of Rohtas Project Private Limited director Paresh Rastogi till date. A spokesman said Paresh Rastogi of Lala Lajpat Rai Marg in Hazratganj was booked under Gangster Act in the past. Gautampalli inspector said that the court of CP, Lucknow, passed a preliminary order for attachment of properties (worth 21.2 crore) of the accused in favour of the state government on Monday.

The spokesman said a total of 82 cases of fraud were registered against the accused at Hazratganj, Gautampalli, Vibhuti Khand, Chinhat and Gosainganj police stations and a primary order for attachment of properties (worth over Rs 116 crore) was passed earlier on June 13, 2022.

pool of blood," the complainant stated.

According to the police, the accused, who works with a private company, was arrested with the help of a CCTV footage, and surveillance. During interrogation, he owned up to his crime and said that he had been living with her grandmother for the last two days.

The accused said he was in dire need of money and went to his grandmother's house to get help from her. He asked her to give him money and the gold bangles which she was wearing, but she refused. He forcibly snatched the ornaments and money. However, as she offered resistance, he killed her before fleeing the scene. The accused said he hid the murder weapon near a tomb close to old Pucca Pul. The police recovered the weapon following the disclosure.

The 90-year-old victim lived alone at her house, which belongs to her younger son Mukesh Chandra Sharma (62). Mukesh, who lives separately with his family in Jankipuram, retired from FSL, Agra.

The deceased is survived four sons — Ramesh (68), Alok (65), Mukesh (62), and Mahesh (60). Barring Mukesh, all of them live outside Lucknow. Her husband Kailash, who was a businessman, had died five years ago.

Meanwhile, a 23-year-old teacher ended her life at her house in Krishna Nagar on Monday. The deceased, identified as Nancy Shukla of Manas Nagar in Krishna Nagar, taught in a private school. She was found hanging from the ceiling on Monday morning. Investigating officer Ankit Kumar (S-I) said Nancy was found hanging around 9 am on Monday and her parents rushed her to Lok Bandhu hospital. The body was sent for autopsy while further investigation was underway.

e-payment facility available now for entry to parks, monuments

Lucknow (PNS): Now the facility of e-payment will also be available for entry into all the monuments and parks of Smarak Samiti in Lucknow and Noida. Vice-Chairman of Lucknow Development Authority and member secretary of Smarak Samiti Indramani Tripathi inaugurated the digital payment counter at Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Sthal in Gomti Nagar on Monday. LDA finance controller Deepak Singh said the entry fee for various monuments and parks of Smarak Samiti is Rs 20. At present, with the increasing trend of digital payment, there was a demand by tourists to create a system for online payment option for the entry fee.

Keeping in mind the convenience of tourists, instructions were given by Tripathi for implementation of the e-payment system for entry tickets.

The digital payment system was simultaneously implemented in all the monuments and parks of under Smarak Samiti. People visiting monuments and parks will now be able to pay the entry fee through cash as well as UPI and debit/credit cards.

WEATHER TURNS PLEASANT



Weather took a U-turn on Monday evening when a bright clear sky took a grey hue. Light rains with breezy winds made the weather pleasant. The brief spell of rain disrupted power supply in some parts of the city. Mohammed Danish from Met department said that rains were caused by a cyclonic circulation above Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir, and Haryana. The forecast for Tuesday is light rains in parts of western UP and cloudy skies in Lucknow

Victory XI Durga Puja celebrates 50 years

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Victory XI Durga Puja has entered into its golden jubilee celebrations this year. Artists have come from Krishna Nagar in Kolkata to make the Goddess Durga idol.

According to SK Mukherjee from the Victory XI Durga Puja committee, the celebrations will be traditional and there will be different programmes on different days. "Murti shapana will take place on Panchami (October 19), and 'Mahisasur Mardini' will be staged on the same day. The puja and bhandara will take place on Saptami, Ashtami, and Navami," he said.

On October 19, there will also be a blood donation camp with Civil hospital like every year at the Boys' Anglo-Bengali Inter College.

Mukherjee recalled that he had joined the Victory XI Club Durga Puja in 1992. About its journey in the last fifty years, he said it was first held opposite the Bengali Club.

"Thereafter, it was shifted adjacent to the Bengali Club and then held at Kasturba Girls' Inter College. Later on, it was held at a place called Gulab Niketan, and finally at



the Boys' Anglo-Bengali Inter College in 1991-92," he said.

The area had a large population of Bengalis coming from Model House, Hewitt Road, Sunderbagh, and Maqboolganj, but people have moved out over the years, and only 40 per cent of the population is left, Mukherjee pointed out. "There were huge hous-

es of Bengalis earlier which were getting dilapidated, and so traders purchased them and the number of community members in this area dwindled. However, the puja continues to be held at the same venue. Devotees come from Indiranagar, Ashiyana, Vrindavan Yojana, Jankipuram, etc," he said.

"My daughter has been involved with the puja for the last 22 years. She is now in the United Kingdom but will be coming for the puja in its golden jubilee year. One family is coming from Hyderabad while another is coming from Kolkata. Youngsters who have moved out of the city for jobs and other work will also be taking part in the celebrations," he said.

Jyotish Chaudhary from the same committee said that the Durga idol would be over 13-feet-tall and the theme of the pandal would be rural Indian culture.

"We will display things which are used in rural India such as 'soop', fans, mats, etc," he said. Talking about the 50-year journey, he said that it started in 1974 and found a permanent venue after going through many places.

"Eleven friends founded the puja, some of whom are still around while others have passed away. In the 11th year, we had displayed Chandannagar lights, which attracted a large number of people from the city. It is unfortunate that we have lost 15-20 people from our group over the years," he said.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE
I, Hasan S/o Shakeel Ahmad Rana R/o 15/6-B Civil lines, Kanpur 208001, have changed my name to Hasan Rana for all further purposes.

NOTICE
Notified that in my wife's passport my name has been written Mohammad Zubair by mistake. While my correct name is Zubair Ahmed Khan. In future I will be known as Zubair Ahmed Khan Zubair Ahmed Khan S/o Mohammad Sameem Khan R/o 98/78 Bhusa Mandi, Aminabad Lucknow.

सूचना
सूचनार्थ सतनाम सिंह, पुत्र दर्शन सिंह, निवासी-86 एफ ए, समर विहार, निकट शिव मन्दिर, आलमबाग, लखनऊ, उ०प्र० मेरा हाई-स्कूल की मार्कशीट एवं पासपोर्ट पर नाम सतनाम सिंह डंग अंकित है और मेरे आधारकार्ड पैनकार्ड व अन्य दस्तावेजों पर नाम सतनाम सिंह अंकित है। यह सतनाम सिंह डंग एवं सतनाम सिंह दोनों एक ही व्यक्ति के नाम हैं।

NOTICE
This is to inform that my and my wife name has been mistakenly recorded in my son High School marksheet as Hafil and wife name Nahid. Whereas my correct name is Syed Hafiz S/o Md. Istiaq and my wife name Nahida W/o Syed Hafiz. In future Me and she should be known by this name. Syed Hafiz R/o- Gram chakrasool, Post Nawabganj, Gonda (U.P.)

PUBLIC NOTICE
All General people are informed. That The applicant was going from his house towards P. Road at about 8.00 pm on 11.10.2023 to get a photocopy of the original registered will dated 26.06.1981, document no. 744, executed by my great grandfather late Rajaram son late Mannu Lal, the said will was fell down somewhere on the way and even after a lot of searching, The will was not found by the applicant. If the said will is misused by any person then it will be illegal and against the law and I will not take any responsibility for it. (Sumit Verma) Son Late Anil Kumar Verma M.No.- 106/304A, Ganesh Park, Gandhi Nagar, Kanpur Nagar, Mob.: 8707012249

NOTICE
I have to changed my name from Shrivastav Shweta Rajnikant to Tasim Sohail Ahmed Shaikh W/o Suhail Ahmad for future purpose. Add- 16 Gandhi Nagar Pattar Kata Colony Unnao.

NOTICE
I Ranjila Pradhan Tamang Spouse of Army No. 9423519-K Hav Nagen Tamang declares that inadvertently my name in the service record of my husband was wrongly mentioned as RANJILA PRADHAN whereas my real name is RANJILA PRADHAN TAMANG may be recorded in service record.

NOTICE
Notify that I have lost my class X Marksheet & Certificate year 2023 of CISCE Board New Delhi, Roll No. 1234940/049, Unique ID No. 7987995 (Passed from Green Fields School, Rajajipuram, Lucknow (Sheikh Sameer Ali S/o Sufiyan Ahmad Siddiqui 365/59 Mohan Road, Alamnagar, Rajajipuram, Lucknow-17

NOTICE
I Punam Devi Yadav Spouse of Army No. 9423034-F Hav Rajesh Kumar Yadav declares that inadvertently my name in the service record of my husband was wrongly mentioned as PUNAM DEVI whereas my real name is PUNAM DEVI YADAV may be recorded in service record.

NOTICE
I, Satyendra Singh, S/o Shishupal Singh, R/o Chandanpura, Rasoolabad District, Kanpur Dehat, certify that the agricultural land deed No 4234 of Gata No. 1745 Village Usri dated 24.07.2015 paper has been lost somewhere, misuse by any other person would be illegal.

सूचना
मेरे स्वामित्व के भवन सं० 123/690(49) ब्लाक-एस०, पी० एण्ड टी० योजना संख्या 1, फेक्री एरिया, गडरियन पुरवा, कानपुर नगर का मूल पट्टा खिलेख दिनांकित-16.03.77 कहीं खो गया है। जिसका प्रयोग अवैधिक होगा। उषा अग्रवाल W/o नरेन्द्र कुमार अग्रवाल 288/4, बाबू पुरवा, कालोनी, कानपुर नगर

Darwan lake to undergo beautification

Lucknow (PNS): Ambedkar Nagar is gearing up for beautification and development of the sprawling Darwan lake covering 124 hectares. A detailed project report (DPR) has been prepared for this ambitious project, with an estimated expenditure of Rs 4.75 crore. This project's successful completion will provide the local residents and tourists with an ideal spot for recreational activities and will also offer bird enthusiasts an opportunity to observe various native and migratory species that flock to the area.

Minister of Tourism and Culture Jaiveer Singh said the government is committed to enhancing tourist attractions by providing essential facilities

around lesser known and celebrated sites in every district.

The government's specific focus is on eco-tourism, and numerous tourist destinations have been identified for such development projects.

Singh also announced plans to create a sanctuary for both indigenous and foreign bird species within Darwan lake. During the winter season, a large number of foreign birds flock to this area. To accommodate these birds, a dedicated space will be developed in the middle of the lake. The site will also include swings for children, cottages, parking facilities, and stairs among other amenities. Singh emphasised on the immense potential for tourism in the state.

229 UP villages to be developed as tourism villages

Lucknow (PNS): Rural tourism will now play a significant role in boosting employment and increasing income in the rural areas, with the government's increased focus in this segment. A drive is being run to select the best villages across India by the Union Ministry of Tourism through a competition to encourage villages to be more aware about the benefits that rural tourism can bring about economically. The second round of this competition will be held next year.

Currently, 229 villages in Uttar Pradesh have been identified to be developed as tourism villages. Although the competition's date has not been confirmed yet, the state's Tourism department has started making preparations. The villages will be placed under 11 categories for the competition: heritage & agri-tourism, crafts, green villages, vibrant villages, spiritual & wellness tourism, clean villages, adventure tourism, etc. There will be three levels to this competition — district, state, and national.

Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh said: "The soul of India resides in its villages. The Tourism department is now making efforts to bring prosperity to these villages and provide employment opportunities, not just through agricultural activities but by also exploring other viable options."

"The government is focusing on agriculture and rural tourism. When people from across the country and abroad visit these villages, the economic condition of the local population will improve, which, in turn, will strengthen the rural economy," he added.

CITYBRIEFS



CONFERENCE

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD) are organising a two-day national conference on "Best practices in rural cooperative banks". The conference, which commenced on Monday, is being attended by senior officials from NABARD, BIRD, and representative of UP government as well as 14 state cooperative banks, 61 district central cooperative banks, and over 200 selected primary agriculture credit societies. In his inaugural address, NABARD chairman Shaji KV highlighted the current status of rural cooperative banks in the context of the 'Sahkaar Se Samridhi' campaign launched by the Central government. He pointed out that the share of cooperative banks in the ground level credit flow to agricultural sector has decreased to 11%, which is a matter of concern. He emphasised on the importance of technological advances, infrastructure development, branding, governance and building trust with rural customers in the growth of cooperative banks. He encouraged all present cooperative bank officials to actively work towards improvement in these areas.

LOAN CAMP

A two-day retail loan camp was organised by Indian Bank, Lucknow division on Monday. It was inaugurated by Area General Manager Pankaj Tripathi in the presence of Area Head Pranesh Kumar. Major builders of Lucknow participated in it and customers were given information about the benefit of a 100% rebate in processing fees and concessional

interest rates by the bank.

CDRI JOINS HANDS WITH START-UP

Sravathi AI Technology Pvt Ltd has announced a strategic collaboration to develop new therapeutics for the treatment of cancer. The collaboration will entail the use of advanced artificial intelligence and computational tools developed at Sravathi to design novel chemical entities (NCEs) with anti-cancer properties. CSIR-CDRI will validate these predictions by synthesising the NCEs and performing the required biological evaluation in vitro and in vivo. The two companies will work closely to optimise active compounds and select suitable candidates for clinical evaluation. "We are excited to collaborate with CSIR-CDRI to develop new therapeutics for cancer," founder and MD of Sravathi Dr Kishan Gurram said. Sravathi AI Technology Private Limited is an India based Artificial Intelligence (AI) start-up located in Bangalore.

DIVYANG EMPOWERMENT CAMPAIGN

Divyang Empowerment Campaign camp was organised by Aryavart Bank, Barabanki regional office under NDFDC on Monday. District Magistrate Satyendra Kumar, Chairman of Aryavart Bank Santosh S, and Regional Manager Sanjeev Kumar were present.

DEBATE CONTEST

Avadh Girls' Degree College organised 'Shri Aditya Kumar Chaturvedi Memorial Inter Collegiate Debate Competition' on Monday. The debate competition has been organised every year since 2015 on October 23 in the memory of Aditya Kumar Chaturvedi, father of vice-principal of the college Prof Ujala Chaturvedi. This year, the topic for the bilingual debate competition was artificial intelligence. The competition witnessed participation by Avadh Girls' Degree College, National PG College, Karamat Hussain Muslim Girls' PG College, Isabella Thoburn College, Navyug Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Bappa Shri Narendra Vocational PG College, Shri Jai Narayan Mishra PG College, and Kalicharan PG College.

Campaign against child marriage organised in Gonda district

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the occasion of 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat Divas', celebrated across the nation as part of the 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat' campaign, non-governmental organisation Aparajita Social Committee organised awareness programmes in the Gonda district.

Approximately 2,00,000 women, children and common citizens took pledge not to support child marriage.

The National Family Health Survey data shows that 23.3 per cent of young girls between the ages of 20 to 24 were married before the age of 18. In Gonda district, this percentage was even higher, with 25.4 per cent of girls being married off before the age of 18. The 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat' campaign is being carried out in over 300 districts across India with the goal of completely eradicating child marriage from India by 2030.

In support of this campaign, various rallies, public pledges, and other events were organised in different villages and schools throughout the day.

Kiran Bains, director of Aparajita Social Committee, said child marriage was a crime that had held the society captive for centuries. However, the commitment and efforts shown by civil society and the government of Uttar Pradesh will soon establish an environment and system where children will have a safer and secure atmosphere, she added.

NOTICE

All the general public is informed that the Municipal Corporation House No. 260/A is located at Mohalla Miyapura Po. Subhash Nagar and the city and district is Ghazipur, and the entire part of House No. 260 is whose boundary - east road is paved, west - courtyard is rising, Singh North - House and courtyard - Nirmala Srivastava South house - Mahmood Alam whose owner is Manish Jaiswal, son of Kripashankar Jaiswal, M.O. Sarai Poikha Po., Markeganj, Ghazipur Hall, Miyapura Post - Subhash Nagar, Ghazipur, which Manish has purchased from Manta Gupta, wife of Vijay Gupta, Navapur. The above ordered land was purchased by Shri Mati Manta wife Vijay Gupta through registered deed dated 13/12/2016 whose book no. 1, volume no. 4220, pages no. 273 to 298 / 26 to 298, account letter no. 6513 from Nirmala Srivastava, wife Dinesh Kumar Srivastava. The said original document has been lost and a report has also been lodged in the police station regarding this. Purnjab National Bank Razuza wishes to mortgage the property mentioned above. If any person has any claim of interest or claim of right or any other objection in respect of the property mentioned in the above notice, he may file his complaint within seven days of the publication of this notice. Can make representations/reports to the Bank BRANCH MANAGER PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK RAZUZA GHAZIPUR

COURT NOTICE

CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT) (Chapter XXX, Rule-21) IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD ORIGINAL JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 41 OF 2023 IN THE MATTER OF THE GOODS OF Late Keshari Nath Tripathi, son of Late Harish Chandra Tripathi Resident of 12-B, Lohia Marg, Prayagraj-211001. Deceased. Neeraj Tripathi, Petitioner. WHEREAS an application has been made by Neeraj Tripathi, son of Late Keshari Nath Tripathi, resident of 12-B, Lohia Marg, Prayagraj-211001 for the probate of the will (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of Late Keshari Nath Tripathi deceased, who died at 12-B Dr. Lohia Marg, Civil Lines, Allahabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh on 08.01.2023 AND WHEREAS, the 18th day of October, 2023 has been fixed for hearing of the said application. THIS CITATION is issued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest to come and see the proceedings if they think fit before the grant of probate (or Letters of Administration). Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 30th day of August, 2023. DEPUTY REGISTRAR HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD

CM inaugurates dairy project in Gkp

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that six years ago, Uttar Pradesh was plagued by riots and lawlessness and investors were hesitant to invest in such a situation.

"As soon as our government came to power, we improved the law and order situation and implemented necessary reforms for ease of doing business," he added.

"We also connected the youth with the Prime Minister's Skill Development Scheme. As a result, Uttar Pradesh received investment proposals worth Rs 38 lakh crore at the Global Investors' Summit in February 2023. This will directly provide jobs to 1.1 million youth in the state, preventing them from seeking employment in other states," Chief Minister Yogi said in Gorakhpur on Monday.

He said when the youth combine their energy and talent with the development of Uttar Pradesh, nothing can stop the state from becoming a leading economy in the country.

Chief Minister Yogi inaugurated an extensive dairy and dairy production project in



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated an extensive dairy and dairy production project in Sector 26 of Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA) on Monday

Sector 26 of Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA), set up with an investment of Rs 114 crore in 20,067 square metres.

He emphasised the need for this dairy to produce five lakh litres of milk, indirectly benefiting around one lakh families and providing direct

employment to 300 individuals. An additional 1,500 people will be associated with the plant's operation.

Chief Minister Yogi mentioned that recent investments in Gorakhpur, including companies like Galent, Ankur TMX, Varun Beverages, PepsiCo, KEAN Industries and

Tatva Plastics have brought a new wave of development to eastern Uttar Pradesh, creating opportunities for new employment. Furthermore, Chief Minister Yogi stated that GIDA, initially limited to some villages around Sahjanwa, is now expanding its reach, extending up to Dhoolia. "The

Gorakhpur Link Expressway is being connected to the Purvanchal Expressway, facilitating the establishment of industrial units along both expressways, leading to the creation of numerous job and employment opportunities," the chief minister said.

He stressed the importance of the administration's commitment to ensuring that investors face no crises and local youth receive training in line with industry requirements. This involves connecting students of ITIs, polytechnics and degree colleges with certificate and diploma courses. He believes that when the youth are prosperous, society thrives, and when society prospers, the state advances towards progress.

Chief Minister Yogi also inspected the dairy production plant before his address and honoured five workers who contributed to its operation.

The programme was attended by Gorakhpur MP Ravi Kishan Shukla, District Panchayat Chairperson Sadhna Singh, Mayor Dr Mangalesh Shrivastav, Sahjanwa MLA Pradeep Shukla, and Legislative Council member Dr Dharmendra Singh, among others.

Western UP witnessing a surge in caste-based political movements

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections, western Uttar Pradesh is witnessing a surge in caste-based political movements. Various communities are demanding a fair share in representation and opportunities, setting the stage for a complex and competitive political landscape.

Jats, Tyagis, Gurjars, Brahmins, Thakurs, Backward Classes and Dalits collectively account for approximately 40 per cent of the vote bank in 27 Lok Sabha constituencies in western UP, making them a significant factor in the outcomes of the elections.

As political parties strive to secure this crucial vote share, the battle for community support is in full swing. Recent events, including mahapanchayats, rallies and conventions held over the last two months, have showcased the various caste groups voicing their demands. These gatherings, initially organised on non-political platforms, have increasingly become forums for communities to express their expectations from the political establishment.

A striking example of this

trend is the Jat community's renewed demand for reservation. Before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Jats launched a vigorous movement, seeking reservation at the central level, with the Bharatiya Janata Party making promises of fulfilling this demand upon coming to power. However, a decade later, the demand remains unaddressed, prompting the Jats of western UP to rekindle their quest for reservation.

Jat leaders believe that this is the opportune moment to press for their reservation demand before it is overshadowed by election agendas. The RLD, along with opposition parties, organised a convention in Meerut in September to rally Jat support. A few days later, Jats supported by the BJP called the 'International Jat Parliament' in Meerut, emphasising their reservation demand. Leaders from across the country attended the event, including Union Minister Sanjeev Balyan.

The Jat community's primary demand remains centered around reservation. Additionally, they have urged the recognition of Jat luminaries through Bharat Ratna awards and the installation of

statues of eminent Jats in the new Parliament House. Jat mahapanchayats continue to be held across districts in western UP, with the reservation issue at the forefront.

Leaders from khaps and prominent Jat figures are gearing up for discussions with the government and potential demonstrations. Conferences are planned in Amroha, Aligarh and Mathura, with a national convention scheduled for November in Delhi.

The Tyagi community in western UP is also mobilising to assert its political presence. Despite being long-standing supporters of the BJP, Tyagis claim they face discrimination within the party. Tyagis have been largely excluded from receiving party tickets in assembly, municipal and panchayat elections, as well as appointments in regional, metropolitan and district units. Frustrated with this treatment, Tyagis have recently organised mahapanchayats and even formed their own political party. The political landscape in western UP is evolving as communities strive to secure their political stake and representation in the forthcoming elections.

UPPCL to ensure uninterrupted power supply during festivals

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Energy Minister AK Sharma said that UP Power Corporation Limited would ensure uninterrupted quality power supply during the festivals of Dussehra and Diwali.

UPPCL will spend close to Rs 23,000 crore for strengthening the power distribution infrastructure for increasing capacity of transformers, construction of new feeders and new 33/11 kV sub-stations.

The missing links in the power distribution network are being identified and addressed under which worn-out low-tension distribution lines will be replaced and bamboo poles will be replaced with RCC poles. The minister said the capital expenditure on power distribution would bring qualitative change in power supply. Sharma said for the ongoing Navratri festival, directives had been issued to

UPPCL to improve power supply across the state and to ensure that all areas receive electricity as per the fixed schedule. The officials responsible for electricity distribution have been instructed to maintain uninterrupted power supply from dusk to dawn. Managing directors of discoms, chief engineers and officials of the UPPCL have been instructed to ensure electric supply to Shakti peeths and religious places according to the prescribed schedule during Navratri, in line with the state government's objectives.

UPPCL officials have also been directed to exercise vigilance in their respective areas and promptly address any disruptions in power supply at the local level to minimise inconveniences. The minister emphasised the importance of taking all necessary precautionary measures, particularly in addressing issues such as dilapidated or hanging wires and

cables. He asked the officials to address complaints related to voltage fluctuations and low voltage. In the event of unexpected power breakdowns, the officials have been advised to proactively organise adequate numbers of repair teams to restore power supply. Additionally, complaints received through toll-free numbers should also be resolved promptly, the minister stressed.

Instructions have also been issued to set up special control rooms at both the discom and district levels to ensure that all arrangements are made for uninterrupted power supply.

Furthermore, it has been directed that in areas where processions or gatherings for idol immersion are anticipated, officers should conduct on-site inspections to enhance the entire electrical system, thus minimising the risk of electrical accidents and ensuring a safe environment for public events.

AAP to protest arrest of Sanjay Singh on Oct 21

Lucknow (PNS): The Aam Aadmi Party will hold a statewide protest against the arrest of party's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh on October 21.

After this, protests will be held in Delhi on October 27. The AAP workers will also spread the message of Sanjay Singh from jail among the public through pamphlets and door-to-door contacts.

This was stated by AAP district president Shekhar Dixit in a statement issued on Monday. He said the arrest of Singh was unconstitutional and he was arrested under a conspiracy without summons.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party is getting the opposition leaders arrested by the Enforcement Directorate wher-

ever the public is not voting for it," Dixit alleged.

Giving details of the message, he said Singh will tell the public through his letter from jail the reason why the Narendra Modi government got him arrested.

"In the letter, Singh has stated that he was arrested for exposing corruption, raising the voice of farmers, youth, employees, Dalits, deprived and exploited people of every section," Dixit said.

Dixit said Prime Minister Modi would lose the 2024 parliamentary elections to INDIA bloc and Singh's arrest showed this frustration. "The ED is working under pressure from BJP, hence summons were not sent before arresting Sanjay Singh," he said.

RLD president raps Balyan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a strong response to Union Minister of State Dr Sanjeev Balyan's statement about the possibility of western Uttar Pradesh becoming a separate state, Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Jayant Chaudhary said it would be more appropriate for the Bharatiya Janata Party to address domestic matters before making such proposals.

Speaking at a public meeting where Asian Games gold medal winner Parul Chaudhary was felicitated, Jayant Chaudhary said that the government and public representatives belonged to the people, and they should be more accountable to the public.

The RLD chief highlighted that the government had been elected on the same promises it was making now and should not

evade accountability after a decade. Chaudhary pledged to allocate 100 per cent of his Member of Parliament local development fund to support sports initiatives, underlining his commitment to promoting sports talents. During his visit to a local village, Jayant Chaudhary paid a visit to Parul Chaudhary's residence and later brought Parul and her family on to the stage and bestowed her with recognition. The RLD chief stressed the importance of nurturing sports talent and offered his support for the development of a stadium in Bharala village, pledging financial assistance as needed.

Jayant Chaudhary made a commitment to celebrate and honour athletes who achieve success. He also criticised the budget allocation to Uttar Pradesh, highlighting a dispari-

ty as Gujarat received more funding. While acknowledging Uttar Pradesh's medal-winning achievements, Jayant Chaudhary emphasised the need to secure more medals. Currently, states like Maharashtra, Haryana and Punjab are leading in terms of sports accomplishments. Chaudhary expressed concern about the challenging times ahead, particularly for the youth, as job opportunities appear to be dwindling.

Parul Chaudhary, in response, expressed her gratitude to Jayant Chaudhary and commended the efforts of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's government in providing assistance and creating employment opportunities. She stressed that such support would boost the morale of athletes and contribute to their success.

Police constable's wife raped

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident reported from Meerut, the wife of a police constable was raped after taking her five-month-old son at gunpoint.

The incident took place in a village under Bhawanipur police station on the night of Gandhi Jayanti, but the police took cognisance only when the victim posted her ordeal on the chief minister's portal.

One of the accused was arrested on Sunday night and efforts were on to nab the remaining two who are absconding.

The victim, a resident of a village in Bhawanipur police station area of Meerut, said that on the night of October 2, she was at home with her five-month-old child and her husband was on duty in Etah. She said at 11:30 pm, she was

putting the child to sleep in the verandah when she heard someone knock at the gate.

When she opened the gate, Bajrang, who lives in the neighbourhood, entered the house. He took out a gun and snatched the child from her lap. The accused put the gun at the child's head and threatened to shoot the mother and son if they made any noise. After this the accused raped her. When the accused was fleeing from the spot, she raised an alarm following which her in-laws along with father-in-law came and tried to nab him.

When the father-in-law tried to catch the accused, Bajrang opened fire and climbed on the roof and jumped into the neighbouring vacant plot from where he went to another neighbour's house. After some time, the

neighbour and his son helped the accused to escape safely.

The victim said she contacted the local police and the senior officers but they refused to register a case. When the report was not registered, the constable narrated his ordeal on the chief minister's portal on October 11. He requested the chief minister to order registration of the report. When investigation started on the chief minister's portal, the Bhawanipur police immediately registered a rape case on October 13, based on the complaint of the constable's wife. The Bhawanipur police also arrested Bajrang on Sunday night.

Bhawanipur Inspector Atar Singh Yadav said that search was on for the absconding father and son who helped the accused to escape.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As a result of the Yogi Adityanath government's effort to empower women in the state, female participation in the labour force of Uttar Pradesh has seen a remarkable surge of 17.9 per cent over the past six years.

According to the latest findings of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the state's female labour force participation rate has soared from a mere 14.2 per cent in 2017-18 to an impressive 32.10 per cent in 2022-23.

Under the adept guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, dedicated efforts have been made to uplift women in the state, resulting in this substantial increase. The chief minister's personal monitoring of these initiatives has created an environment where women feel secure and respected, propelling them towards self-reliance at an unprecedented pace.

As per the report, India recorded a female labour force participation rate of 39.80 per cent in the financial year 2022-23, while Uttar Pradesh reported a rate of 32.10 per cent. In stark contrast, in the financial year 2017-18, India's female labour force participation rate stood at 25.3 per cent, with UP lagging even further behind at 14.2 per cent.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on women empowerment at the national level, combined with the emphasis of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on women's self-reliance in Uttar Pradesh, has played a pivotal role in bolstering women's participation in the workforce across the country.

With the Yogi government's proactive approach, women are getting fully benefited from both Central and state schemes and are also availing various opportunities to advance in their professional lives in Uttar Pradesh. Notable initiatives include the Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao campaign, which has raised awareness among 1.90 crore daughters of Uttar Pradesh, and the Mission Shakti campaign, which has benefited 8.99 crore women.

Additionally, 1,89,789 Anganwadi centres have been approved while 1,89,014 centres are currently operational. A network of 10 lakh self-help groups has connected one crore women, while more than two lakh women have benefited from the PM SVANidhi Yojana.

Besides, BC Sakhis have been appointed in over 57,000 gram panchayats, and more than 1.5 lakh women have secured government jobs in Uttar Pradesh. These initiatives have provided women with the necessary resources and support to thrive in various sectors, ensuring that they derive maximum benefits from a range of government programmes.

Tension prevails in Aligarh after attack on Ram baraat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Tension prevailed in Aligarh after members of a particular community pelted stones in front of a mosque at the Ram baraat in Chandaus police station area of the district.

During the stone-pelting, some mischievous elements also attacked the Ram baraat with swords, in which more than 12 people were injured. The condition of two of the injured was said to be 'critical'. They have been admitted to Aligarh higher health centre for treatment.

After receiving information about the incident, DIG Shalabh Mathur, District Magistrate Indra Vikram Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police Kalanidhi Naithani, circle officers of many circles and forces from many police stations reached the spot. There was a lot of anger among Hindu leaders due to the incident. They surrounded the Chandaus police station and demanded the arrest of the accused.

On behalf of the Hindu organisation, a complaint has been filed in the

police station against more than 150 unknown and 20 named attackers. The police have detained one of the accused. Ram baraat has been taken out in Chandaus police station area for the last 84 years, but this time it was attacked in front of a mosque.

It is alleged that some people came out of the mosque and first pelted stones at the Ram baraat and then attacked the baraat with swords.

Many people who were injured due to the sword attack were admitted to the Aligarh higher health facility for treatment. The Ram baraat alleged that mischievous elements often worked to spoil the atmosphere but no action was taken by the police. People allege that in the past, the police station incharge and circle officer level officers were informed many times that some incident could happen during the Ram baraat procession but they did not take it seriously. Aligarh Range DIG Shalabh Mathur, while talking to the media, said that the Ram baraat was attacked by some people in Chandaus area.

Cop placed under suspension for post in support of Palestine; inquiry ordered

Lucknow (PNS): A police constable found himself in trouble after allegedly sharing a post on social media in support of Palestine.

The constable was suspended and a departmental inquiry was initiated following his action, which occurred amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine.

The Israel conflict is a fallout of the massive terror attack which Hamas militant group launched on Israel from Gaza Strip on October 7.

"The UP Police have set up a departmental inquiry against the constable who had sought donations for Palestine from his official social media account. The constable was suspended for making the controversial post and seeking donations for Palestine on social media. An

inquiry has been set up against the constable in order to find out the reason for supporting Palestine. On being found guilty, strict action would be initiated against the erring constable," said Sandeep Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police of Lakhimpur Kheri.

The police action came following the social media post of constable Sohail Ansari, who is currently posted in Lakhimpur Kheri and hails from Bareilly district, went viral.

"Help Save Palestine," the constable's post read. It further said that "one repost is equal to one dollar. All donations are directly sent to @IslamicreliefUSA. Around 82 lakhs have been raised so far. Add to the story to help save Palestine". This is not the first time in Uttar

Pradesh that a person has supported the Palestinian cause. On October 9, an FIR was registered against four students and others for taking out a march on the campus in support of Palestine. A video of the procession too surfaced on social media.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath issued directives to the police in a recent meeting to take stern action against those trying to spread hatred using the Palestinian cause in the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. In the meeting, he ordered the officials that no controversial statement would be tolerated on social media or at any religious place. Stern action would be taken if someone violated the directive, said a government spokesperson quoting the chief minister.

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, ALLAHABAD BENCH, PRAYAGRAJ COMPANY APPLICATION CA (CAA) NO. 22 / ALD / 2023

In the matter of Companies Act, 2013 AND In the matter of Sections 230 to 232 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 AND In the matter of the Scheme of Arrangement of

LOHIA CORP LIMITED (APPLICANT TRANSFEROR COMPANY / DEMERGED COMPANY) AND KANPUR PACKAGING MACHINES LIMITED (APPLICANT TRANSFEREE COMPANY / RESULTING COMPANY) AND THEIR RESPECTIVE SHAREHOLDERS AND CREDITORS

Lohia Corp Limited, a Company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 having its Registered Office at D-3/A, Panki Industrial Estate, Kanpur - 208022, Uttar Pradesh having Corporate Identification Number U29263UP1981PLC005446 within the jurisdiction of this Tribunal. (APPLICANT TRANSFEROR COMPANY / DEMERGED COMPANY)

Form No. CAA.2 [Pursuant to section 230 (3) of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 6 and 7 of the Companies (Compromises Arrangements and Amalgamations) Rules, 2016]

ADVERTISEMENT OF NOTICE CONVENING THE MEETINGS OF SECURED CREDITORS AND UNSECURED CREDITORS OF THE APPLICANT TRANSFEROR COMPANY / DEMERGED COMPANY

Notice is hereby given that by an Order dated 22nd September, 2023, the Allahabad Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal ("Tribunal") has directed to convene separate meetings of the Secured Creditors and Unsecured Creditors of the Applicant Transferor Company / Demerged Company for the purpose of considering, and if thought fit approving, with or without modification(s), the Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger of the Technical Textile Machinery Business (Demerged / Core Undertaking) of Lohia Corp Limited (Applicant Transferor Company / Demerged Company) and vesting the same as a going concern with Kanpur Packaging Machines Limited (Applicant Transferee Company / Resulting Company).

In pursuance of the said Order and as directed therein, further notice is hereby given that separate meetings of secured and unsecured creditors of the Applicant Transferor Company / Demerged Company will be held as per schedule mentioned below at which time and place the secured and unsecured creditors are requested to attend:-

Sl.No.	Class of Meeting	Day and Date of Meeting	Time (IST)	Venue of Meeting
1	Secured Creditors	Saturday, 25th November, 2023	11:00 AM	Lohia Industrial Complex, Chaubepur, Kanpur-209203 (U.P.)
2	Unsecured Creditors	Saturday, 25th November, 2023	1:00 PM	Lohia Industrial Complex, Chaubepur, Kanpur-209203 (U.P.)

The Notice together with the accompanying documents of the aforesaid meetings shall be sent to the secured creditors and unsecured creditors, whose names appear in the records of the Company as on 31st July, 2023:-

- through electronic mode to those secured creditors and unsecured creditors whose e-mail IDs are registered with the Company; and
- through registered post, speed post or courier to those secured creditors and unsecured creditors who have not registered their email IDs with the Company.

Copies of the said Scheme of Arrangement and of the Statement under Section 230 can be obtained free of cost from the Registered office of the Applicant Transferor Company / Demerged Company situated at D-3/A, Panki Industrial Estate, Kanpur - 208022, Uttar Pradesh. Persons entitled to attend and vote at the respective Meetings, may vote in person or by proxy, provided that all proxies in the prescribed form are deposited at the Registered Office of the Applicant Transferor Company / Demerged Company at D-3/A, Panki Industrial Estate, Kanpur - 208022, Uttar Pradesh, not later than 48 hours before the commencement of the Meeting. Forms of Proxy can be had at the Registered office of the Applicant Transferor Company / Demerged Company.

The Hon'ble Tribunal has appointed Mr. Rajesh Sharma, Chartered Accountant as the Chairperson and Mr. Prakash Saran Srivastava, Advocate as the Co-Chairperson for the said meetings including for any adjournment thereof. Further, the Hon'ble Tribunal, has appointed Ms. Shruti Srivastava, Practising Company Secretary as a Scrutinizer for the said meetings for conducting the poll process in a fair and transparent manner.

The abovementioned Scheme of Arrangement, if approved by the Secured Creditors and Unsecured Creditors in the aforesaid meetings with requisite majority, will be subject to the subsequent approval by the National Company Law Tribunal, Allahabad Bench, Prayagraj.

(SHIKHA SRIVASTAVA)
Authorised Signatory
Date: 16.10.2023
Place: Kanpur of the Applicant Transferor Company / Demerged Company

Man found hanging under mysterious circumstances

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A man missing for the past three days was found hanging from a tree under mysterious circumstances in Majhavan in the Vidhnu police station area on Monday morning. He was identified as Vinod Nut alias Badshah (35). Father Arjun of Majhavan village said his son was addicted to liquor. He would often leave the house and return after four to five days. On October 13 also he had left the house and after three days was found hanging from a tree in the jungle behind a primary health centre in Majhavan on Monday morning. Stray dogs were scratching the body. His kin alleged his killing and informed the police which rushed to the spot along with forensic team and carried out a probe. The body was sent for an autopsy. SHO Pradhuma Singh said a probe was on and on the basis of complaint, further action will be taken in the matter.

THEFT CASE: The Gwaloli police have worked out a theft case within 24

hours of the incident and arrested two persons on Monday. ADCP (Central) Arti Singh told mediapersons that a resident of Gwaloli had informed about a theft in his house on Sunday. After lodging the FIR, police teams were deputed to work out the case. On a tip off police arrested the two thieves - Vishal Kumar Katheria alias Khurchan (19) of Nawabganj and Vicky Sonkar (38) of Gwaloli - and recovered the stolen jewellery along with ₹37,960 cash and one mobile phone on Monday.

They were arrested from the Jhula Park, near Settlement Colony, Gwaloli. They used to commit theft in houses after recce in the morning. The accused were being sent to jail, she said. Police team comprised SIs Ravi Kumar, Dilip Singh, Cons. Rajiv Sagar, Sumit Kumar and Ketan.

MISHAP: A nagar nigam contract safai karmachari was fatally knocked down by an unidentified vehicle in the Panki police station area on Monday morning. His kin took the seriously injured safai kar-

machari to LLR (Hallet) Hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors. The police have started a probe in the matter. Reports said that when the



Agitation being staged on Kalpi Road after the death of a safai karmachari in a road mishap on Monday morning

contract safai karmachari Ram Prakash (48) was going for duty on a bicycle he was knocked down by an unidentified vehicle near the petrol pump on Kalpi Road in the Panki police

station area. At the LLR (Hallet) Hospital the doctors declared him as brought dead. On hearing about the death of their colleague, hundreds of

contract safai karmacharis rushed to the spot, staged an agitation and blocked the Kalpi Road by placing the body of their colleague there. The police tried to pacify the issue.

BHU set to host Regional Science Congress-2023 from today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is all set to host the Regional Science Congress-2023 from October 17 to 21. The mega event will witness participation of students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The event is aimed at attracting young minds and igniting an urge to pursue science as their careers.

The inauguration ceremony of the programme will take place at Mahamana Hall, Institute of Science, on Tuesday at 10 am. Prof Anil Kumar Tripathi, Director, Institute of Science, will be the chief guest of inaugural ceremony.

Vinayak Garg (IRS), Commissioner, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti will chair the programme.

Prof Sukh Mahendra Singh, Dean, Institute of Science, will be the guest of honour, while Pratibha Mishra, SDM, Pindra will grace the occasion as special guest.

BHU launches scheme for faculty of affiliated colleges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) continues its commitment to fostering a dynamic and promising academic environment for all its members, be they students or educators. Taking a significant stride in this direction, the university has introduced the Annie Besant College Teacher Exchange Programme, an initiative designed to enrich the educational landscape under the Institution of Eminence (IoE) programme of the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Named in honour of Dr Annie Besant, a renowned freedom fighter and a strong advocate for a robust Indian education system, this programme not only commemorates her pioneering spirit but also strengthens the academic ties between BHU and its affiliated colleges. Arya Mahila PG College, DAV Degree College, Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, and Vasanta College for Women.

Under this programme, faculty members from these

affiliated colleges will have the invaluable opportunity to spend an academic year as visiting faculty at BHU. During their tenure, they'll gain valuable academic, research, and professional exposure, thus enhancing their own growth and enriching the educational ecosystem.

The Banaras Hindu University will treat visiting faculty on 'deputation' status, providing salaries and allowances as per central government regulations. The programme fosters collaboration, diversity, and research advancements, enabling visiting faculty to engage in joint research initiatives with BHU's esteemed faculty and contribute to ongoing projects.

The programme places a strong emphasis on integration, with host teachers from BHU assigned to support visiting faculty members. They will have access to BHU's state-of-the-art facilities, including extensive libraries, well-equipped laboratories, and cutting-edge research centres.

Vice-Chancellor Prof

Sudhir Kumar Jain notes that this programme is designed to foster collaboration and expand the benefits of BHU's initiatives to a broader community. He states, "Annie Besant's visionary spirit inspires us to strengthen academic bonds and promote excellence in teaching and research, while also focusing on the capacity building of teachers from affiliated colleges. The Annie Besant Visiting Faculty Programme stands as a testament to our commitment to higher education and collaborative partnerships."

Dr Annie Besant, who founded Central Hindu School in 1898 and later entrusted it to Banaras Hindu University, left an indelible legacy. This newly introduced programme embodies her enduring vision by fostering collaboration, promoting academic excellence, and advancing the cause of higher education.

BHU takes inspiration from her legacy as it embarks on a journey to create a vibrant academic environment and forge strong academic bonds.

Review meet organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The seventh meeting of the Reconstituted Expert Committee (EC), Climate Change Programme (CCP), Climate & Clean Energy (C3E) Climate Change of Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India took place in BHU. The committee reviewed the existing CoEs under the NMSKCC and NMSHE missions on their overall performance, research initiatives, implementation feasibility from policy perspectives and the adaptation strategies proposed to address the emerging climate challenges.

Concern over sharp increase in people suffering from mental health problems

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Sakhi Kendra and Ursula Hospital jointly organised a two-day health camp at Shiv Park which came to a close on Monday. The closing programme was inaugurated by Field Coordinator, Maya Kureel. The key person of the camp was Dr Sandeep who expressed concern over the sharp increase in people suffering from mental health problems. Over 60 people approached the camp out of which 10 patients were referred to Kanshiram General Hospital. Dr Sandeep said it was a major concern that mental health took a back seat in India. He said well-being basically meant when both mental and physical health were perfect. He said the major reason for India to lose its mental health was lack of awareness and sensitivity about the issue. He said there was a big stigma

around people suffering from any kind of mental health issues. He said getting treatment for physical problems was naturally a top priority as it incapacitates the person. He said since people had limited finances, physical problems were given preference and mental issues take a back seat as its impact was not as visible as physical issues. He said there was a lack of education and awareness about mental health and people consider mental issues as a taboo and try to hide them. He said they did not discuss it openly with others and felt low and a sense of guilt for suffering from mental illness. Secretary, Sakhi Kendra, Neelam Chaturvedi said a person begins to show symptoms of a mental health condition, but still were able to maintain the ability to function at home, work or school—although perhaps not as easily as before they started to show symptoms.

She said often there was a sense that something was "not right," yet the people shy from disclosing mental problems even with their spouses. She said statistics show that one in every five individuals suffer from some form of mental health illness symptoms. She said around 50 per cent of mental health conditions start by age 14 and 75 per cent of mental health conditions develop by age 24. She said mental illness can be triggered by multiple factors and complex interactions between mind, body and environment resulted in psychological disorders. She said some of the factors were long-term acute stress, biological factors, drug abuse and overdose, cognitive behaviour like constant negative thoughts, low energy, etc. Others who took part in the camp were Dr Sudhanshu, Dr Sumil, Vinita, Arti, Renu, Sarita and Tara.

'Sustainable & eco-friendly mushrooms can be grown using recycled materials'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Vice-Chancellor of Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr Anand Kumar Singh, while inaugurating the six-day mushroom production methods jointly organised by Mushroom Development and Development Centre at the varsity auditorium on Monday said mushroom production can convert the huge lignocellulosic waste materials into a wide diversity of products, edible or medicinal food, feed and fertilisers, protecting and regenerating the environment.

He said mushroom was highly nutritious food and one of the best source of protein which contained less of carbohydrate and fat. He said most population in India suffered due to protein-malnutrition, as

sufficient requirement of proteinaceous supplement was not available in daily diet.

He said mushrooms act as antibacterial, immune system enhancer and cholesterol lowering agents and in addition they were important sources of bioactive compounds. He said as a result of these properties, some mushroom extracts were used to promote human health and were found as dietary supplements.

Addressing the session the nodal officer of Mushroom Research Centre, Dr SK Biswas said biggest benefit for farmers was that it was a low maintenance crop and its cultivation required minimal effort and resources making it a low-maintenance side business. He said sustainable and eco-friendly mushrooms can be grown using recycled materials and

without the use of harmful chemicals making them a sustainable use as food for human consumption. He said they were rich in vitamin C and B complex and the protein content varied between 1.6 to 2.5 per cent. He said mushrooms were an appealing futuristic food source for several reasons one that they were sustainable, nutritious and can be fast growing. He said the second was that they required no regular watering, just a damp environment and this made them more sustainable than other crops being grown for nutrients, like corn and leafy greens etc. He said there has been a perennial demand of mushroom as it was the choice of many individuals. He said mushroom cultivation was a profitable business as it had low initial investment with a prof-

it margin of around 15-20 per cent. Biswas informed that different mushroom species yield differently and the CSA variety will provide all technical guidance to the farmers. He said quite a few yield more like button mushrooms, they give a total of 10 to 15 kg mushroom yield per square foot. He said if the farmers cultivate mushrooms in a 250 square foot, then the total yield was up to 2,500 - 3,750 kg. He said similarly oyster mushroom which was the other popular mushroom variety yields a total of 12 kg per square foot in India. He added the total oyster mushroom yield per 250 square foot was 3,000 kgs. He said each participant will have to deposit a sum of Rs 1,000 registration fee along with personal ID, passport size picture and copy of Aadhar card.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar Tender Notice

Online Tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers / authorized dealers for the Annual Rate Contract for supply of Chemicals, Glassware and Plasticware etc. (upto Rs. 2,00,000/-) for 2023-24. Earnest Money (Rs.20,000/-) may be deposited online latest by 30-10-2023 (till 5:00 PM). Online tender form can be filled through link available on www.gndu.ac.in

Director of Research
NA/12/19630/2023/28882
Dated CHD :- 10/16/2023

V-C inaugurates face recording terminal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain inaugurated the Face Recording Terminal (FRT) at the main entrance of the Central Office here on Monday. Five such



FRTs have been installed in the Central Office and one in the Controller of Examinations' Office. Under this, while coming to the office at 10 am in the morning and leaving the office at 5 pm, the employees will have to pass in front of the FRTs. This machine records the employee's face in just two seconds. About 250 employees of the Central Office and about 150 employees of the Controller of

Examinations' Office will be benefited by its installation. These FRT machines will be coordinated by Joint Registrar Dr Nand Lal. On the occasion the V-C along with Finance Officer Dr Abhay Kumar Thakur, joint registrars Dr HP Mathur, Dr Sanjay Kumar and Dr Nand Lal, deputy registrars Ajay Kumar Singh and Ranjit Shandilya etc were also present.

Emphasis on creating awareness about savings & investments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A huge rally was taken out on the closing day of World Investor Week from Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University on Sunday in association with Rashtriya Sewa Yojana Unit IV. The rally went round university premises and finally culminated at the varsity auditorium where a seminar was held. Manager, Central Investment Services Ltd, Devesh Dubey later addressing the seminar said the effort was to reach out to citizens from all walks of life and create awareness about savings and investments. He said Investor Awareness Programms (IAP) were organised through various partners. He said investing in India can reduce the overall risk of one's portfolio. Dubey said smart investor was an online direct investing service designed to help one make one's own investment decisions, so one can achieve one's financial goals. He said whether one wanted to generate income or grow one's savings, one will find an investment account and a wide range of investment opportunities to suit one's needs. He said technology had connected everyone with all the things around them like managing finances, ordering groceries, accessing entertainment, socialising, networking — all of it was connected and possible at the touch of a button. He added that technological advances had made the world a smarter place. He said investing was essential to achieve one's goals and the only way to

make ones future better. He said by making investments, one were also saving and accumulating a corpus for a rainy day. He said making regular investments forces one to set aside a sum regularly, thereby helping one to instil a sense of financial discipline in the long run. He advised that if one's money had to grow, then it had to earn returns and for this one needed to invest. He advised the investors to be highly careful before investing.

AID: Assistant Director Fisheries NK Agrwal in an official statement on Monday informed that as per the directive of the Director, Fisheries, Lucknow it has been decided to provide financial aid to the farmers in the form of compensation especially for those who suffered damages on account of natural disasters and advised that such farmers to apply online for financial

help at <http://fisheries.up.gov.in>. He added that the verification for such claims needs to be done by the district magistrate and the maximum limit will be ₹4 lakh. He said it has also been decided to provide financial aid up to ₹5 lakh for the treatment of chronic diseases like heart, kidney transplant, surgery of spine, replacement of knees, cancer treatment, HIV, eye surgery, appendix surgery, breast cancer, cancer of ovary and uterus and other critical illnesses. He said this will be paid on par with fee charged by AIIMS, New Delhi. He said people who have undergone surgery need to submit their vouchers and apply online and this had to be countersigned by the chief medical officer. He said this will be only for those who were not availing themselves of any kind of financial benefit of such kind from other sources.

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Press Tender Enq. No. 493/P-3/EMP-W-12461 dated 13-10-2023
Dy. Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites Press Tender for Outsourcing of 1 No. Truck (Capacity 9.0 MT) along with 1 No. Driver and 1 No. Unskilled Worker in GGSSTP, Roopnagar
For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://pspc.in> Website
Note:- Corrigendum & Addendum, if any will be published online at <https://pspc.in> RTP-117/23
76155/12/2288/2023/28892 Dated CHD :- 10/16/2023

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Tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr No	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Chandigarh Dairy Vehicles for the Transportation of Verka Products from Milk Plant, Chandigarh to other Verka Dairy Units, Milkfed Branches & Depots (In the state of Punjab & other states), Upcountry Markets.	Annual
2.	For Verka Mohali Dairy Pest Control Service	Annual/ One job
3.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy a) Outsourcing of man power Unskilled/Semi-skilled/ Skilled/Highly skilled & other Categories. b) Hiring of Insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products in Bathinda Milkshed area.	Annual Annual
4.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy Hiring of Road Milk Tankers for Transportation of milk all over Punjab, Chandigarh, U.P., Delhi & Haryana.	08 No's
5.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy a) Purchase of :- • Total Mixed Ration Machine (TMR). • Conduction Lid Film b) Hiring of Powder plant for Conversion of skimmed milk to SMP	Annual Annual 06 month
6.	For Verka Sangrur Dairy Hiring of :- • Godown (store) for storage of Skimmed Milk Powder. • Cold Store for storage of White Butter. • Vehicle (older than seven years will not be consider for empanelment).	Annual/12000 sq. feet to 14000 sq. feet Annual/Approx. 1000 MT 01 No.
7.	For Verka Ferozepur Dairy Unusable material & plant machinery scrap.	-
8.	For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy a) Supply of rice husk b) Design, supply, installation, testing & commissioning of fully automatic SCADA based CIP System.	2000 MT 01 No.
9.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy Providing :- • Labour through service provider who is having EPF/ESI No. and Labour Providing License. • Security Personnel	As per our requirement
10.	For Verka Mega Dairy, Basai Pathana Hiring of Service Contract for packing of Tetra Pak Products.	Annual

NOTE:
1. 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.
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Incharge (Purchase)

RTO notice to vehicle owners

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Regional Transport Office (RTO) has issued notice to the owners of as many as 8,696 vehicles that registration/fitness has expired, while suspended the registration of as many as 272 vehicles and cancelled the registration of as many as 436 vehicles.

According to the ARTO-Administration Sarvesh Kumar, the total number of the vehicles that registration/fitness has expired is 10,473 and so, the notice has been issued to the owners of as many as 8,696 vehicles, while the registration of as many as 272 vehicles has been suspended and the registration of as many as 436 vehicles has been cancelled. The private vehicles pay one-time tax and so, the vehicles owners do not apply to cancel the registration except the vehicles having total loss.

Table tennis tournament starts



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The two-day GD Goenka First Invitation Table Tennis tournament started at the GD Goenka School on Monday. President of the UP Table Tennis Association Sanjiv Pathak along with school principal S Luther inaugurated the event. Pathak said this is the first initiation taken by a school for the promotion of the game and praised the efforts of the institution. Matches of U-14, U-17 (boys/girls) were played on

Monday. Results of u-17 girls' category were declared as Sir Padampat Singhania School (first), DPS Azad Nagar (second), GD Goenka Public School (third), DPS Kalyanpur (fourth).

Secretary of Kanpur TT Association Sanjay Tandon, Rajan Luther, Sunil Shukla, Pradip Mishra, Amir, referee Anjali, Aman, Ansh, Sahil Srivastava and coach of all the schools were present.

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION: The prize distribution ceremony of 17th Inter-school

Taekwondo Championship was held at the Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) on Sunday. Principal Bhawna Gupta, who was the chief guest, awarded medals to winners. The SPSEC won the prize of overall champions while Archies Education Centre Bishop Westcott School were the runner-up and third winners respectively. Sports teachers were also felicitated. They included Sanjay Pal, HoD, Delhi Public School, Azad Nagar, and Sunil Shukla, HoD, GD Goenka School. President of the Kanpur Taekwondo Association Deepak Chaurasia, senior vice-president Dinesh Dixit, vice-president Rajendra Gupta, general secretary Pradip Singh Chauhan, co-secretary Satyendra Singh Yadav, Deepak Gaur, Jishan, Ravi and Alka were present.

Cleanliness drive at Assi Ghat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The 95 Battalion of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Srijan Samajik Vikas Nyas and Municipal Corporation on Monday jointly launched a cleanliness drive at Assi Ghat here. The local MLA Saurabh Srivastava led the drive. Under the direction of DIG, Chandauli Range Surendra Chaudhary and Commandant of 95 Battalion of CRPF Anil Kumar Briksh, the cleanliness drive was launched by the CRPF, Srijan Samajik Vikas Nyas and Municipal Corporation at Assi Ghat here, while the MLA Saurabh Srivastava led it.

Sansad Khel Pratiyogita Kashi-2023 begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After successful conducting of Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav (KSSM) in which the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself attended the closing function to award the winners, Sansad Khel Pratiyogita Kashi-2023 was inaugurated at UP College grounds here on Monday. The sports competition was inaugurated jointly by UP ministers Ravindra Jaiswal and Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' by lighting the lamp and hoisting of flag.

The function was also attended by Mayor Ashok Tiwari, city chief of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Vidya Sagar Rai, District Magistrate S Rajalingam, Chief Development Officer Himanshu Nagpal, ADM (City) Alok Verma, RSO, BSA, Additional Municipal Commissioner and many other senior officials and BJP leaders. The inaugural function began with the presentation of Saraswati Vandana, welcome song and cultural programmes by the schoolchildren.

In the first event of the sports competition, the 100 metres race for girls and boys was started by both the ministers of state (Independent Charge) by flagging off the same. After this, the students' volleyball competition was also inaugurated by them, along with, Mayor and DM by play-



UP Ministers Ravindra Jaiswal and Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' inaugurating Sansad Khel Pratiyogita Kashi-2023 in Varanasi on Monday.

ing volleyball.

According to the district administration, it is expected that 1,64,250 male and 1,13,227 female players will participate in the competitions at different levels in the district. The competition will run till November 8. There is no age limit in this competition. Competitions of 27 sports and 35 events are being organised from village to city. Transgender and disabled people will also showcase their talents in this sports event.

According to Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, a good

women's participation in the event is expected as there is enthusiasm among the girls and the attraction of the event will be the participation of 103-year-old Kalavati who will take part in a race event. He said that 2,77, 642 people have registered for the event and the number of male participants in the competition is 1, 64, 250 while of female participants 1,13,227. Besides, 165 transgender have also registered. The CDO informed that there will be 27 competitions in this sports competition.

The PM during his last visit in the city had launched the

Sansad Khel Pratiyogita Kashi-2023 portal while laying the foundation stone of the International Cricket Stadium on September 23 from his parliamentary constituency. The aim was to connect sports with people, so that youth can also take sports as a career. To showcase the talent of players from village to city, sports competitions are being organised at gram panchayat, nyay panchayat, university and school/ college, development block, zone and district levels. The competition will be organised at the district level from November 6 to 8.

2 brothers feared drowned in Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Two brothers were feared drowned in the Ganga in the rural area of Puramufi. Their friends raised an alarm and the local boatmen jumped into the river to trace them, but all their efforts went in vain.

Himanshu (20) of Akbarpur Sallahpur under Puramufi is the driver of the chief medical superintendent of Colvin Hospital. On Sunday he went to Fatehpur Ghat on a bike with his younger brother Mahendra Raj. They were accompanied by some neighbours. Suddenly Himanshu slipped into the area where water was deep. On seeing him drowning the younger brother came forward to save Himanshu, but both of them were swept away. Their friends raised an alarm. Some local boatmen responded but they could not save the brothers.

Efforts were made later to trace them but in vain.

NABBED: Samajwadi Party block pramukh from Kaudihar Mohammad Muzaffar tried to dodge the police by wearing a burqa but was nabbed and sent to jail. Muzaffar was wanted in a case of cow slaughter. On May 11, 2022, SO Soraon had intercepted a truck near HP petrol pump in Kurgaon. The truck was from Haryana and had 16 cows out of which eight were found dead. A case had been lodged against unidentified persons in this connection but investigation revealed that Muzaffar was the kingpin of the cow slaughter gang. Aslam has already been sent to jail in this connection. Muzaffar went missing since his name figured in the cow slaughter case. The police raided his hideouts several times, but he managed to escape every time. On a tip off

the police raided a place in the trans-Ganga segment of the district and caught Muzaffar while trying to escape wearing a 'burqa'. After being produced before the magistrate, he was sent to jail.

TIGHT SECURITY: Taking a lesson from the murder of mafia don Atiq Ahmed and his brother Khalid Azeem alias Ashraf by sharpshooters in a hospital when they were taken there for a medical examination, the police did not allow mediapersons to interact with yet another kingpin of the crime world, Babloo Srivastava. He had been brought here from Bareilly jail under tight security to be produced in the court in connection with kidnapping and ransom demand of Rs 10 crore.

Babloo was fearing his murder while being transferred from Bareilly jail to Prayagraj court, and requested to record

his statement through video conferencing, but the court had turned down the request of the mafia don, who is quite close to the 'D' gang.

Babloo was brought here on Sunday and kept in Kaushambi jail for security reasons. When he was produced in the court on Monday a good number of mediapersons and lawyers had gathered there to interact with him but no one was allowed to meet him.

Babloo was produced in a special Gangster Court here in connection with the kidnapping of a trader Pankaj Mahendra and asking for a ransom of Rs 10 crore. Statements of other criminals involved in this kidnapping — Vineet Parihar, Shachchidanand Yadav, Chandra Prakash and Sandeep Chaudhary have already been recorded by the court.

Bid to ensure foolproof fire security arrangements

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In a bid to ensure foolproof fire security arrangements, the officials of the Fire department have asked all puja pandals to follow a set of directives. Moreover, all puja pandal committees must have NOC from the Fire department for setting up pandal.

Apart from security arrangements for visitors, the Fire department has asked committees concerned not to use synthetic material or ropes to construct puja pandals. Besides, every puja pandal has to leave around 4.5 metre space around it so that people could evacuate puja pandal in case of crisis.

Pandals must have more than three metres height and no pandal should be set up under the electric wire cable. The exit gate must have at least five metres width and distance of pandal from main road must be within 45 metres.

Chief Fire Officer (Prayagraj) RK Pandey told

mediapersons, "We have asked puja pandal committees to hire licensed contractors for lighting of pandals. There should be at least two exit points and both the gates should be opposite from each other". Besides, we have also asked all puja pandal committees to ensure emergency lighting services and there should be no fire crackers show in and around the pandal. Every pandal must have at least two advanced fire-fighting extinguishers and water storage of 200 litres near the pandal, he said.

The CFO said as many as eight teams are being constituted to check puja pandal at frequent intervals in Civil Lines, Naini, Bara, Meja Koraon, Handia, Phulpur and Soraon. Apart from security plan, police have also decided to use separate plan for crowd control or any other emergency, especially during evening hours. Senior cops have advised puja committee to depute additional volunteers to control the crowd thronging the pandals,

especially during peak hours (7 pm to 2 am).

These volunteers are being deployed in shifts to avoid any laxity. All the major puja pandals would be under police scanner and skilled volunteers would be assisting cops to handle emergency-like situation in case of stampede or fire break out.

There will be separate arrangement for water to ensure adequate supply to tackle any accidental fire. There are plans to utilise drone cameras for assessing crowd strength in pandals and also to keep an eye on security measures. Each policeman and private volunteer will be aware about their role and responsibility.

Besides, a reserve water storage facility will also set up to control any fire outbreak. "We are more focused on security arrangements and are coordinating with the local puja pandal committees," said a senior cop.

Majority of visitors throng pandals during evening hours

to enjoy the lighting arrangements and the grandeur of the Goddess while offering puja. There will be shift wise duties of policemen at static locations so that they remain alert to tackle any crowd problem.

On their part, the men-in-khaki have already drafted an elaborate security arrangement plan for Durga Puja pandals to prevent any untoward incident during the festival and the police station concerned will be coordinating with committee members regarding security arrangements. Installation of CCTVs will be mandatory to keep an eye on the visitors and additional security forces have been deployed to maintain law and order.

Puja committees have also been instructed to ensure proper lighting inside and outside the pandals during Durga Puja and Navaratri celebrations. A senior cop said, "There will be around 100 small and big puja pandals in the city and security will be reviewed on a routine basis."

BJP to launch voter awareness drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Regional (Kashi) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Dilip Singh Patel said that the party will launch a voter awareness campaign from October 29 under the Mission 2024. According to him, in this direction, the state unit of BJP has made a blueprint in which the party's first focus will be on the voter list. "For this, a mega campaign to be known as Voter Chetna Maha Abhiyan will be started simultaneously in the entire state from October 29 in which the party will knock every house," he said, adding that to make the campaign a success, a training camp for party workers has been started at the district level from Monday.

On his return after attending a state level meeting addressed by state chief Bhopendra Singh Chaudhary and general secretary (Organisation) Dharampal Singh, the regional president said that despite the alliance of the parties in the last Lok Sabha elections, BJP had got more than 50 per cent votes. "BJP achieved historic victory in urban body, panchayat and cooperative elections and in



Regional BJP chief DS Patel addressing party workers in Varanasi.

such a situation, the strong organisational structure of BJP is capable of accepting any challenge and giving positive results," he said.

Patel further said that during the campaign, the party workers will approach the concerned employees to add names of the youths in the voter list who have completed 18 years of age, change the residence addresses of married women voters and add new

voters and delete the names of deceased voters. He said that complete information about the proposed campaign would be given to the workers by the senior party office-bearers in the divisional workshops to be held in the coming days so that the work of voter verification can be done successfully and every eligible person can become a voter.

He said that participation of every party office-bearer,

worker and public representative will be ensured in the campaign.

Giving information about the two days training programme being organised at the district level from Monday, he said that training for voter divisional workshops on October 18 and 19. He said that the draft voter list will be published by the Election Commission on October 27.

"After listening to the next episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' programme on October 29, all the party office-bearers, workers, MPs, MLAs and other public representatives will contact every house and get involved in voter verification work. Work has to be done to connect every worker with the campaign," he said, adding that the party would contact each voter by running a special door-to-door contact campaign from October 30 to November 5 and from November 25 to December 3.

He said that by contacting the new voters and connecting them with the party, victory in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections will be easy and BJP would achieve the target of winning 80 seats in the state.

Devotees throng Brahmacharini Temple

VARANASI (PNS): Hundreds of devotees thronged Brahmacharini Devi Temple located near Brahma Ghat in Kotwali area on the second day of Shardiya Navratra here on Monday. Right from the morning hours, there was a long line of devotees in the nearby narrow lanes and only a few devotees were allowed to enter the temple premises at a time to avoid any awkward situation. The devotees waited for a long time to reach the temple and offer prayers.

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 Vindhayachal 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, Sheelta Mata Mandir at Adalpura (near Chunar, Mirzapur) and others. Due to the high level of water in river Ganga, though it was recorded steady during the day, the devotees faced it tough to reach Sheelta Mata Mandir at Old Dashashwamedh Ghat. At both Durga Kund and Brahmacharini Devi temples, elaborate security arrangements were made.

Two commit suicide

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): Two persons committed suicide in two separate incidents in the past 24 hours in the city. In the first case, a 27 year-old youth identified as Yashwant, a resident of Pratapgarh committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling at his rented accommodation near Bagh road under the Khuldbad police station. The police said Yashwant was preparing for the competitive exams and had not picked up phone for the past two days. The incident came to the fore when his uncle went to meet him but found door locked from inside. On being alerted, a team of Khuldbad police rushed to the spot and found the youth hanging from the ceiling. The police said foul smell was also coming from the room suspecting that youth might have hanged himself two days back. The body has been sent for the post

mortem. In second case, a 37-year-old man identified as Abhishek of Lukerganj committed suicide by hanging himself at his residence under the same police station. Initial police investigation revealed that he committed suicide due to domestic issues.

PRAYAGRAJ JN BEING REDEVELOPED: Prayagraj Junction is being redeveloped in view of the Mahakumbh to be held in 2025 here. Now work has started on platform numbers 9 and 10 from Sunday. No trains will operate on this route for 77 days. As many as 10 trains have been completely cancelled while around 30 trains were shifted to other platforms. Both these platforms are important because trains go to cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Surat from here. This change may also cause some inconvenience to the passengers.

IIT (BHU) organises campus dialogue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

An engaging 'Campus Dialogue with Students' was organised by the Research Cell of IIT (BHU) on Monday with Padma Bhushan & Padma Shri Prof Padmanabhan Balam, former Director of IISc Bangalore. The talk was titled 'Reflections on Science in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic'.

He spoke about the history of science and how we advanced from primal beings to using microscopes and telescopes to understand different worlds. He reiterated and explained Dr Richard Feynmann's atomic hypothesis that in the event of a cataclysm where all knowledge were to be destroyed, humans should start their research with the fact that 'all things are made of matter'. The evolution of the pandemic was also talked about where he stressed on the importance of biotechnology in today's world. He considered the research on cells as the greatest feat of biological engineering and also that biology unifies all sectors of science. During his talk, Prof Balam also discussed the interdisciplinary nature of science and the contributions of various scientists like Erwin Schrödinger, Richard Feynman, Lynn Sagan and many more.

The session was organised in the Annie Besant Lecture Theatre, with a capacity of



Padma Bhushan Prof P Balam at 'campus dialogue with students' programme at IIT (BHU) in Varanasi on Monday.

300, brimming with students, research scholars, PhD applicants and professors. The audience was so pumped up that many students and the faculty stayed back even after the session ended and kept discussing the realms of science with Prof Balam who kept answering their questions with utmost energy and excitement.

The programme began with a warm welcome of Prof P Balam by the Dean (Research & Development), IIT (BHU), Prof Vikash Kumar Dubey and the Head of the Biomedical Engineering Department, IIT (BHU) Prof Sanjeev Kumar Mahto, with bouquet and shawl. The event proceeded with Prof Balam's excellent and informative talk

on advancing science and research post-pandemic. Afterwards, the curious audience and the speaker had an engaging question and answer session. The questions were interesting, and the answers were vividly descriptive and inspiring.

Post the question-answer session, the eminent scholar was given a memento as a token of respect and appreciation. Assistant professor Aditya Kumar Padhi from the School of Biochemical Engineering concluded the talk with a heartfelt vote of thanks to the guest. The session was hosted by Muskan Gupta, Sophomitra head of the Research Cell, IIT (BHU) and third-year undergraduate student of the

Chemical Engineering department. Deans, senior faculty members, and a staggering strength of over 300 students brimming with curiosity and passion attended the talk.

A renowned scientist and a prolific author, Professor Balam boasts an impressive career with nearly 1,000 publications and 25,000 citations spanning over five decades. After completing his postdoctoral training at Harvard under the Nobel Laureate Robert Burns Woodward at just 24, he later served as the Director of IISc, Bangalore, for over 10 years. Prof Balam's legacy shines brightly, symbolising unparalleled dedication and scholarly brilliance in the scientific community.

Millet need of the hour: Minister

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel before flagging off a rally to make people aware to promote the use and farming of 'Shree Anna' at Vikas Bhawan on Sunday said millet is the need of the hour hence it should be adopted not only in the larger interest of health but also of nature.

She said that the UNO has declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Regarding the district she said farming of millet is the way to cope with the declining groundwater situation. Addressing the gathering District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjana said millet needs less water for irrigation hence is very suitable for area like Mirzapur. On the occasion other experts also expressed their views and the vote of thanks was proposed by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Sriilaxmi VS.

Flagging off the awareness rally taken out by the Agriculture department the minister appealed to farmers to



Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel flagging off the millet awareness rally at Vikas Bhawan on Sunday

not only make others aware but also adopt themselves first. The awareness rally which started from Vikas Bhawan passed through different localities and villages and concluded at the agriculture farm house in Bisundapur.

INAUGURATED: Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel has inaugurated the Vindhya Darshan Mela app at Vikas Bhawan on Sunday. She praised the initiative of the district

administration which prepared the app for the convenience of the devotees. She said the app had many information, including medical facilities, police assistance, hotels as well as dhabas, rain baseras, toilet facility, CNG/petrol pump, contact number of district administration, medical camp etc. She said the entire information related to the 'darshan' route will be available to the devotee through one click. DM Priyanka Niranjana and CDO

Sriilaxmi VS were also present on the occasion.

COUPLES REUNITE: Under Project Milan programme eight couples reunited through the Family Counselling Centre (FCC) located at Police Lines on Sunday. The couples were living separately due to misunderstanding over trivial issues and the case were brought to the police. The police had referred them to the FCC. After separate sittings eight couples agreed to live together. The staff extended their best good wishes to them for a successful life and bright future. Constable Sapna and colleague Sunita were present.

ARRESTED: The Madhian police arrested an accused of raping a minor girl on Sunday. A woman had lodged a case on September 22 in this connection. The police started the investigation. On being tipped off by an informer the police nabbed an accused of Belwan village under Padari police station from the Madhian area on Sunday and sent him to jail.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Underdogs no more!

Buzkashi-playing Afghanistan has braved high odds to make a mark on world cricket, and how!

Ignoring long years of wars, conflicts and turmoil, Afghanistan's cricket team threw up the biggest upset in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, vanquishing defending champions England by a convincing margin of 69 runs. This victory marked only their second win in World Cup history. But it changes everything: Afghanistan's battle-hardened cricket team is now firmly established among the sport's elite. Of course, some credit is due to India, which has helped the Afghan team reach this position of strength. The journey of Afghan cricketers was shaped by their early training in Pakistan, with some even starting their crickering careers in refugee camps across the border. As they played in dusty and makeshift grounds, they harboured dreams of representing their country on the international stage. The team from this war-torn country made its T20 and ODI debuts against Pakistan. However, the turning point came when the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) stepped in to play a pivotal role in the swift ascension of the sport within the strife-ridden nation. In 2015, the Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex in Greater Noida served as a temporary "home ground" for the Afghans. In the world of cricket, few stories are as captivating and inspirational as the meteoric rise of the Afghan team. Over the past two decades, its journey has been a testament to the indomitable spirit of the Afghans and their unrelenting pursuit of excellence. From its humble beginnings to becoming a formidable force, Afghanistan has not only earned the confidence and respect of major cricketing nations but also made a mark in history.

Its remarkable progress in cricket came through their participation in domestic and international tournaments, such as the World Cricket League. Under the guidance of coaches and mentors, Afghan players honed their skills and developed a unique brand of cricket. Their bowlers, known for their pace and spin prowess, have become a force to reckon with, while their batters have shown glimpses of brilliance. One of the defining moments for Afghanistan was gaining Full Member status from the International Cricket Council (ICC) in 2017. It meant they were granted the same status as giants like India, England and Australia. The emergence of the Afghanistan cricket team is a story of resilience and dedication. It has captured the hearts of cricket enthusiasts and earned the confidence and respect of their peers. The fear factor now associated with Afghanistan's spinners and batters is a testament to their remarkable journey. As Afghanistan continues to take impressive strides in international cricket, it is crucial to celebrate its success as a reminder of the power of sports to bring people together, regardless of their background or circumstances. Afghanistan's cricketering journey is a story of hope and inspiration, one that demonstrates how determination can lead to triumph in the most challenging circumstances. To rephrase Shah Rukh Khan's famous dialogue from a Hindi movie: "Don't underestimate the grit of a war-torn nation!"

PICTALK



Artists perform during the annual presentation 'Shri Ram', a dance drama on Sampoorna Ramayana, in New Delhi PTI

Is it worth going to study in a foreign university?

Most students fall for the smart marketing tactics and the lure of getting good employment overseas, realising little that the jobs are scarce there

For the past few years, the craze for people from India to go abroad to gain admission to foreign colleges and settle there has been on the increase. According to the government, between 2016 and 2021, 26.44 lakh Indian students went abroad to study. The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) estimates show that in the year 2020, 4.5 lakh Indian students went abroad for education and they spent \$ 13.5 billion in this process. In the year 2022, this expenditure was 24 billion dollars that is, about 2 lakh crore rupees. According to the report of Redseer Strategy Consultant, by 2024 this expenditure may reach US\$ 80 billion, that is, 7 lakh crore rupees, when an estimated 20 lakh Indian students will go abroad to study. If we make a state-wise analysis, till the year 2021, among the students going to study abroad, 12 per cent were from Punjab and Andhra Pradesh each; and 8 per cent were from Gujarat. If seen in proportion to the total number of youth, then 7 out of



every thousand youth from Punjab, 4 out of every thousand youth from Andhra Pradesh and at least 2 out of every thousand youth from Gujarat are going to study abroad every year. If we take the cumulative numbers from 2016 to 2022, the situation looks quite alarming. This number is 50 per thousand in Punjab, 30 per thousand in Andhra Pradesh and 14 per thousand in Gujarat. The exponential increase in the number of students going abroad to study is a matter of concern for many reasons. The biggest concern is that these youth are migrating to foreign countries in search of education and employment and this migration is causing a shortage of labour for the economic activities in the country. There has been huge progress in the field of education in the country. If we

look at the admission of students in higher education, then in 1990-91, only 49.2 lakh students took admission in higher educational institutions; but this number reached 41.4 lakh in the year 2020-21. Broadly speaking, the number of students taking admission to higher education has increased more than 10 times in the last 30 years. If we talk about higher education institutions, we see that in the year 2021, there were 1113 universities and equivalent institutions, 43796 colleges and 11296 standalone educational institutions in the country. As far as the fee for admission into educational institutions is concerned, in most of the Indian educational institutions it's much lower than the fees in foreign institutions and most of the foreign institutions in which Indian youth are taking admission are of very low standard. So, the question arises why do Indian youth spend huge amounts of money and get admission to foreign educational institutions? The simple answer is that most of the students who go abroad to pursue higher education, actually don't go to

get a higher degree. The real intent of Indian students going to other countries including Australia, Canada, and European countries including the United Kingdom, is not too keen to get an education. Their real objective is to get employment there. But Indian youth fail to realise that there is a huge shortage of employment in these countries also. In many countries, incidents of violence by local people, against Indians and youth coming from other countries, generally from South Asia, are also being witnessed. Most of the young students leaving the country fail to get employment there and have to return home, due to which they are also facing frustration. The students are not able to realise that today in Canada, Australia and European countries, where they are taking admission to educational institutions, those educational institutions are giving easy admission to Indian students in their institutions, for profit. (The writer is a professor, at PGDAV college, University of Delhi, views are personal)



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

The Israel-Hamas war in perspective



PRAFULL GORADIA

Religiosity woven into war has the automatic effect of rendering the ensuing bloodshed all the more bitter. The results are devastating

The world is used to the spectacle of scholars, academics and social and political activists propagating and conferring for global peace, but it is increasingly difficult to dismiss the notion that peace is little more than an uneasy halt between wars. While civilians somehow cling to some unreal hope, those in charge of the political destinies talk of peace, but actually build and sharpen the weaponry for the next bout.

In the land of origin of the three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, peace is currently the biggest casualty. Virtually everyone is concerned about the Israel-Hamas war. One, however, does almost immediately ponder as to how Tel Aviv was caught by utter surprise. Needless to add, the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad has been reputed to be one of the most efficient in the world, possibly the best spy agency. On balance, it appears that Hamas was conscious that there are groups within Israel that desire the Jewish homeland and country to further expand into a Greater Israel, as large and great as possible. Undoubtedly, the Hamas leaders themselves yearn to wipe the Jewish nation out of existence. Curiously, like in love, so in hate; such desires are mutual. With the help of friends and allies, it is likely that Hamas has been, for a long time planning to strike a 'grand slam' at their Jewish neighbour.

Just as the Israeli leaders would like to get rid of Hamas from the country's neighbourhood. All of this lays the grounds for a conflict before the end of which the other side would supposedly be wiped out. A wounded enemy is more dangerous than one who hasn't been wounded. A grand slam, so to say, might have been thought to be necessary. The question is whether Israel too sees the Hamas invasion and barbarity as a great opportunity for "setting things right" in the Middle East.

An organized state in Tel Aviv would certainly be functioning round the clock and would not give its adversaries any chance to destroy it. As luck would have it,



Hamas perceived that its Jewish neighbour was divided over the political divide over the issue of judicial powers enjoyed by the country's Supreme Court. They needed to be reduced or restrained so that the democratically elected Knesset or Parliament could assert its will more effectively. While the members of the Knesset could not readily reach a settlement, the people of the country took over and protested through public meetings and processions. Such scenes had not been seen ever before and were being played out again and again, on the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. When the adversary is divided, it is human nature for the other side to smell an opportunity. As we have discussed, the desire of Hamas has been intense. The images of an Israel divided in the streets of its cities would certainly have held out the temptation, to believe that this was the opportunity. A terrorist organization like Hamas is unlikely to be foresighted. In fact, terrorism per se seldom win. For the simple reason that its adventures, however violent and apparently successful, do not



HAMAS HAS GIFTED ISRAEL WITH A JUSTIFICATION TO BLAME ANY COUNTRY OR ORGANISATION IT CHOOSES AS A PARTNER-IN-CRIME THAT EXPRESSES EVEN MINIMAL SYMPATHY FOR HAMAS

capture territory. And without territory, there is no lasting victory. And yet, terrorist after terrorist gives up his life, merely to temporarily devastate places and people. Evidently, such men or women cannot be far-sighted. To expect the Hamas to be, therefore, to have vision is to expect a bat to have eyesight. Regardless, the attacks launched by Hamas on October 7 Bloody Saturday were thoughtless, to say the least. The consequences from Sunday onwards were foreseeable and yet, were not seen by the terrorist fighters of Hamas. It is not impossible that their escape route may, in an eventuality, be the Mediterranean Sea.

On the other hand, Hamas has gifted Israel with a justification to blame any country or organisation it chooses as a partner-in-crime that expresses even minimal sympathy for Hamas. Israel would also, and not without reason, feel justified to heap destruction on not any the Hamas but also the palaces of Qatar (which reportedly funds Hamas to some extent) and Iran's nuclear toys, as well as bomb places in Syria, most of which are in ruins anyway because of the latter's civil war. Fortunately for

Israel, ammunition has begun flying in from the USA; if necessary, even weapons would flow in. When Israel's Prime Minister says that his country will change the Middle East, he isn't bluffing.

Unfortunately, Israel—and India too—has been battling enemies who look upon war as a religious duty. Religiosity woven into war has the automatic effect of rendering the ensuing bloodshed all the more bitter. Such religious beliefs hold the promise of an eternal heaven with unending gratification of one's natural lust, in the pursuit of which the adherents of those dogmas have little hesitation in unleashing hell on earth.

For India, tightening our security, internal and external, in the wake of the war in Gaza will be imperative, for Hamas' initial boldness could well embolden elements in Pakistan to try something similar. This time, the Arab states have not supported Hamas, as several of them are seeking better relations with Israel and a different future.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author, and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA'S DEPLORABLE HUNGER INDEX

Sir—It's shocking news that the Global Hunger Index for 2023 ranks India 111th out of 125 countries, categorizing the level of hunger as "serious." While the Union government has rejected this index as erroneous, it can't be completely dismissed, considering that India ranked 102nd out of 119 countries in 2022. Despite maintaining buffer stocks, people dying of starvation is a disgrace, especially for the world's fifth-largest economy, ranking lower than nations like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sub-Saharan African countries. Hoarding food grains while thousands starve is extreme callousness. Hollow government slogans claiming that nobody will die of starvation are contradicted. Furthermore, this alarming ranking on the Global Hunger Index points to a harsh reality: millions of our fellow citizens are struggling to access their daily bread, with their basic human rights being compromised. The fact that India, often celebrated for its rapid economic growth and technological advancements, ranks below countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa in terms of hunger is a stark contradiction. It highlights the persistent disparities that exist within the nation and the urgent need for comprehensive policy reform. The government's rejection of this index as erroneous should not serve as a shield to deflect from the pressing issues at hand. It's imperative for the authorities to take this wake-up call seriously and delve into the root causes of this hunger crisis.

They must work towards a more equitable distribution of resources, food security, and social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable among us.

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

INDIA TO HOST 2036 OLYMPIC GAMES

Sir—Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 141st session of the World Olympic Committee in Mumbai, announcing India's readiness to host the 2036 Olympic Games. If the World

India beats Pakistan, again



An 8-0 verdict against Pakistan in World Cup matches has proven that the team from our neighborhood is not up to the challenge at this level. Even the Pakistan hockey team went

down tamely without a semblance of a fight in the Asian Games. The toss proved vital in the ODI games, and after losing it, the team was progressing at a slow pace. As the team across the border failed to accelerate the scoring, danger lurked. Once Babar, the star batsman, was out, the wickets started tumbling, and the end was in sight. Instead of boosting their scoring with pinch hitters to upset Indian spin bowling, the lower-order batsmen fell into the trap and perished. The Indian batting did not retreat against Afridi but instead wielded the willow with great effect, hitting fours and sixes, bringing the target within reach. Captain Rohit Sharma's batting and his ability to handle both bowlers and field placements received appreciation. In the end, Pakistan was soundly defeated. However, Pakistan has had a great tradition of cricket and this is not the end of it as they can and will bounce back to the height they once were.

Ck Ramani | Trichy

Olympic Organization accepts this demand, it will be a significant honor for India. India is rapidly emerging as a global superpower, rising from the tenth to the fifth largest economy in a few years. It is expected to be ranked third soon. Hosting the Olympics will introduce India's tourism to the world and be a source of pride for athletes. India's successful organization of the Asian Games and the inclusion of cricket in the World Olympic Games are positive developments. However, India's permanent membership in the UN Security Committee is still pending, which is crucial for maintaining world peace. The Olympics in India will be a momentous occasion with numerous benefits.

Shantaram Wagh | Pune

GAZA'S WORSENING CONDITION

Sir—Gaza and the West Bank are becoming a new battleground as we saw in Bucha, Kyiv, and Donetsk region of

Ukraine at the start of 2023 when Russia invaded Ukraine. The condition of Gaza is dire after the Israeli Air Force occupation. The Iron Sword operation by Israel's defense ministry and the suffering of Palestinians paint a grim picture.

The world is marred by struggles for superiority and ethnic and religious tensions. Gaza has seen no peace for years, only shelling, tears, plight, fear, and anger. Wars persist without solutions, causing destruction and suffering. We must shift our mindset from war to peace, as India opposes the erasure of the Palestinian community. The world needs de-escalation, not war. We must focus on peace in conflict zones, or the world will continue fighting for unnecessary supremacy.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION

Forbearance and endurance are paramount keys to achieving success



RAVI VALLURI

Anand was a mere mentee at a celebrated flautist's music school. The youngster was bewitched by a damsel who too was learning to play the flute under the expertise of the legendary musician.

Anand and Bhairavi were ensnared by craving; they were in a tearing hurry to achieve stardom through soulful renditions of the fabled Ananda Bhairavi raga. Their respected Master was however certainly not impressed at the proffer of his novitiates and admonished them.

"One needs enormous tapas to arrive at the world stage," he added.

A Zen Story: Years ago, a greenhorn was learning various nuances of breathing techniques and meditation at a temple of knowledge. After acquiring some basic skills, he approached his monk as to how soon he could graduate from the monastery and begin to spread the knowledge of Zen Buddhism. The impassioned monk was to say impassively, "It will take you ten more years."

"Master, I will practice twice the number of hours, then how long will it take me to become a suzerain of Buddhism?"

"Thirty years," was the bland reply.

Learning to Learn: Forbearance and endurance are paramount keys to achieving success. Tearing hurry and sheer desperation to climb the ladder to achieve fame in any field leads only to severe psychological problems.



Psychotherapy: The intent of a therapeutic approach is to upend the pyramid. It is to ensure the betterment of the victim's life. The therapy reinforces the client's resolve for mitigating distress leading to an improved lifestyle. By adopting a holistic line of treatment, the mind is blessed with positivity, becomes robust and develops the ability to eschew unwelcome habits.

There is astonishing progress in the victim who undergoes a mental transformation; the thinking pattern changes dramatically and becomes empowered to make mindful decisions on the voyage of rehabilitation. Gifted and trained psychotherapists combine their clinical insights and their mental GPS to zero in on suitable psychodynamic therapies.

Dynamics of Rehabilitation and Recuperation: Fundamentally, psychodynamic therapy cogitates that it is an intra-psychic conflict that is primarily responsible for the psychological malady. The fountainhead of the problem lies within the psyche of the individual. Research in the field opines that querulous desires of childhood and unmitigated childhood fears are essentially responsible for intra-psychic disorders. Keeping in mind the above two factors, psychotherapists deploy the technique of free association and eliciting information through visualisation, dreams, thoughts, and feelings to create a database. The cutting edge of the therapy is provided as the therapist glides and floats from the intellectual frame to an emotional plane. Psychodynamic therapy enfranchised the therapist to understand the mind of the patient and provide emotional succour.

Last but not least, the duration of treatment is of tremendous significance. The magnitude of the problem is obviously a key determinant of the span of treatment. However, around 15 to 20 vigorous sessions put the patient well on the road to renaissance.

Alternative therapies

Unbridled ambition could also trigger alcoholism, bulimia, heavy smoking, and substance abuse among others. In such cases, alternative therapies such as practising the unique rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya, Vipassana, sessions of yoga and pranayama, and meditation techniques of Yoga Nidra, help in the relaxation of the mind and body immensely.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd and is a faculty at the Art of Living. Views are personal)

Igniting the passion of traditional entrepreneurs



DINESH SOOD

'PM Vishwakarma' is an attempt to empower the self-employed traditional entrepreneurs who contribute to their communities and create employment



Many people strive to secure their dream job and are unwilling to risk becoming an entrepreneur. However, it is notable that professions such as blacksmiths, goldsmiths, potters, carpenters, sculptors, barbers, cobblers, and others are a significant part of India's workforce. These traditional tiny entrepreneurs work with their hands and tools and are usually self-employed individuals whose skills are passed down from generation to generation. This proves that entrepreneurs are born, not made. The culture in which these individuals are raised plays a significant role in shaping their entrepreneurial mindset. They witness the ups and downs of entrepreneurship and choose to live their lives similarly. Recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the 'PM Vishwakarma' scheme worth Rs 13,000 crore to promote such traditional tiny entrepreneurs to create more employers than employees. The aim is to integrate traditional tiny entrepreneurs into the domestic and global value chains by providing skill upgradation and modernisation. This will help to enhance their already existing traditional skill sets and make them more relevant, thereby improving their socio-economic status and quality of life.

Successful entrepreneurs are not limited to those who inherit family businesses. An individual's mindset towards entrepreneurship is crucial and develops with age and experience. As people mature, they become aware of the advantages of entrepreneurship and often choose it as a career path. However, how can we motivate those who do not come from entrepreneurial backgrounds to become future employers and contribute to our sustainable econo-



SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS ARE NOT LIMITED TO THOSE WHO INHERIT FAMILY BUSINESSES. AN INDIVIDUAL'S MINDSET TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS CRUCIAL AND DEVELOPS WITH AGE AND EXPERIENCE

(The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International and a network member of India International Skill Centres. Views are personal)

my? It is our responsibility to take the necessary steps to make this happen. Can't we start at least with these initial steps?

Home; the parents should start from the early school days of their young ones, read to them the stories of successful entrepreneurs, ones their young buds could relate to and get them acquainted with their day-to-day life attributes and the attributes and benefits they pass on to the society. Well, it is better to tell your bud to aim at making a hospital or hotel than just being a doctor or a chef, in the process, the young mind will keep his trajectory not confined to just being a doctor or a chef but keep his horizons much open and farther even after turning a successful super specialist doctor or a celebrity chef.

Schools; To fuel the entrepreneurship spirit among job seekers, multi-faceted efforts are needed to accelerate the creation of more job providers in the bustling industrial, services and tertiary sectors. Unfortunately, our education system did not focus on the development of essential entrepreneurial skills in school students, while entrepreneurial skill is the main pillar of job providers, intend to march forward.

Thus, to support the entrepreneurial spirit must give a nod to the Business Blaster Young Entrepreneur Programme in schools to encourage school children from class 11 to become entrepreneurs. Successful entrepre-

neurs and unicorns who bring with them years of entrepreneurial experience can play a vital role as mentors and can contribute the angel funding to build entrepreneurial orientation and mindset among the youths, especially school dropouts can be skilled and would equip their budding entrepreneurship to take charge as a job provider.

Colleges; there should be a structured curriculum with frequent seminars and workshops on entrepreneurship, emphasizing hands-on experience rather than just classroom learning. Encouraging idea sponsorships and mentorship from entrepreneurs would be beneficial. Additionally, students should be encouraged to visit actual facilities to better understand the entrepreneurial culture.

Business schools; should place equal emphasis on teaching entrepreneurship as they do on teaching business. Mock drills should be implemented, where students spend an equal amount of time shadowing an entrepreneur as they do during internships with organizations. Evaluations should hold equal weight in determining the student's level of business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit.

Skill Development Centres; we have some of the brightest minds who are driving change in skill development. These leaders should focus on imparting entrepreneurship skills with the same energy and dedication as employability skills. Entrepreneurship

Development Institutes; how many successful entrepreneurs have we connected with to mentor our future entrepreneurs? We don't need teachers to teach how to be an entrepreneur; if they knew, they would already be one. We need proven entrepreneurs to guide and support our future entrepreneurs and set them on the path to success. Providing resources is only part of the equation, providing expert guidance is equally important.

Lastly; successful entrepreneurs must step forward and make time in their busy schedules to mentor future entrepreneurs regularly. This can be done for a specific period until the mentee establishes their trajectory, after which the mentor can move on to the next aspiring entrepreneur. This would be a more effective and impactful form of corporate social responsibility.

Entrepreneurship is driven by aspirations that exceed available resources. Entrepreneurs do not start businesses because everything falls into place perfectly. Even the self-employed, or "Vishwakarma" in traditional terms, continue to hone their skills for personal fulfilment and to contribute to their communities. Society as a whole should come together to support these individuals and in doing so, benefit itself. The goal should be to create more employers than employees, and it is hoped that "PM Vishwakarma" will help make this a reality.

Developing argumentative skills with Moot Courts

In a bid to improve the argumentative skills of budding lawyers, law colleges and schools across India are choosing 'Moot Court' competitions

The syllabus of the law universities features 'Moot Court' as a compulsory topic, the marks scored in it playing a crucial role in determining the grade with which the students pass out of the LLB degree examination. Persons outside the legal fraternity or law colleges may stare back when they are asked about Moot Court. "Though Moot Courts are as important and interesting as Mathematics Olympiad, they are yet to get the public recognition. For those interested in legal affairs, this is an event equal in status to the Mathematics Olympiad," said Prof V R Jayadevan, principal, of Government Law College, Thrissur, who successfully conducted an all-India Moot Court event in his college in



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

(The writer is a special correspondent at The Pioneer; views expressed are personal)

the last week of September. Though planned as a low-profile event the Thrissur Moot Court Competition drew 36 teams from all over India. The winners walked away with the Justice T Ramachandran Memorial Trophy. The event saw intense competition as participating undergraduates switched over from one section of the law to another section with elan and poise. If you ask a person without a legal background what moot court is about, chances are that you will get a grumpy look. No one can blame him/her because persons without knowledge of legal education are not at all familiar with the term. Moot Courts are simulated lessons held in law schools to make budding lawyers ready to face

real-life battles in courtrooms. It is an intellectual bout conceived to test the prowess of law students in their academic pursuits. The organisers take out subjects of national and international events, put them as a legal issue and ask the students to argue for and against the topic. Classrooms in law schools are converted into real-life courtrooms with all resplendent ambience. These bouts turn out future Jethmalanis, Servais, Narimans and Sorabjees! Those familiar with the nuances of law and legal codes are sure to take a liking to the event. "I always feel that Moot Courts resemble Kathakali, a pantomime of Kerala, which could be enjoyed only by the connoisseurs of art. For those

who are uninitiated about Kathakali, watching it is a futile exercise. There is a saying in Malayalam that watching the art form without knowing the story is a waste of time," said Parvathi Sreejith Valliathan, Assistant Professor, SRM Law School, Chennai. The Thrissur event was the 12th edition of the annual Moot Court competition held by the College. "This year we selected a topic right out of a real-life event. Dharmanchal, a State in the Union of India, enacted Dharmanchal Infrastructure Investment Fund Act 2001. The preamble of the Act states that it was expedient to constitute a fund for investment in infrastructure projects in the State. The Act was similar to the provisions of the

Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Act 1999," explained Prof Sonia K Das, the livewire of the event. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India took strong objections to the way the KIIFB was functioning and the availing of loans beyond the repaying capacity of the State. The Articles concerning the federal structure and the freedom of the States were used as weapons by the participants in simulated courtrooms which were presided over by judges who needed the counsels appearing for the petitioners and respondents with questions that went deep into the subject. The expressions on the faces of the audience spoke a lot. They too were taken to the hitherto undebated issues in the Indian

Constitution. "Our intention is to tone up the skills of advocacy," said Prof Jayadevan. The competition witnessed high-pitch arguments and counter-arguments. "Besides arguments, Moot Courts are the path for law students to have practical knowledge in drafting, pleading and conveyancing. The Moot Courts will intellectually stimulate students to develop skills that will be of great importance in future. The participants (addressed as Mooters) should possess sharp analytical skills to dissect complex legal issues, identify key arguments and develop logical frameworks," said Parvathi Kumar, who has more than a dozen Moot Court events to her credit. Moot Court also have a

number of participants performing various tasks like researching and drafting which are put to the Court for approval/consideration. The participants are hopeful that one day they will be able to compete in the Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court hosted in Washington DC. Considering the fact that there is no empowered body to ask the global community of nations to follow the diktat of the International Court of Justice, it is for the Gen Next to come up with ideas and solutions that make the States obey the orders issued by it. The progress made in science and technology has brought together warring nations of Europe is a hopeful signature. Let the Moot Courts flourish in India.

Nadda visits Rajasthan to shore up BJP prospects in poll

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Assembly polls in Rajasthan, BJP president JP Nadda held a meeting with party office bearers of Udaipur division on Monday as former Chief Minister Vasudhara Raje is reportedly not happy with absence of his loyalists name from the first list of candidates released by the party on October 9.

After holding talks in Udaipur, the BJP chief is also to visit Jodhpur to interact with party leaders and workers. Nadda held discussions with

senior party workers, present and former MPs and MLAs, office bearers of different morchas and cells of the party in Jodhpur division.

In the first list released by the party for Rajasthan, the BJP included royal scion and Rajsamand MP Diya Kumari and Jaipur Rural MP and former Union Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore which has already created flutter among those denied tickets by the party with some announcing contesting polls as independent candidates.

The list of 47 candidates did

not have Raje's followers which has apparently miffed the former Chief Minister.

BJP's decision to field Rajsamand MP Diya Kumari from Jaipur's Vidhayadhar Nagar seat, denying tickets to its five-term MLA and Raje Loyalist Narpat Sijngah Rajvi, son-in-law of Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, has unnerved the Raje camp followers, according to sources.

The two-time former CM on Sunday suddenly reached Udaipur and met with Assam governor Gulabchand Kataria at his residence. Kataria has



held Udaipur seat four-times. Kataria, before being appointed as Governor, was leader of opposition in the Rajasthan assembly and has influence over 25 Assembly seats in south Rajasthan.

He is also a former State Home Minister. Raje had a 40-minute discussion with Kataria before leaving for Tripura Sundari. The meeting was confidential and no one in the city had any prior information about her visit.

Confirming his meeting with Raje, Kataria said both belonged to one family and

keep meeting each other. "Nowadays I don't discuss politics as I have changed my line," he said. The meeting, though, has triggered speculations that both the leaders may not be in "sync with the top leadership". Raje proceeded to Udaipur after her meeting.

Elections to 200 Assembly seats is to be held on October 25 and the BJP is set to release its second list for Rajasthan by this week. Some more BJP MPs and Central Ministers are expected to contest Assembly polls, according to sources.

Nadda's visit to Jodhpur

holds significance in the run up to the Assembly elections in the State where it seeks to unseat the Congress Government headed by Ashok Gehlot.

"Party is already faced with unrelenting protests against party candidate Devji Patel from Sanchoore constituency, the only name the party has announced so far, from 33 constituencies of Jodhpur division", said a party leader.

Six mandal presidents of Jalore have resigned to protest the party's decision to rope in Patel from Sanchoore Assembly constituency.

PM to unveil Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 at maritime summit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the third edition of the three-day Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS), aiming to outline strategic future initiatives, at Mumbai on Tuesday via video-conferencing and unveil "Amrit Kaal Vision 2047".

In line with this futuristic plan, the prime minister will inaugurate, dedicate to nation and lay the foundation stone of projects worth more than ₹ 23,000 crore, that are aligned with this vision for the Indian maritime blue economy, a statement from his office said.

Modi will lay the founda-



tion stone of the Tuna Tekra all-weather deep draft terminal, to be built at a cost of more than ₹ 4,500 crore at the Deendayal Port Authority in Gujarat.

This state-of-the-art greenfield terminal will be developed in PPP mode.

Over 300 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth more than ₹7 lakh crore for global and national partnership in the maritime sector will also be unveiled during the programme.

The summit will be the biggest maritime event in the country, the statement said.

It will witness participation of Ministers from across the globe, representing Europe, Africa, South America and Asia (including central Asia, Middle East and BIMSTEC region), said the statement.

It will also be attended by global CEOs, business leaders, investors, officials, and other stakeholders from across the world. Several Indian states will

also be represented, it said.

The three-day summit will discuss and deliberate key issues of the maritime sector including ports of the future, decarbonisation, coastal shipping and inland water transportation, shipbuilding, repair and recycling, finance, insurance and arbitration, maritime clusters, innovation and technology, maritime safety and security, and maritime tourism among others.

The summit will also provide an excellent platform for attracting investment in the maritime sector of the country, it said.

The first edition of the summit was held in 2016 at Mumbai while the second was held virtually in 2021.

Mulling making AAP accused in excise policy scam cases: CBI, ED tell SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI and ED told the Supreme Court on Monday they are contemplating making the city's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) an accused in the Delhi excise policy cases.

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, representing the two probe agencies, told a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti he has instructions to State that the agencies are considering making AAP an accused, invoking legal provisions on "vicarious liability" and section 70 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

However, the bench asked Raju to clarify his stand on Tuesday on whether there will be separate charge against the AAP in cases being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate.

Raju made the statement while the bench was



hearing the bail pleas of AAP leader and former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who was arrested in the excise policy cases being probed by the CBI and ED.

The investigative agencies have often suggested that AAP was a beneficiary of the kickbacks received from stakeholders who got liquor licences as part of a quid pro quo.

They have alleged the AAP used the money for campaigning in the Goa Assembly elections.

SC rejects plea for abortion of 26 weeks old foetus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to permit a married woman, a mother of two, to terminate her over 26-week pregnancy as the foetus was healthy and the AIIMS medical board found no abnormality with it. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the length of pregnancy has crossed 24 weeks, the upper limit for allowing Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP), and therefore it cannot be permitted.

The apex court said the foetus is 26 weeks and 5 days old and there is no immediate threat to the mother. There was also no foetal abnormality, it said.

"The length of the pregnancy has crossed 24 weeks and it is approximately 26 weeks and 5 days old. The

medical termination of the pregnancy cannot be permitted," the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misa said.

The top court had said earlier in the day that the challenge to pregnancy termination law will be dealt with in separate proceedings, and the present case would be limited to the issue between the petitioner and the State.

The apex court had earlier sought a report from the AIIMS medical board on whether the foetus was suffering from any abnormality. The bench was hearing arguments on the Centre's application seeking recall of the apex court's October 9 order permitting the 27-year-old woman, a mother of two, to undergo termination of pregnancy at AIIMS as she was suffering from post-partum psychosis after the birth of her second child.

1st State education achievement survey to cover 11 million students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The first State Education Achievement Survey will be conducted on November 3 by the national assessment regulator Parakh and will cover 11 million students across the country. According to the Ministry of Education, the survey is aimed at identifying areas requiring improvement in learning will be held across states, targeting school students up to the block level. It will be a precursor to the Education Ministry's annual National Achievement Survey (NAS), which is conducted at the district level.

MoE said that it will be the first survey conducted by the Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH), an organisation under the NCERT. It is tasked with bringing the school boards across the states and the Union territories on a common platform.

Scheduled for November 3, SEAS (State Education Achievement Survey) 2023 has been designed to enhance the learning standards for students in Classes 3, 6 and 9. Operating at the block level, this survey encompasses a comprehensive range of competencies, spanning the foundational, prepara-



tory, and middle stages of education.

According to the officials, SEAS will represent a distinctive and baseline assessment, marking a gradual shift from rote learning to competency-based education. The adoption of competency-based learning holds the potential to foster the holistic development of students, they said, adding that these efforts are dedicated to nurturing the well-rounded growth of future generations. This survey will prove invaluable in realising this aspiration, the officials said.

"At the heart of this endeavour is the belief that every child deserves a well-rounded education. Our competency-based assessment system aims to assess not just what students know but also how well they can apply that knowledge in real-world scenarios," head and CEO of PARAKH Indrani

Bhaduri said. Bhaduri also heads the NAS cell at the NCERT which conducts the crucial national level large-scale assessment to obtain information about the learning achievement of students of Classes 3, 5, 8 and 10 studying in state government schools, government-aided schools, private unaided and central government schools.

The ETS, which conducts key tests such as TOEFL and GRE, was chosen by the National Council for Education Research (NCERT) for setting up the regulatory platform.

Sachin Jain, country manager of ETS India and South Asia, said, "By joining forces with the NCERT, we are committed to fortifying the assessment process, ensuring its robustness, and elevating the quality of large-scale surveys in the educational sector."

India, UK hold first '2+2' foreign, defence dialogue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and UK on Monday reviewed the entire spectrum of their defence and strategic ties here in the inaugural India-UK '2+2' foreign and defence dialogue at the senior official level. The two sides focused on ways to boost cooperation in a range of key areas such as trade and investment, defence, critical technologies, civil aviation, health and energy.

The two sides also discussed international developments including in the Indo-Pacific region and considered the possibility of enhancing anti-terror collaboration, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The 2+2 dialogue at senior official level is a mechanism to discuss and review all aspects of India-UK comprehensive strategic partnership.

The dialogue took place as the two sides are exploring the possibility of a visit to India by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak later this month.

The MEA said the two sides discussed "possibilities for further collaboration particularly in areas of trade and investment, defence, critical and emerging technologies, civil



aviation, health, energy, culture and strengthening peoples connect."

"The officials had an opportunity to exchange assessments about recent international developments including in the Indo-Pacific region, given their shared vision for peace, stability and prosperity and for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region," the ministry said in a statement.

"They also considered possibility of enhancing collaboration in areas of counterterrorism, HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) and maritime security," it added.

The India-UK relationship was elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the India-UK virtual summit held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his then

British counterpart Boris Johnson in May 2021.

At the summit, the two sides adopted a 10-year roadmap to expand ties in the key areas of trade and economy, defence and security, climate change and people-to-people connections, among others.

The Indian delegation at the dialogue was co-chaired by Piyush Srivastava, Joint Secretary (Europe West) at the MEA and Vishwesh Negi, Joint Secretary (International Cooperation) at the defence ministry.

The UK delegation was co-chaired by Ben Mellor, India Director at the Indian Ocean Directorate in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Lt General Rob Magowan, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, Finance and Military Capability at the British Ministry of

Stipend issue: SC raps NMC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court came down heavily on the National Medical Commission (NMC) on Monday after taking note of submissions that around 70 per cent medical colleges in the country are not paying the mandatory stipend to MBBS interns.

"What is the National Medical Commission doing? These young doctors are putting 16-20 hours a day... This is like bonded labour," a bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said.

The bench said private medical colleges, which take heavy donations or capitation fees while admitting students, are not paying the mandatory stipend to the MBBS interns and asked as to what the NMC is doing as the regulator.

The observations came when a lawyer reiterated the allegation that 70 per cent of the medical colleges in the country are not paying the mandatory stipend to the MBBS interns.

The counsel for the NMC sought some time to collate the information and get back to the bench, which granted the same.

The top court, meanwhile, issued a notice to the Delhi government after taking note of the submissions of the city's Army College of Medical Sciences (ACMS) that a fee regulatory authority has not been

set up in the national capital to deal with such issues.

On September 15, the bench had asked the NMC, the apex governing body for medical education in the country, to look into the allegation that 70 per cent medical colleges are not paying the mandatory stipend to the MBBS interns.

The court had also directed the ACMS to pay a monthly stipend of Rs 25,000 to its MBBS interns from October 1. Advocate Vaibhav Gagar, appearing for students seeking a stipend had said that according to a recent NMC report, 70 per cent of the medical colleges in the country are not paying stipends to their interns.

The bench had directed the NMC's counsel, Gaurav Sharma, to respond to the claim and file an affidavit giving a tabulated chart of the colleges that are paying the stipend to the interns and the ones that are not.

It had said the NMC's mandate cannot be breached and that interns, who come from different backgrounds, are required to be paid a stipend for the period of their internship.

The top court was hearing a plea of five MBBS students studying at the ACMS, established by the Army Welfare Education Society (AWES) and affiliated to the Guru Govind Singh Indraprastha University, seeking a stipend for the period of their internship.

Deoria killings: Alld HC stays demolition order

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court on Monday stayed the order of a revenue official of Deoria district for the demolition of a house belonging Prem Chand Yadav, who was among six killed over a land dispute recently.

Deoria tehsildar on October 11 issued a demolition order of the house which belongs to former district panchayat member Prem Chand. His father Ram Bhawan Yadav had approached the HC against order.

On October 2, 50-year-old Prem Chand was attacked with sharp-edged weapons and killed by his rival Satyaprakash Dubey and his family when he went to his house.

In retaliation soon after, Prem Chand's supporters attacked Dubey's house and brutally killed Dubey and five of his family members, including children. Justice Chandra Kumar Rai passed the order in an appeal filed by Ram Bhawan Yadav against the order.

Counsel for the petitioner submitted that authorities are adamant about demolishing the house as Ram Bhawan has filed an instant petition without availing remedy of appeal under Section 67 (5) of UP Revenue Code, 2006.

He further submitted that even on merit, the impugned order cannot be maintained, but without affording a proper opportunity of hearing as well as without making proper survey and demarcation, the order for ejectment and damages has been passed against the petitioner.

Chief Standing Counsel for the State JN Maurya submitted that land in dispute is recorded as 'khalihan', as such no interference is required in the matter. The court observed, "It is directed that in view of ratio of law laid down in Ali Sher (Supra), the order dated October 11 passed by tehsildar for demolition and damages shall not be given affect till the disposal of petitioner's appeal under Section 67 (5) of UP Revenue Code, 2006."

"In view of the remedy of appeal against the order impugned passed by the Tehsildar, the writ petition is disposed of finally directing the petitioner to file an appeal before Collector against the order impugned dated 11.10.2023 within a period of two weeks from today. If the appeal is filed within the aforesaid period, the same shall be registered and disposed of in accordance with law," the court said.

SC agrees to examine AAP leader Raghav plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine the plea of AAP leader Raghav Chadha challenging his indefinite suspension from the Rajya Sabha and sought the assistance of the attorney general in adjudicating the issue.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the submissions of senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi and lawyer Shadan Farasat, representing Chadha, that the suspension cannot extend beyond the particular session during which the decision to suspend the member was made.

The top court issued the notice to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat only on the plea which will be heard on October 30. Besides the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Chadha had made the chairperson of the House and the privileges committee the parties to his petition. Dwivedi said he was not seeking any interim relief in the petition at the moment.

Army top brass deliberates national security during Commanders' Conference

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Army top brass on Monday here began deliberations on national security challenges including the situation at border in Ladakh and the Line of Control (LOC) facing Pakistan and ways to boost the overall combat capability of the force while kick-



starting a five-day conference. Being chaired by Army Chief General Manoj Pande, the commanders are delving into a range of issues, including the ongoing reform process in the 1.3 million strong force, matters relating to jointness among the three services and key geopolitical developments.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to address the conference on October 18. Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan and Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari are among those addressing the Army commanders.

Ajay Kumar Sood, the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, will also deliver a talk on "Leveraging Technology for National Security".

Defence Ministry signs contract for upgrade of INS Beas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Defence on Monday here signed a contract for Mid Life Upgrade and Re-Powering of "INS Beas" with Kochi-based M/S Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) at an overall cost of ₹313.42 crores. INS Beas is the first of Brahmaputra class frigate to be re-powered from steam to diesel propulsion. After completion of mid life upgrade and re-powering in 2026, INS Beas will join the active fleet of the Indian Navy with a modernised weapon suite and upgraded combat capability, defence ministry officials said here.

The transformative maiden re-powering project marks a significant stride in the maintenance philosophy of the Indian Navy and repair capabilities of M/s CSL. The project would involve more than 50 MSMEs and would lead to generation of employment for more than 3,500 personnel.

The project will be a proud flag bearer of Atmanirbhar Bharat in consonance with the Make-in-India initiative of the Government of India, they said.

'India expected to grow at 6.3 per cent in FY24'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's economic growth is expected at 6.3 per cent during 2023-24 on the back of good health of the financial sector and uptick in private investment even as downside risks remain, said a survey by industry body Ficci unveiled on Monday.

The latest round of Ficci's Economic Outlook Survey pegs annual median gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2023-24 at 6.3 per cent - with a minimum and maximum growth estimate of 6 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively, the chamber stated.

The median growth forecast for agriculture and allied activities has been put at 2.7 per cent for 2023-24. This marks a moderation vis-a-vis growth of about 4 per cent reported in 2022-23. The El Nino effect has had an impact on the spatial distribution of rainfall this monsoon. Industry and services sector, on the other hand, are anticipated to grow 5.6 per cent and 7.3 per cent, respectively in current fiscal year, the survey shows.

Ficci said the survey was conducted in September 2023 and drew responses from lead-



ing economists representing industry, banking and financial services sector.

"Persisting headwinds on account of geopolitical stress, slowing growth in China, lagged impact of monetary tightening and below normal monsoons pose downside risks to growth," it said.

According to survey results, median GDP growth is estimated to slow down to 6.1 per cent and 6 per cent in Q2 2023-24 and Q3 2023-24, respectively - after posting a four-quarter high growth of 7.8 per cent in Q1 2023-24.

Further, the chamber said

the median forecast for CPI based inflation has been put at 5.5 per cent for 2023-24, with a minimum and maximum range of 5.3 per cent and 5.7 per cent, respectively.

The survey participants opined that the course of inflation remains uncertain.

"There was an unanimous view among the participants that global growth is poised to slow in the current year vis-a-vis 2022, and this trend is expected to continue in the year 2024 as well," Ficci said, and added significant downside risks continue to remain on fore

that could hamper the momentum in recovery. Back home, the survey said though India's economic performance has remained relatively steady amid recent challenges, the country has not been unscathed from the external shocks. Weak external demand is already reflecting in India's merchandise exports performance and is expected to be a drag on domestic growth, it added.

"Nonetheless, growth in India is expected to hold ground on the back of good health of the financial sector, robust urban demand, uptick in private investment as a result of government's front-loading of capex, pick up in real estate/construction sector and the forthcoming festive season," the survey said.

It further said Reserve Bank's policy repo rate is expected to remain unchanged until the end of current financial year. The latest survey results forecast repo rate at 6.5 per cent as at March-end 2024.

Economists were of the view that a cut in the repo rate is expected only by the end of the first quarter or second quarter of next fiscal year 2024-25, Ficci added.

Experts see WPI inflation rising in second half this fiscal

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in India is likely to rise in the second half of the ongoing fiscal and a prolonged deflationary trend could impact growth, experts said on Monday.

Wholesale inflation remained in the negative territory for the sixth straight month in September at (-) 0.26 per cent on easing prices of food items, especially vegetables.

Deflation in WPI in September is primarily due to the fall in prices of chemicals and chemical products, mineral oils, textiles, basic metals, and food products as compared to the year-ago period, the commerce and industry ministry said on Monday.

"In September, the WPI exhibited its sixth consecutive month of contraction, with a decline of 0.3 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), lower than the previous month's contraction of 0.5 per cent," CareEdge Chief Economist Rajani Sinha said.

"The continued contraction in WPI can be attributed to the deceleration in food prices, as well as the ongoing decline in fuel and manufactured product prices," Sinha said.

She suggested that while the fading impact of a high base may lead to a "slight increase" in WPI in the second half of the fiscal year, the overall WPI inflation is expected to remain low.

Elevated global crude oil prices and potential risks to kharif harvest due to uneven rainfall also pose upside risks to WPI inflation, Sinha said.

Abhirup Sarkar, an economist and professor at the Indian Institute of Statistics, told PTI that while the decrease in fuel prices is positive news, geopolitical conflicts in Russia and the Middle East could lead to an increase in international oil prices, affecting wholesale price inflation in India.

He said although wholesale food prices have seen a decline, it may take time for this to be reflected in retail prices, as it depends on traders



and their ability to pass on the price reduction to consumers.

Sarkar cautioned that prolonged deflation in WPI can have a negative impact on the economy, indicating lack of demand and potentially slowing down growth.

The WPI-based inflation rate has been in the negative zone since April and was (-) 0.52 per cent in August.

In September last year, it was 10.55 per cent. Inflation in food articles eased to 3.35 per cent in September, after remaining in double digits in the previous two months. It was 10.60 per cent in August.

"Deflation in September 2023 is primarily due to fall in prices of chemical and chemical products, mineral oils, textiles, basic metals and food products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the commerce and industry ministry said on Monday.

Fuel and power basket inflation was at (-) 3.35 per cent in September, against (-) 6.03 per cent in August. In manufactured products, inflation rate was (-) 1.34 per cent, as against (-) 2.37 per cent in August.

Data released last week showed that the annual retail, or consumer price inflation, was at 5.02 per cent in September, which was a three-month low.



JK Paper to acquire Manipl Utility Packaging Solutions for ₹90 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JK Paper Ltd on Monday said it will fully acquire Manipl Utility Packaging Solutions Pvt Ltd for nearly Rs 90 crore.

The company has entered into a share purchase agreement (SPA) for the acquisition of 100 per cent shares of Manipl Utility Packaging Solutions Pvt Ltd (MUPSPL), JK Paper said in a regulatory filing.

Under the SPA, JK Paper will acquire 4.07 crore equity shares representing 100 per cent of capital of MUPSPL at Rs 21.80 per equity share of Rs 10 each, subject to adjustments as per terms of agreement, it added.

The acquisition is expected to be completed within six weeks of execution of the SPA with the target entity and its promoters/shareholders, subject to fulfilment of conditions mentioned in the SPA, the company said.

JK Paper Vice Chairman and Managing Director Harsh Pati Singhania said, "This acquisition is in line with the long-term strategic objective of the company in the packaging business and gives us an opportunity to offer combined solution to the customers with respect to secondary and tertiary packaging, improve operational efficiencies and ensure that MUPSPL grows and adds value to stakeholders."

MUPSPL is engaged in the business of manufacturing packaging products like folding cartons, corrugated boxes and labels with four manufacturing plants across India. It had a revenue of Rs 147.77 crore in FY 2022-23, the company said.

Packaging business is amongst the fastest growing segments in the Indian paper and packaging industry driven by growth in end use industries such as food and beverage, and FMCG, it added.



Markets fall for 3rd day on weak global equities

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices ended lower on Monday, falling for the third day running, amid weak trends in global markets and spike in Brent crude oil prices due to geopolitical tension in the Middle East.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 115.81 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 66,166.93. During the day, it fell 243.36 points or 0.36 per cent to 66,039.38. The Nifty slipped 19.30 points or 0.10 per cent to 19,731.75.

From the Sensex pack, Nestle, Tata Consultancy Services, IndusInd Bank, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Hindustan Unilever were among the major laggards.

Tata Steel, JSW Steel, HCL Technologies, Axis Bank, Power Grid and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the gainers.

"Markets continued to witness range-bound trend with a negative bias amid weak Asian cues as selective profit-taking was seen in banking, realty and IT stocks, whereas buying in metal, auto and consumer durable stocks helped markets curb losses.

"Investors are trading cautiously in an uncertain global environment as ongoing Israel-

Palestine conflict coupled with weak overseas fundamentals and persistent FII selling have dampened sentiment," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.34 per cent and midcap index gained 0.25 per cent.

Among the indices, telecommunication fell by 0.74 per cent, realty (0.39 per cent), teck (0.32 per cent), FMCG (0.28 per cent), services (0.17 per cent), bankex (0.11 per cent) and IT (0.10 per cent).

Commodities, consumer discretionary, energy, industrials, auto and metal were among the gainers.

"Persistent geopolitical tensions continue to weigh down the sentiment on equity, yet the mid and smallcap index witnessed bargain hunting ahead of festival-driven demand and optimistic Q2 results. If oil price moves higher in a sustained manner, it may elevate yields and operation cost, potentially straining margins in H2 FY24," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading mostly in the negative territory. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Friday.

Sidbi announces growth accelerator programme for small NBFCs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

National development bank Sidbi on Monday announced a growth accelerator programme for small NBFCs to help them become eligible for bank funding.

Under the initiative, being carried out in association with the global alliance for mass entrepreneurship and national NBFC lobby FIDC (Finance Industry Development Council), it has onboarded 18 small NBFCs as the first cohort of the programme.

The five-month-long programme is designed to scale small NBFCs (Non Banking Financial Company) through design interventions, enabling them to apply for institutional funding based on holistic evaluation parameters, Sidbi chair-

man & managing director Sivasubramanian Ramann told reporters here.

The programme includes mentorship from domain experts on risk, operations, governance, and technology and is structured to encourage and facilitate peer learning, reviews and networking through a blend of in-person, virtual and individualised sessions, Umesh Revankar, FIDC chairman and executive vice-chairman of Shriram Finance, said.

Of the nearly 80 million small businesses, only 15 per cent get access to formal credit, showing the large addressable market for MSME (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise) funding, Ramann said.

Further, he said in the past three years, Sidbi's lending to MSMEs doubled to cross the Rs



50,000 crore-mark, while the system wide MSME loan book is Rs 25 lakh crore, which is slated to double over the next three years. Of the present MSME book, only 28 per cent are met by NBFCs.

The objective of the pro-

gramme is to design a replicable model to enable MSME-focused NBFCs to become eligible for formal funding and future-ready, Ravi Venkatesan, founder of the global alliance for mass entrepreneurship, said.

When asked how much

Sidbi will be lending to NBFCs under the initiative, Ramann said that there is no target or cap. All depends on how many of them clear the programme.

The programme will enhance the fund flow for the MSME sector by enabling NBFCs to get institutional funding. In this cohort, the participating 18 NBFCs will benefit significantly from specific advice, informal interactions with peers, structured reviews and evaluations.

"We have built in the process to ensure that participants demonstrate action to be eligible for continuing to the next stage and mentors endorse and support them ensuring accountability, he said, adding that over the next three years, the plan is to prepare 100 non-banks future-ready.

NDDB Dairy Services' semen station in Maharashtra emerges top in quality parameters

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NDDB Dairy Services-owned Rahuri Semen Station in Maharashtra has got highest mark among 55 such facilities across India in an audit report submitted by the government-constituted Central Monitoring Unit.

National Dairy Development Boards (NDDB) arm NDS said in a statement that Rahuri Semen Station has emerged first on parameters ranging from quality, animal genetics to health and safety protocols.

NDS is NDDB Dairy Services. Earlier this month, NDS said that the CMU has submitted a technical audit report of 55 semen stations across the country for 2022-23 to the Union government's Depart-



ment of Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development.

In the audit report, Rahuri station was given a mark of 97 followed by 95 for Animal Breeding Centre Salon, a NDS station, in Uttar Pradesh.

The CMU report accorded a total of nine semen stations a score of 90 and above under Grade A.

The other seven include the two NDS stations — Sabarmati Ashram Gaushala, Bidaj in Gujarat and Alamadhi

Semen station in Tamil Nadu.

NDDB Chairman Meenesh Shah, who is also the Chairman of NDS, said "credit to this goes to the dedication of the teams of veterinary experts and scientists who are working for enhancing the productivity of the milch animals and propagation of the genetics of the indigenous breeds".

The semen stations run by NDS adhere strictly to the quality protocols and have in-place stringent bio-security measures

to produce disease-free semen, he said.

NDS functions as a delivery arm of NDDB for field operations relating to promoting Farmer Producer Organisations and Productivity Enhancement Services. This includes supply of high genetic merit semen doses, Artificial Insemination Delivery Services, Embryo Transfer Services, Animal Nutrition Services and induction and supply of high genetic merit live animals under the brand 'SAG Live'.

NDS stations have close to 1,800 high genetic merit bulls of 35 breeds and together sold over 5.2 crore semen doses during the evaluation period 2022-23. These stations are also actively involved in In vivo and Invitro embryo production and transfers.

Coal India's fuel supply to thermal power plants rises 6 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India on Monday said its supply of fossil fuel to the country's coal-fired electricity generating units increased by six per cent to 23.5 million tonnes in the first half of October, ahead of the festive season.

The supply was increased amid a sudden rise in power demand even as unseasonal rains hit the operations in coal bearing areas of Coal India's arms based in the eastern part of the nation.

Chattishgarh-based South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) also bore the brunt of the inclement weather, it said.

Coal supply to thermal power plants stood at 22.2 million tonnes during the same period of the last financial year. "Coal India's (CIL) supplies to thermal power plants of the country shot up close to six per cent to 23.5 million tonnes



(MTs) during the first fortnight of October 2023... Comparatively the supplies were 22.2 MTs in the same period of October 2022," the public sector coal producer said in a statement.

The overall supply of dry fuel by CIL to the country's coal-fired power plants was nearly 319 MT till October 15 of the ongoing fiscal, which was 12 MT higher in volume terms compared to 307 MTs supplied during the corresponding period of FY23.

"On a cumulative basis CILs targeted commitment was 316 MT to power sector till 15th October FY 2024, against which the company's supplies were ahead by 3 MTs at 319 MTs. CIL is confident of meeting the tasked target to the power sector," it said.

Coal is the largest source of electricity in the country and CIL produces over 80 per cent of the fuel in India.

"CIL's supplies to all consuming sectors were 389.3 MT during the referred period posting nine per cent growth compared to 356.6 MT of same period last fiscal year," it said.

"With no letup in the output tempo, CIL's progressive production of 360 MTs till 15th October FY 2024 has logged a robust 11.6 per cent year-on-year growth with 37.6 MT expansion in volume terms. This growth is again higher than the fiscal's asking rate of around 11 per cent," the company said.

The 'maharatna' firm expects its supplies to exceed the target.

Delta Corp shares plunge

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Delta Corp plunged nearly 9 per cent on Monday after the company received a GST notice for short payment of tax to the tune of Rs 6,384 crore.

The stock tanked 8.79 per cent to settle at Rs 127.70 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it fell 11 per cent to Rs 124.60 — its 52-week low. On the NSE, it plummeted 8.17 per cent to end at Rs 128.55 per piece.

On the volume front, 28.26 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 2.93 crore shares were traded on the NSE during the day.

In another blow to the company, Delta Corp has received a GST notice for short payment of tax to the tune of Rs 6,384 crore, taking the over-



all tax demand on the firm to over Rs 23,000 crore.

The company said that the tax demands are arbitrary and contrary to law, and added it will challenge them. DGGI (Directorate General of GST Intelligence) Kolkata on October 13, 2023 has served an intimation notice on Deltatech Gaming, a subsidiary of Delta Corp, seeking GST of Rs 6,236.8 crore for the period January 2018 to November 2022, the company said in a filing on Saturday.

For the period July 2017 to October 2022, another demand worth Rs 147.5 crore has been served, it said.



Petrol, diesel sales fall ahead of start of festive season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel sales fell in the first half of October ahead of the start of festive season that is expected to boost consumption, preliminary data of state-owned firms showed.

Last year, Durga Puja/Dussehra as well as Diwali fell in October. This year the festival season, when consumption picks up, starts in the second half of October.

Petrol sales by three state-owned fuel retailers fell 9 per cent year-on-year, the first drop in two months. Diesel consumption dropped 3.2 per cent. The decline was largely because of the larger base of last year.

Petrol sales dropped to 1.17 million tonnes during the first half of October from 1.29 million tonnes a year back. Sales dropped 9 per cent month-on-month as well.

Consumption of diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country — accounting for about two-fifths of the demand, dropped to 2.99 million tonnes during October 1 to 15 from 3.09 million tonnes a year back. Month-on-month sales were, however, up 9.6 per cent when compared with 2.73 million tonnes in the first half of September.

Diesel sales typically fall in monsoon months as rains lower demand in the agriculture sector which uses the fuel for irrigation, harvesting and transportation. Also, rains slow vehicular movements. This had led to a fall in diesel consumption in the last three months. And once the monsoon ended, consumption has risen month-on-month.

Consumption of diesel had soared 6.7 per cent and 9.3 per cent in April and May, respectively, as agriculture demand picked up and cars yanked up air-conditioning to beat the summer heat. It started to taper in the second half of June after the monsoon set in. It has continued to fall since.

Suppliers group OPEC sees India's oil demand expanding on average by 2,20,000 barrels per day on the back of vigorous economic growth.

Consumption of petrol during October 1-15 was 12 per cent more than in the COVID-marred October 2021 and 21.7 per cent more than in pre-pandemic October 2019.

Diesel consumption was up 23.4 per cent over October 1-15 in 2021 and 23.1 per cent compared to October 2019.

With the continuing rise in passenger traffic at airports, jet fuel (ATF) demand rose 5.7 per cent to 2,95,200 tonnes during first fortnight of October against the same period last year.

Rishi Sunak visits UK's Jewish school to reassure community

PTI ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday visited a Jewish school here and reiterated his government's commitment to protect Britain's Jews from anti-semitic attacks amid the ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict.

The British Indian leader also stressed that Israel's operations must centre on the terrorist group Hamas to avoid an escalation of conflict in the region. He pointed to the spy planes deployed by the UK to the eastern Mediterranean region to monitor and prevent arms shipments from landing in terrorist hands.

"I'm determined to ensure that our Jewish community is able to feel safe on our streets, that there is no place in our society for antisemitism, and we will do everything we can to stamp it out and where it happens," said Sunak during his visit to the Jewish school in north London.

He attended an assembly at the secondary school before answering a few questions from those present.

"I stand with all of you, the Jewish community, not just today, tomorrow but always, and I really mean it. Like many of you, I am different; I come from a different background, and our society is strongest when that diversity is respected. There are people who are trying to stir up hatred and division, and I will always strive very hard to protect that diversity," he said. "We've already sent surveillance aircraft to the eastern Mediterranean last week. They will be able to, as I said, make sure that no arms shipments, for example, have been sent to other terrorist organisations in the region. That's a practical step that we can take to help ensure that this remains contained to dealing with Hamas and does not spread more broadly in the region," he added.

"Today I met students and staff at a Jewish school in London to show my solidarity with the community. I am doing everything in my power to keep Jewish people in the UK safe, including through extra @CST_UK funding," Sunak said in a post on social media platform X. "Antisemitism will not stand," he added.



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak signing messages and prayers for Israel during a visit to a school in north London, England Monday. AP/PTI

Biden postpones trip to Colorado

Washington (AP): President Joe Biden postponed a trip to Colorado on Monday to stay in Washington and focus on the growing conflict in the Middle East. Biden had been heading to the Colorado district of Rep. Lauren Boebert, where he was to visit CS Wind, the world's largest facility for wind tower manufacturing. The White House said just a few hours before Biden was set to take off for the trip that it would be rescheduled.

Instead, Biden is expected to hold a series of high-level meetings with aides on Israel and the growing humanitarian concerns in Gaza. The Democratic president is weighing a decision to visit the region in a powerful symbol of support for Israel following the October 7 attack by Hamas that killed more than 1,400 people including at least 30 US citizens. The decision reflects the competing pressures for the president, heading into an election year in which he is trying to showcase his domestic agenda as conflicts abroad in Ukraine and now Israel grow. Boebert, had

described Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, his signature domestic legislation and the source of hundreds of billions of dollars for clean energy incentives, as "a massive failure" that "needs to be repealed."

But Biden was planning to demonstrate otherwise when he visits CS Wind in the town of Pueblo. The company is undergoing a USD 200 million expansion that is expected to create 850 jobs by 2026 with help from the tax incentives in the law. Pueblo is one of the anchors of Colorado's sprawling 3rd Congressional District, which covers more ground than Pennsylvania. Boebert won her seat in 2020 and barely held on to it during the 2022 midterms. There's maximum chaos in Congress right now for House Republicans, who ousted Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California as their speaker but have been unable to settle on a replacement. Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, a prominent ally of Donald Trump, is the current leading candidate to replace McCarthy, but victory for him is uncertain.

EU leaders to hold an emergency summit

Brussels (AP): European Union leaders will hold an emergency summit on Tuesday as concerns grow that the war between Israel and Hamas could fuel inter-communal tensions in Europe and bring more refugees in search of sanctuary.

"This conflict has many consequences, including for us in the European Union," EU Council President Charles Michel said in a video statement announcing that he had convened the virtual meeting. "The conflict could have major security consequences for our societies."

Since the Palestinian militant group Hamas attacked southern on October 7, triggering the latest Gaza war, France has ordered a ban on pro-Palestinian demonstrations and the number of antisemitic acts has risen. Low-level rallies have been held in other EU countries. Both the 27-nation bloc and the United States consider Hamas as a terrorist organisation.

Noboa wins presidency in Ecuador

AP ■ QUITO (ECUADOR)

Daniel Noboa has managed to do what his father failed at five times: Getting elected as Ecuador's president. And he did it Sunday on his first attempt, winning a runoff election against a leftist lawyer on the resume of a 35-year-old who belongs to the South American country's elite, which means some schooling in the US, some entrepreneurial work, some dabbling in politics.

Now, he must answer the universal demand to make Ecuador safe again, which voters urged on all the candidates who originally jumped into the race amid a surge in unprecedented violence tied to drug trafficking.

Noboa's proposals to tackle the crucial issue have run the gamut. At one point in the campaign, he proposed turning ships into floating jails for the most violent criminals. At



another, he simply promised more gear for police.

Voters are increasingly frightened by the escalation of drug violence over the past three years. Killings, kidnappings, robberies and other criminal activities have become part of everyday life, leaving Ecuadorians wondering when, not if, they will be victims.

And as he is getting a truncated term, Noboa faces a daunting task.

"I think there would be a very slim chance that even the best equipped president could reverse Ecuador's security crisis within 18 months — it's such a short period of time — and neither of these candidates was the best equipped."

Noboa certainly not," said Will Freeman, a fellow on Latin American studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "His proposals on security were erratic, and they gave the

sense that he was improvising." The incoming president's term will run only through May 2025, which is what remains of the tenure of President Guillermo Lasso.

He cut his term short when he dissolved the National Assembly in May as lawmakers pursued impeachment proceedings against him over alleged improprieties in a government contract.

With nearly all votes counted, electoral officials said Noboa had just over 52%, compared to nearly 48 per cent for Luisa González, an ally of exiled former President Rafael Correa. González conceded defeat during a speech before supporters in which she also urged Noboa to fulfill his campaign promises.

After results showed him victorious, Noboa thanked Ecuadorians for believing in "a new political project, a young political project, an improbable political project."

UNRWA sends advance team to Egypt

United Nations (PTI): The UN agency for Palestinian refugees on Monday said it has sent an advance team to Egypt to prepare for a possible opening of a corridor to bring humanitarian aid supplies into the Gaza Strip amidst Israeli bombardment that has displaced over one million people in the Hamas-ruled region.

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said that heavy Israeli Forces' bombardments of the Gaza Strip have continued, from the air, sea and land, and civilians continue to flee to the southern areas following Israel's warning on Friday to evacuate northern areas.

With Gaza running out of water, food, fuel and essential medicines, UNRWA said it has sent an advance team to Egypt to prepare for the possible opening of a humanitarian corridor to bring humanitarian aid supplies into the Strip. Advocacy continues at the highest levels for humanitarian access for pre-positioned critical supplies to cross into Gaza through Rafah, including food, water, medical supplies, fuel and non-food items.

In a situation report by UNRWA on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the agency said people across Gaza have severely limited access to clean drinking water. As a last resort, people are consuming brackish water from agricultural wells, "triggering serious concerns over the spread of waterborne diseases." UNRWA in Gaza found some water in local shops, but rations are still down to one litre of water per person per day for the UNRWA teams in the Rafah logistics base to cover drinking and all other needs. UNRWA said while it continues to run its operations in the West Bank, including schools and health centres, and waste collection in refugee camps, its staff continues to face severe access and movement restrictions, due to closures, checkpoints and road blockages by the Israeli Forces. UNRWA staff are unable to travel to their place of work unless it is in the immediate vicinity.

For the fifth consecutive day, Gaza had no electricity, pushing vital services, including health, water and sanitation to the brink of collapse, and worsening food insecurity, UNRWA said.

Muslim boy killed, woman hurt in Illinois hate crime

AP ■ CHICAGO

A 71-year-old Illinois man accused of fatally stabbing a 6-year-old boy and seriously wounding a 32-year-old woman was charged with a hate crime Sunday. Police allege he singled out the victims because of their Islamic faith and as a response to the war between Israel and Hamas.

In recent days, police in U.S. cities and federal authorities have been on high alert for violence driven by antisemitic or Islamophobic sentiments. FBI officials, along with Jewish and Muslim groups, have reported an increase of hateful and threatening rhetoric.

In the Chicago-area case, officers found the woman and boy late Saturday morning at a home in an unincorporated area of Plainfield Township, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) southwest of Chicago, the Will County Sheriff's Office said in a statement on social media.

The boy was pronounced dead at a hospital. The woman had multiple stab wounds and was expected to survive, accord-

ing to the statement. An autopsy on the child showed he had been stabbed dozens of times.

"Detectives were able to determine that both victims in this brutal attack were targeted by the suspect due to them being Muslim and the on-going Middle Eastern conflict involving Hamas and the Israelis," the sheriff's statement said. According to the Will County sheriff's office, the woman had called 911 to report that her landlord had attacked her with a knife, adding she then ran into a bathroom and continued to fight him off.

The man suspected in the attack was found Saturday outside the home and "sitting upright outside on the ground near the driveway of the residence" with a cut on his forehead, authorities said.

Joseph M. Czuba of Plainfield was charged with first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, two counts of hate crimes and aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, according to the sheriff's office. He was in custody Sunday and awaiting a court appearance.

Attempts to reach Czuba or a family member were unsuccessful Sunday. His home phone number was unlisted. Messages left for possible relatives in online records and on social media were not immediately returned. The sheriff's office and county public defender's office did not immediately return messages about Czuba's legal representation.

Authorities did not release the names of the two victims.

But the boy's paternal uncle, Yousef Hannon, spoke at a news conference Sunday hosted by the Chicago chapter Council on American-Islamic Relations. There the boy was identified as Wade Al-Fayoume, a Palestinian American boy who recently had turned 6. The organization identified the other victim as the boy's mother.

"We are not animals, we are humans. We want people to see us as humans, to feel us as humans, to deal with us as humans, because this is what we are," said Hannon, a Palestinian American who emigrated to the US in 1999 to work, including as a public school teacher.

Migrant boat sinking off Greek island leaves 3 dead

Athens (AP): Two men reported missing after a migrant dinghy sank off the coast of an eastern Greek island Monday were found alive, Greece's coast guard said, bringing the total number of survivors to 10.

The bodies of a woman and two men had been recovered earlier from the sea after the dinghy sank overnight off the coast of the small island of Symi, which lies near Turkey. Survivors told authorities the boat had been carrying a total of 13 people. Although no further people were reported to be missing, the coast guard said it would continue a search and rescue operation in the area for several hours as a precaution until all survivors had completed their testimonies. The nationalities of those on board were not immediately known.

Leaders from emerging economies arriving for 'Belt and Road' forum

AP ■ BEIJING

Leaders of emerging market countries are arriving in Beijing for a meeting organised by the Chinese government that will mark the 10th anniversary of its Belt and Road Initiative.

More than a dozen leaders from Africa, Asia and the Mideast were flying into Beijing on Monday, following the arrivals of Chilean President Gabriel Boric and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Sunday. Others are coming on Tuesday.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, a signature policy of President Xi Jinping, Chinese companies have built ports, roads, railways, power plants and other infrastructure around the world in a bid to boost trade and economic growth.

But the massive Chinese

development loans that funded the projects have also burdened some poorer countries with heavy debts.

A flurry of diplomacy is expected on the sidelines of the third Belt and Road Forum, whose main events are on Wednesday. Orbán met with Xi and Premier Li Qiang, Hungary's state news agency MTI said.

The forums also were held in 2017 and 2019.

Kenyan President William Ruto will be seeking additional loans for stalled road projects despite the country's already high public debt, and an easing of the repayment of a Chinese loan for a railway project that has not proven commercially viable.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to attend the forum, as are representatives of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Putin downplayed the idea

that China, through its Belt and Road projects in Central Asia, is competing for influence in a region that Russia has long considered its backyard.

"Our own ideas on the development of the Eurasian Economic Union, for example, on the construction of a Greater Eurasia, fully coincide with the Chinese ideas proposed within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative," he told Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, according to a transcript posted on the Kremlin website.

The leaders who arrived on Monday included Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Republic of Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso, Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet.

Ex-Finnish president dies at 86

AP ■ HELSINKI

Martti Ahtisaari, the former president of Finland and global peace broker who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 for his work to resolve international conflicts, died Monday. He was 86. The foundation he created for preventing and resolving violent conflicts said in a statement it was "deeply saddened by the loss of its founder and (former) chair of the board."

In 2021, it was announced that Ahtisaari had advanced Alzheimer's disease. It is with great sadness that we have received the news of the death of President Martti Ahtisaari," Finnish President Sauli Niinistö said in a statement. "He was president in times of change, who piloted Finland into a global EU era."

Niinistö described Ahtisaari in a televised speech as "a citizen of the world, a great Finn. A teacher, diplomat and head of



state. A peace negotiator and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate." Regular programming on Finnish public broadcaster YLE was interrupted for Niinistö's speech.

Ahtisaari helped reach peace accords related to Serbia's withdrawal from Kosovo in the late 1990s, Namibia's bid for independence in the 1980s, and autonomy for Aceh province in Indonesia in 2005. He was also involved with the Northern

Ireland peace process in the late 1990s, being tasked with monitoring the IRA's disarmament process.

"President Ahtisaari committed all his life to peace, diplomacy, the goodness of humanity, and had an extraordinary influence on our present and the future," said Kosovar President Vjosa Osmani. "He engraved the frame of our country, and his name will remain forever in the pages of the Republic of Kosovo's history." When the Norwegian Nobel Peace Committee picked Ahtisaari in October 2008, it cited him "for his important efforts, on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts."

Ahtisaari was the Nordic country's president for one six-year term — from 1994 until 2000 — and later founded the Helsinki-based Crisis Management Initiative, aimed at preventing and resolving violent conflicts through informal dia-

logue and mediation. Born June 23, 1937, in the eastern town of Viipuri, which is now in Russia, Ahtisaari was a primary school teacher before joining Finland's Foreign Ministry in 1965. He spent about 20 years abroad, first as ambassador to Tanzania, Zambia and Somalia and then to the United Nations in New York. After that he joined the UN, working at its New York headquarters, before heading the UN operation that brought independence to Namibia in 1990. Ahtisaari had become deeply involved in activities aimed at preparing Namibians for independence during his diplomatic tenure in Africa in the 1970s. He was appointed as the special representative of Namibia by then-UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim in 1978, and is widely credited with leading the African nation to independence under his mandate as head of UN peacekeeping forces there in the late 1980s.

Kenyan Facebook moderators accuse Meta of not negotiating sincerely

AP ■ NAIROBI

The lawyer representing 184 former Facebook content moderators based in Kenya who sued the site's parent company, Meta, over working conditions and pay told the judge Monday that Meta has not been sincere in trying to reach an out-of-court settlement as agreed in the last court session.

Lawyer Mercy Mutemi said the talks had collapsed and the former moderators want to proceed with a contempt of court case against Meta. "The petitioners gave it their best effort. They attended every mediation. The respondents asked for information which we gave them. They kept saying they would get back to us by a certain date but only got back to us at the end of last week with a very small amount that cannot even take

care of the petitioners' mental health," she told the court. She described Meta as "not genuine". The moderators were employed via Sama, a San Francisco subcontractor that describes itself as an ethical AI company, to work in its hub in the capital, Nairobi. Their job entailed screening user content in 12 African languages and removing any uploads deemed to breach Facebook's community standards and terms of service. Some of the petitioners have told The Associated Press that their job required them to watch horrific content for eight hours a day that overwhelmed many of them while being paid 60,000 Kenyan shillings, or \$414 a month. They accused Sama of doing little to ensure post-traumatic professional counselling was offered. They are seeking \$1.6 billion in compensation. Meta and Sama

lawyers told the court they thought the mediation was making good progress, with long hours involved, until the moderators' lawyer wrote to them in protest.

Justice Nduma Nderi said the failed talk were a "missed opportunity" to find a balance between the parties involved as opposed to the court issuing an order. The parties will now appear at a hearing on Oct 31 on the moderators' application to find Meta and Sama in contempt of court. The lawsuit is the first known court challenge of its kind against Facebook outside the United States. In 2020, Facebook agreed to pay \$52 million to US content moderators who filed a class action lawsuit after they were repeatedly exposed to beheadings, child and sexual abuse, animal cruelty, terrorism and other disturbing content.

Macron holds security meeting amid alert after school stabbing

Arras (France): French President Emmanuel Macron was holding Monday a special security meeting amid heightened alert against feared terror threats, as a high school where a teacher was fatally stabbed in an attack last week has been evacuated over a bomb alert.

Several hundreds of students and teachers could be seen going back into the high school in the northern town of Arras after what appeared to be a false.

It comes after a teacher was killed and three other people wounded Friday in an attack by a former student suspected of Islamic radicalisation.

The prefecture of the northern region where the high school is located said that "all precautionary and safety measures" have been taken after the bomb threat was made via a police website. A demining team was on site.

The Louvre Museum in Paris and Versailles Palace evacuated visitors and staff Saturday after receiving bomb threats.

Macron cut short travel plans abroad to hold a security meeting at midday with the prime minister and other key government members as well as top military and counterterrorism officials. Macron was initially planned to attend a summit on the Western Balkans in Tirana, Albania.

Education Minister Gabriel Attal said 168 bomb threats in French schools have been reported since the beginning of September. "This is inadmissible and unacceptable," he said. The French government heightened the national threat alert and ordered up to 7,000 soldiers to be deployed by Monday night and until further notice to bolster security and vigilance around France.

Schoolchildren and educators were to hold a moment of silence in all French schools on Monday afternoon in homage to the teacher who was fatally stabbed in Friday's attack. AP

LIONEL MESSI REMAINS A DOUBTFUL STARTER

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Lionel Messi's involvement in a 1-0 win over Paraguay last week doesn't necessarily mean he'll be fit for Argentina's next game in World Cup qualifying against Peru.

Messi played most of the second half against Paraguay last Thursday despite struggling with muscular pains in the weeks leading up to the game.

But there's no certainty he'll play against Peru on Tuesday despite practicing with the squad.

Meanwhile in Brazil, Neymar is under fire for his lackluster performance in a 1-1 draw against Venezuela last week that ended with some fans throwing popcorn at the Arena Pantanal in Cuiabá. He will have a tough challenge at Uruguay to show he is back in form.

The next World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada is expanding to a 48-team format, meaning direct entry to the top six teams in South America. The seventh-place team will contest an intercontinental playoff for a berth.

World Cup winner Argentina leads continental qualifying with 9 points, followed by Brazil (7), Colombia (5), Uruguay, Chile and Venezuela (4), Ecuador (3), Paraguay and Peru (1), and Bolivia (0).

The fourth match day in South American qualifying also features Ecuador against Colombia, Paraguay against Bolivia and Venezuela taking on Chile.

PERU vs. ARGENTINA

Argentina's practice on Sunday didn't show whether the 36-year-old Messi will play against Peru. He took part of the morning session at his national team's training ground, but has



recently felt muscular pains in his right leg that have sidelined him for several MLS matches for his club, Inter Miami.

If Messi plays at Peru, coach Lionel Scaloni might have to remove either Julián Alvarez or Lautaro Martinez from the lineup that beat Paraguay. Keeping the captain in the starting lineup will likely mean Argentina playing Nico Gonzalez again in Lima.

Messi substituted Julián Alvarez in the 52nd minute

against Paraguay, when Argentina was already in the lead. He hit the post twice, but had a low key performance overall at the Monumental de Nuñez Stadium in Buenos Aires.

Peru has lost its latest two qualifying matches in South American qualifying. The squad arrived in silence shortly before dawn so no fans could be at the airport protesting after its 2-0 loss at Chile. Players and coach Juan Reynoso know they will face a much tougher challenge

against the World Cup champion.

"May this defeat today suit us for what is coming," Reynoso said in a news conference after the match in Santiago. "You don't qualify by playing beautiful soccer, you do it by playing well. For us to do that, we need to be a chameleonic team that adapts to various circumstances."

URUGUAY vs. BRAZIL

Brazil fans were frustrated with the draw against Venezuela,

a team that has never qualified to a World Cup. The 31-year-old Neymar was the team's most criticized player after that encounter because of several missed passes and floppy finishes.

The Al-Hilal striker was filmed leaving the pitch in anger as some fans threw popcorn at him. Brazil's soccer tradition calls "pipoqueiro" (popcorn man) the players who fail to deliver in big matches. He is likely to face Uruguay at the Centenario Stadium in Montevideo on Tuesday.

Neymar is Brazil's all-time top goal scorer with 79 goals in official matches.

Brazil's new coach Fernando Diniz, who was also criticized after the draw with Venezuela, is likely to make three changes for the next round of qualifying.

Right-back Danilo is injured, and is set to be replaced by Yan Couto. Left-back Guilherme Arana is expected to be replaced with the 24-year-old Carlos Augusto, who will make his national team debut. And striker Richarlison, on a six-match goal drought for the national team, could lose his position to Gabriel Jesus.

Uruguay has not beaten Brazil in World Cup qualifying since 2001. Captain Federico Valverde is optimistic about the match after a 2-2 draw at Colombia. He said he and Real Madrid teammates Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo of Brazil have spent weeks talking about the encounter.

"We could have gotten a better result, but at least we returned with one point, which always suits us," Valverde said of the draw. Uruguay has been coached by Argentine Marcelo Bielsa since the start of South American qualifying.



Gavi goal against Norway, secures 1-0 win

AP ■ LONDON

Gavi's winning goal for Spain against Norway in a European Championship qualifier on Sunday will likely have been cheered as wildly in Glasgow as it was in Madrid.

The Barcelona midfielder's strike at Ullevaal Stadium in Oslo secured a 1-0 win that means both Spain and Scotland have qualified for Euro 2024.

Gavi's goal came in the 49th minute and ensured the three-time European champions will be at next year's tournament in Germany when they will be among the favorites to lift the trophy for the first time since 2012.

Scotland might not harbor realistic ambitions of winning Euro 2024, but it has arguably exceeded expectations by qualifying from Group A. Indeed, until losing to Spain on Thursday, the Scots had made a 100% start to qualifying.

Scotland has now qualified for back-to-back Euros, having

failed to reach the finals from 2000-2016. In Germany it will be aiming to advance from the group stages for the first time in its history.

Turkey also qualified with a 4-0 win against Latvia at the Konya Metropolitan Municipality Stadium, while Croatia made it back-to-back losses in Group D after a surprise 2-1 defeat to Wales.

CROATIA STRUGGLES

Less than a year after a third-place finish at the World Cup in Qatar, Croatia is making hard work of qualification for the European Championship.

The Croatians went into this latest batch of qualifiers atop Group D, with the chance to put daylight between them and Turkey. But a 1-0 loss to Turkey on Thursday has now been followed by defeat to Wales.

Even with stars like Luka Modric, Josko Gvardiol and Marcelo Brozovic in the team, Croatia is trailing 2-0 to goals from Harry Wilson in each

half. Mario Pasalic halved the deficit, but it wasn't enough to spark a comeback. Wales moved up to second in the group ahead of Croatia in third, with both teams on 10 points.

Yunus Akgun set Turkey on course for victory against Latvia, with substitute Cenk Tosun scoring two and Kerem Akturkoglu also grabbing a goal.

ALBANIA WAITS

Four teams are separated by four points in Group E as results on Sunday meant Albania was left waiting to seal qualification. Czech Republic's 1-0 win against Faroe Islands leaves it two points behind leader Albania in second place.

Poland drew 1-1 with Moldova to leave those teams three points and four points off the top respectively.

Romania is top of Group I after a 4-0 win against Andorra - ahead of second-place Switzerland, which needed goals in the 89th and 90th minutes to draw 3-3 with Belarus.



Spain coach De la Fuente able to silence doubters

AP ■ MADRID

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente has found a way to turn the doubters into supporters.

Nearly a year after he was appointed amid a wave of skepticism, De la Fuente now has widespread backing at the helm of La Roja, having turned Spain into a contender again and comfortably securing the team a spot in the 2024 European Championship.

Spain qualified for next year's tournament in Germany on Sunday with a 1-0 win at Norway — the team's sixth straight triumph since a loss at Scotland in March had left De la Fuente under pressure just two games into his stint.

"We are always learning," De la Fuente said. "At that moment the analysis was different than it is now. We've just reached an important objective and we have to keep working and learning. We recognize what was done well, but we know there are still things to improve."

The 62-year-old De la Fuente replaced Luis Enrique after the team's loss to Morocco in the round of 16 of the World Cup in Qatar. He was then relatively unknown in Spain after spending years coaching the nation's youth squads.

His first match in charge was a home win in a qualifier against Norway in which Spain struggled from the start, and the subsequent loss to Scotland put

De la Fuente on the hot seat early on. Many didn't think he had the experience to take charge of the national team at the time.

But after the slow start, De la Fuente also helped Spain win the Nations League with victories over Italy in the semifinals and Croatia in a penalty shootout in the final. Spain then routed Georgia 7-1 and Cyprus 6-0 in qualifiers, and defeated Scotland 2-0 at home last week before securing its spot at Euro 2024 against Erling Haaland's Norway on Sunday.

"I'm happy with the work that we've done," De la Fuente said. "When you achieve something like this, things must have been done right. But in soccer one day you are up and the other you are down again, so we have to stay balanced. I'm happy now, but I also stayed composed in the tougher moments."

De la Fuente put Spain back on track in part by betting on the talent of some younger players. He kept players like Gavi, Ansu Fati and Pedri - who played at the World Cup - and brought in others such as 16-year-old Lamine Yamal, the Barcelona sensation.

His experience with the nation's youth squads proved important, and he now has his job secured for a while. "We have a team for the future, it's what I'm most excited about," he said. "We worked hard to be where we are and we deserve it."

Tom Kim wins PGA Tour, 2nd time in the same season



AP ■ LAS VEGAS

Tom Kim now has something in common with Byron Nelson as the only players to have won the same PGA Tour event twice in the same season.

Kim successfully defended his title Sunday in the Shriners Children's Open when he closed with a 5-under 66 to emerge from a pack of a dozen players who had a chance in the final hour. Kim won by one shot over Adam Hadwin, who birdied the final hole for a 67.

Kim now has three PGA Tour titles in the last 15 months, at 21 the youngest player since Tiger Woods in 1997 to have three tour wins.

"I really felt confident in myself," Kim said. "I knew that if I did me I was going to be able to do it. I'm stoked to get this one."

He won in Las Vegas a year ago, beating Patrick Cantlay in a play-

off at the TPC Summerlin, when the Shriners Children's Open was early in the season. Now, the Las Vegas event is still part of the same season because the PGA Tour goes to a calendar season starting in 2024.

Nelson won the San Francisco Open in January 1944, and the same tournament in December of 1944, both times at Harding Park. This one was up for grabs until Kim seized control on the par-5 16th.

With an hour left in the tournament, there was a six-way tie for the lead and 12 players were separated by a single shot. The key stretch at the TPC Summerlin was holes No. 13 through No. 16, which ranked as four of the five easiest holes in the final round.

Taylor Pendrith was tied for the lead with a birdie on the 13th, but had to settle for pars the rest of that stretch. K.H. Lee made all pars.

Then, it became a two-man

race between Kim and Hadwin, playing in the final group with Kim holding a one-shot advantage.

Both birdied the 13th, Hadwin with a 35-foot birdie putt that rimmed all the way around the cup before dropping. Both birdied the reachable par-4 15th, Kim with a tough up-and-down and birdie putt from 12 feet, Hadwin narrowly missing a 25-foot eagle attempt.

It turned on the par-5 16th. Kim hit to the fat of the green in two, 50 feet away for eagle. Hadwin knew he missed his shot right after contact and it came up well short and into the water. Hadwin missed a 6-foot par putt after his penalty drop, and Kim three-putted - he had to make a 5-footer on his third one - for par.

"I completely whiffed it, up and out of it, and unfortunately one of my worst swings of the day at the least opportune time," Hadwin said.

"I feel like you dump it in the water there on 16, and I certainly by no means gave the tournament, but I would have liked to have hit a more quality golf shot and put a little bit more pressure on Tom coming down the stretch."

That gave Kim a two-shot lead with two to play, and he closed with solid pars. Kim finished at 20-under 264.

Eric Cole boosted his bid to be PGA Tour rookie of the year by closing with a 62 to finish two behind, along with Alex Noren (65), J.T. Poston (66) and Pendrith (67). Pendrith came into Las Vegas at No. 123 in the FedEx Cup and was projected to move to No. 90, all but assuring a full card for 2024.

Ludvig Aberg, who made his Ryder Cup debut two weeks ago, also shot 62 and tied for 13th.

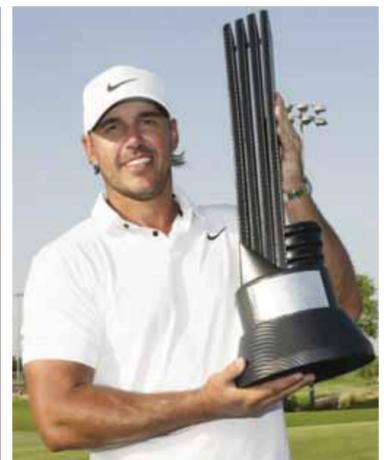
Kim, born in South Korea and raised primarily in Australia, won for the first time in 2023. He had a hot run last summer that included victories in the Wyndham Championship and in Las Vegas, followed by a dynamic debut in the Presidents Cup.

But he said he felt the pressure to live up to the expectations, and it turned this year into a grind. He was a distant runner-up in the British Open, though he injured his ankle during the week that kept him from defending his title in the Wyndham Championship.

"It's been a grind trying to figure it out," Kim said. "My first full season, trying to live up to expectations of a great year. It's been humbling sometimes."

The victory moves Kim to No. 11 in the world ranking.

Isaiah Salinda, who got into Las Vegas as a Monday qualifier, had a 63-67 weekend and tied for seventh, which gets him into the next full PGA Tour event Nov.



Brooks Koepka defends LIV Golf title

AP ■ KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY (SAUDI ARABIA)

Brooks Koepka held it together at the end for a 2-under 68 and defended his title at LIV Golf-Jeddah with a birdie on the second playoff hole to beat Talor Gooch on a day when both had reason to celebrate.

Koepka had to birdie two of his last three holes to finish at 14-under 196 and tie with Gooch, who closed with a 62. With his playoff loss, Gooch moved past Cameron Smith and won the season points title and the \$18 million bonus.

Koepka not only won \$4 million from the tournament, his victory bumped Bryson DeChambeau out of the top three in the season standings. Koepka picked up an additional \$4 million for finishing third in the points race.

DeChambeau fell back Sunday with a 70. Smith had a 66 and tied for 24th.

The LIV Golf League wraps up its second season next week at Doral in South Florida with the team championship.

Koepka ends his year with two LIV Golf titles, along with his fifth major at the PGA Championship.

Rod Pamplung ends a marathon day at SAS

AP ■ CARY (NORTH CAROLINA)

Rod Pamplung of Australia had to play 33 holes Sunday in the rain-delayed SAS Championship and it was worth every step when he finished off a 68 and then closed with a 5-under 67 for his second career PGA Tour Champions title.

The SAS Championship was the final tournament before the Charles Schwab Cup playoffs begin for the top 72 players. Pamplung's victory moved him up 13 spots to No. 17. David Duval shot 71 and tied for

11th, just enough for him to move up seven spots and finish at No. 71 in the Schwab Cup to qualify for the post-season.

Pamplung finished with a bogey for a two-shot victory over Steven Alker, who moved up to No. 2 in the standings behind Steve Stricker.

The Australian finished off 15 holes of the second round in the morning with back-to-back birdies, and then he played bogey-free in the final round until the end, when it only affected his margin of victory. "I just walked as slow as I could,"



Pamplung said. "It was a long day. We knew what we were going to be in for. Just eat the food, take your time. Thankfully, it wasn't too quick out there."

Pamplung had a one-shot lead over Alker, Paul Broadhurst and Vijay Singh when the second round was finished. Singh and Broadhurst fell back early in the final round, and Pamplung had three birdies in a four-hole stretch around the turn to seize control.

"We've been working hard," Pamplung said. "We got rid of our bad

stuff about a month-and-a-half ago. Been closer and closer and this week it was just a great ball-striking week, putting well, everything. It's a great feeling to win again."

Ernie Els had a 68 and tied for third with Mario Tiziani, who closed with a 65.

Tiziani, the brother-in-law of Stricker, split time this year playing on the PGA Tour Champions, managing his wife's brother and occasionally caddying for Stricker. He made it to the postseason for the second straight year.



AUSTRALIA REGISTER MAIDEN WIN

SHALABH SAXENA ■ LUCKNOW

Australia ticked most of the boxes, barring batting failures of their top batsmen, as they registered their maiden victory in this World Cup, edging Sri Lanka by five wickets at Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Stadium here on Monday.

Spirited performances by leg-spinner Adam Zampa, skipper Pat Cummins along with Mitchell Marsh and Josh Inglis pushed Australia to a not-so-convincing win.

With this win, Australia moved to the eighth spot on the points table while Sri Lanka are now placed at the ninth spot.

The Kangaroos' innings began on an explosive note with Marsh cracking the boundary on the very first ball. However, two quick wickets by Dilshan Madushanka reduced the Aussies to 2/24 in 3.1 overs. Madushanka removed David Warner and Steve Smith by trapping both of them in front of the wickets.

After that Marnus Labuschagne (40), Josh Inglis (58), Glenn Maxwell (31) and Marcus Stoinis (20) romped Australia home in 35.2 overs.

Earlier, leg-spinner Adam Zampa finally found the form to give the Australian skipper a breather as the Kangaroos bundled out Sri Lanka for 209



runs in 43.3 overs, despite the opening partnership of 125 runs between Pathum Nissanka (61) and Kusal Perera (78).

The Australians, who dropped five catches against the Proteas, were looking charged in the field on Monday, especially David Warner, who grabbed two stunners to send Nissanka and Sri Lankan skipper Kusal Mendis back to the

pavilion. Australian captain Pat Cummins led from the front to push his teammates to stage a fightback by breaking the opening partnership.

Cummins dug in one short and Nissanka played a mistimed pull which Warner converted into a catch by sliding under the ball. Cummins then sent Perera back to the

In the next over, Kusal Mendis (9) attempted a sweep off Zampa and Warner grabbed another spectacular catch, running around 25 metres from deep mid-wicket and completing the catch with a dive. Sri Lanka were reduced to 3/165 from 0/125.

After that Zampa trapped Sadeera Samarawickrama (8), Chamika Karunaratne (2) and

Maheesh Theekshana (0) in front of the wickets with his impeccable line and length.

The wickets of Dhananjaya de Silva (7) and Dunieth Wellalage (2) ended all hopes that Sri Lanka had. Mitchell Starc clean bowled de Silva while Cummins got Wellalage run out. Wellalage pushed the ball to mid-off and immediately ran to sneak a single but Cummins picked up the ball in one end and broke the stumps.

Glenn Maxwell then finished off the Sri Lankan innings as Charith Asalanka (25) was caught by Marnus Labuschagne in the deep before Stac cleaned up Lahiru Kumara (4).

WARNER WINS HEARTS: David Warner probably is the most loving Australian player in India. His social media reels on Indian film songs are instant hits. He could be seen doing 'Pushpa' movie hook steps at Chennai against India and the video has already been viewed by millions.

During the match between Australia and Sri Lanka at Ekana Stadium in Lucknow, Warner did this heart-winning act, instantly winning fans' hearts.

When rain hit the match in the 33rd over, the match had to be stopped for some time. Warner helped the ground staff by pulling the covers.

Hoardings fall from Ekana stadium roof

Lucknow (PTI): Strong winds caused several hoardings to fall from the roof of the Ekana Stadium on to the seats below during the World Cup match between Australia and Sri Lanka here on Monday.

After rain stopped play for a bit, there was a dust storm and heavy winds led to several iron angles with branding material from the roof falling on people sitting at the lower levels.

The situation could have been disastrous but luckily the stands were relatively empty. It did, however, cause panic among those who were watching the game as the public announcement asked spectators to move to safety of the higher seats.

By the time the second innings began the security had moved all spectators to the higher level.

The stadium hosted its maiden World Cup game — Australia versus South Africa — last week. The marquee India versus England match is scheduled to be played at the Ekana Stadium on October 29.



Cricket is included in 2028 Olympics

PTI ■ BENGALURU

For long, cricket remained a statistical global sport sans a true global footing. A solid fan base of 2.5 billion and an ever-swelling TV revenue formed its axis to be labelled as a sport with a worldwide appeal, second only to football.

However, in reality, all of it is parked in the Commonwealth countries and even among them India alone helm around 70 per cent, if not more, of those numbers.

But now, all this could change as cricket, in its T20 avatar, has made its re-entry into the Olympic fold through the 2028 edition at Los Angeles, and it is a mutually beneficial association from sporting and commercial angles.

From a sporting perspective, the Olympics provides an unmatched platform for cricket, perhaps even bigger than a World Cup.

Standing on the podium wearing an Olympic medal around the neck is an unmatched feeling for any sportsman, as it is a reverentially warm handshake with history that dates back to 1896.

"It is an excellent piece of news for cricket to be part of the Olympics. It will certainly add to the global image of cricket," says Keith Joseph, president of the Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees (CANOC), who gave a strong backing to ICC's efforts to get cricket included in the LA Olympics.

"T20 provides an excellent platform too in terms of duration and connection with younger audiences. That USA will be co-hosting the T20 World Cup in 2024 will also work as a very good precursor to cricket ahead of the Olympics," he points out.

However, expecting cricket to match the universal appeal of football, something the sport always cherished, just because of an Olympic appearance is quite naïve.

Sample this: The ICC men's T20 ranking list features 87 nations in the men's section and 66 in the women's segment. But the FIFA ranking list touches 207 men's teams and 186 women's outfits, the numbers reveal the vast gulf between the two sports.

Of course, this is not to deny that the T20 format has helped cricket to reach some hitherto

unexplored corners of Africa, Europe and Latin America.

"Yes, it is a good first step to take cricket to a global audience. As the USA is a big market and there is a strong presence of sub-continent crowd. But as of now, it has been included only in Los Angeles, and hopefully it will figure in Brisbane as well (in 2032).

"It is important because Australia is a traditional cricketing nation, and being able to play there will be a big boost to the sport. It may even open doors to cricket being a permanent Olympic sport," opines a veteran BCCI administrator.

However, cricket had to leap over several self-imposed hurdles to make its return to the Olympics.

Both the officials and players did not want to follow several clauses, especially the one pertaining to their whereabouts that is mandatory for random dope testing, laid out by the IOC, IOA, WADA etc.

England, the champion side when cricket was last staged in the Olympics in 1900, was another country which was initially reluctant to take this plunge.

"Yes, there were some difficulties in reaching an understanding for some time over certain issues such as the whereabouts clause.

"However, most importantly, the BCCI and ICC and few other boards have found a common ground to take cricket to a global stage," said the administrator.

Beyond the sporting field, the IOA also might have thought about the crowd-pulling power of cricket, especially in the USA, a country with a large Asian diaspora.

An industry insider, whom PTI contacted, said the million eyeballs that cricket ensures will have a massive influence on the purchase of broadcasting rights of the LA Olympics.

"It is great news (cricket in Olympics) if you are a businessperson. America has a large section of Asian expats, who are crazy about cricket and they will fill the stadium and of course will follow the game on TV or streaming apps.

"Since cricket is in LA, our estimate is that the selling price of broadcasting rights might see at least a 20-30 percent jump from the existing one, which is huge for a single edition," the expert said.

South Africa looks strong against Netherlands



PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

South Africa are making quite a statement at the World Cup, playing entertaining cricket and plundering tons of runs as they steamroll rival teams.

As the Proteas take on the Netherlands in this hilly paradise on Tuesday, the perennial under-performers and 'chokers' have shown in the last two games their determination to go the distance in the tournament.

Their 102-run win against Sri Lanka in the opener in New Delhi after putting a record 428/5 on the board, followed by 134-run victory against five-time champions Australia in Lucknow, have made South Africa the team to beat in the competition.

From staying under the radar in the lead-up to the ODI showcase to becoming high-flyers, the Proteas have started playing to potential and will be firm favourites against the Dutch.

Unlike the Australian and England cricket teams, whose patchy performance so far has left a lot to be desired, the South Africans have come

out with full combat capabilities -with the likes of wicket-keeping stalwart Quinton de Kock, top-order batter Rassie van der Dussen and Aiden Markram making a massive impact here.

The trio smashed a century each against Sri Lanka to pile up a mountain of runs with Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller playing useful cameos in the 428-run total.

Though their bowlers did take a beating from the Sri Lankans, they hit back with full force against the Australians in the next match.

A second consecutive century by De Kock and a massively improved performance from tall pace bowler Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada floored Pat Cummins' side.

The 177-run loss for the five-time champions following the humiliating loss to India in the opener has put the Kangaroos on the mat.

The Proteas would look to attack with even more firepower against the Netherlands, a side that has very few recognisable faces in mainstream cricket. But they have posed a challenge occasionally, like the huge upset they made during the 2009 T20 World Cup, defeating England at Lord's.

Last year, the Dutch eliminated the Proteas, handing them a shocking 13-run defeat in the Super 12 stage of the T20 World Cup in Australia. The Scott Edwards-led side will certainly take inspiration from that victory, though T20 and 50-over formats are like chalk and cheese.

But, on a cricket field, where miracles happen, the Dutch too would want to aim for a victory for the ages after seeing Afghanistan overrun defending champions England on Sunday night in New Delhi.

The Proteas, once bitten twice shy, would be looking to opener De Kock, Rassie van der Dussen and Aiden Markram to once again set the stage on fire and then give their bowlers a big total to defend.

England have to show resilience: Buttler

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

England will have to play of some of their "best cricket" to come out of the hole they find themselves in following their shock defeat to Afghanistan in the ODI World Cup.

England suffered a shock 69-run defeat to the Hashmatullah Shahidi-led side with the defending champions faltering in their chase of the 285-run target at the Ferozeshah Kotla on Sunday.

The win was Afghanistan's second-ever in a World Cup match and lifted them to sixth position on the points table behind England.

On whether it was premature to say that England's World Cup defence was under threat, Buttler, whose team is yet to face India, Australia and South Africa, said, "Yeah. As I mentioned just before, it's not been the way we wanted to start the competition, but this is the situation we find ourselves in and we're going to have to play some of our best cricket moving forward."

The skipper said he had full faith in his team to pull through this crisis.

"Yeah, it's a big setback obviously. Before the tournament starts you have a different idea of how the first three games would pan out. We've got to show a lot of character, a lot of



resilience within the team and most of all a lot of belief. There was a lot of excellent players in there and we haven't played well enough today but we must keep that belief," said Buttler.

Afghanistan were helped on their way to their second-highest World Cup total by a fine 80-run innings from Rahmanullah Gurbaz at the start and a superb 28-run cameo by Mujeeb Ur Rahman in the final overs.

Afghanistan didn't lose a wicket till they had crossed the century mark. England, on the other hand, were 91/4 at one stage.

Asked if he could pinpoint where things started going wrong for England, Buttler said, "No, we didn't, no we started poorly, first ball of the game I missed one and it sort of set the tone for that first 10 overs, we didn't hit the areas that we wanted to and credit to Gurbaz (80 runs) as he put us under a lot of pressure, played some

good shots, but maybe a few too many easy boundaries in there."

England's aggressive style of batting, called 'Bazball', has come to epitomise their cricket in all three formats, more so in Tests under coach Brendon McCullum.

Asked if the team could not "execute properly" the style he wanted it to play, Buttler said, "We always want to play positive and be aggressive and some days you don't play as well as you want to. Though Afghanistan built good pressure on us, maybe the wicket didn't play exactly how we thought it would play and maybe the dew didn't come in as much as we thought as well."

England have played their best cricket when their backs are to the wall of late, with the fight-back during the Ashes this year being fresh in the mind.

Asked if the two losses in three World Cup matches will sharpen the team's focus a little bit more, Buttler added, "We've played some good cricket in all scenarios, whether we've been on top and front-runners and fancied or whether we've had our backs against the wall. It's a position you find yourselves in, it's not the position you wanted to be in three games ago but the character is excellent as I've mentioned, there'll always be belief and we'll dust ourselves down and go again."

OTHER SPORTS

Jordan Thompson upsets Zverev in first round



AP ■ TOKYO

Jordan Thompson upset ninth-ranked Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-4 in the opening round of the Japan Open on Monday for his second win over a top-10 opponent this season.

The 29-year-old Australian saved four of the five break points he faced to claim his first career win over Zverev after losing their only previous meeting six years ago. He also beat seventh-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas at Indian Wells in March.

"I fought off 0-40 first game and I really got into the match after that," the 60th-ranked Thompson said. "But I held on, I was playing an unpredictable style of tennis, and I think he didn't handle it that well in the first set and adapted in the second. But I somehow hung around."

Thompson will next play either Shanghai

Masters semifinalist Ben Shelton or qualifier Taro Daniel.

The other three Australians in action Monday all lost as eighth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime defeated Aleksander Vukic 7-6 (3), 6-7 (2), 6-2, while Mackenzie McDonald beat Max Purcell 7-5, 6-4 and Sebastian Ofner outlasted Christopher O'Connell 6-7 (2), 7-6 (5), 7-5.

Fifth-seeded Tommy Paul plays Daniel Altmaier in a late match. Top-seeded Taylor Fritz plays his first-round match against Cameron Norrie on Tuesday, while second-seeded Casper Ruud meets wild-card entry Yosuke Watanuki.

Shanghai Masters winner Hubert Hurkacz is also in the draw. He opens against Zhang Zhizhen on Wednesday.

JIANGXI OPEN

Tour veteran Vera Zvonareva beat Arianne Hatano 6-1, 6-2 in her opening match of the Jiangxi Open.

The 39-year-old Zvonareva, who made her tour debut in 2000, broke her 166th-ranked opponent's serve six times as she cruised to victory in 61 minutes. Zvonareva next plays fifth-seeded Zhu Lin or Diana Shnaider.

Also, eighth-seeded Sara Sorribes Tormo beat wild-card entry Jiang Xinyu 6-4, 6-0. The Spaniard will next play Camila Osorio, who beat Ma Ye-Xin 6-1, 6-0.

Injured Prannoy withdraws from Denmark and French Open

PTI ■ ODENSE (DENMARK)

Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy has pulled out of the Denmark Open Super 750 tournament due to a back injury that troubled him during his maiden bronze medal-winning run at the recently-concluded Asian Games.

The 31-year-old Indian had battled excruciating back pain to secure India's first medal in men's singles in 41 years at Hangzhou but now he will have to sit out for two to three weeks due to the injury.

"We are not looking at playing any tournament this month. Something also came up in the MRI as well, so I will have to be out for 2-3 weeks, so I will not be able to play Denmark and France," Prannoy told PTI.

"I will need to rest and then start with rehab."

In his absence, India's charge will be led by Lakshya Sen, who will be back on the



court after playing a vital role in India's first-ever silver medal in men's team event at the Asian Games.

World No. 15 Sen, who remained unbeaten at the Asian Games, will open against Thailand's Kantaphon Wang-

charoen and is likely to meet sixth seed Shi Yuqi of China in the second round.

Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu too will look for a good outing after a semifinal finish at the Arctic Open last week. She will be up against

Scotland's Kirsty Gilmour.

World No. 20 Kidambi Srikanth, who is also desperately looking to accumulate ranking points to make the cut for the Paris Olympics, will take on China's Weng Hong Yang in his opening game.

It is going to be a tricky affair for the former world No. 1, who has blown hot and cold throughout the season.

Priyanshu Rajawat, currently ranked No. 30 in the world, will also have his task cut out as he faces world No. 14 Lee Zii Jia, who is brimming with confidence following his title-winning run in the Arctic Open.

Newly-crowned world No. 1 pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who claimed an epic gold at Hangzhou, is pitted against Malaysia's Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi.

MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila will also miss out after the former suffered a back injury at Hangzhou.

The women's pairing of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, however, will be back on the court after the Asian Games and will take on Thailand's Benyapa Aimsaard and Nuntakarn Aimsaard.

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