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WHY 'MAKE IN INDIA' CAN BE A GAME CHANGER

WORLD 8

THOUSANDS JOIN PRO-PALESTINIAN RALLIES

MONEY 10

AMUL SET TO ENTER EUROPEAN MARKET AFTER US SUCCESS

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GAUFF RALLIES TO REACH CHINA OPEN FINAL 12 SPORTS

Team India lifts the World Cup Time for Mahisasura Mardini

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

The air crackled with anticipation of India and Pakistan cricket match. Once again in the ICC tournament India beat Pakistan in Women's T20 World Cup group stage match by 6 wickets. India chased down the target of 105 in 18.5 overs, after losing the toss. Indian bowlers gave a much needed start by taking the wicket of Gul Feroza in the first over of the match.

India's bowling outclassed the batting line-up of the opposition in this crucial match after they got beaten in the heavy match against New Zealand in the first game by 58 runs on the slow track.

Indian star bowler Shreyanka Patil ended her spell with 2 wickets in the bank with one maiden over and Anurdhathi Reddy put the Pakistan innings on hold with 3 wickets and an economical spell in the match.

For Pakistan, Nida Dar was the highest run scorer of the team who managed to lead the team total across the mark of 100, she came in the middle order to anchor the innings after the failure of



India's Renuka Singh, second left, celebrates the wicket of Pakistan's Gul Feroza with her teammates during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 match between Pakistan and India at Dubai International Stadium, United Arab Emirates, Sunday

top order in high voltage game.

Chasing the target, India came hard on Pakistan. Opening duo Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana start their partnership where Shafali's attacking innings of 32 was the highest individual

score for the team after she losing her partner Mandhana early in the innings.

Shafali Verma couldn't lead the team for long in the run chase. Middle order batter Jemimah Rodrigues and Captain Harmanpreet Kaur's

steady partnership gave the team solidity in successfully chasing the target.

Pakistan is still in the league with upcoming match against defending champions Australia on Friday. India managed to win this

match keeping 6 wickets after a slow start in power play without hitting a boundary.

India made their mark with first win of the tournament and will go from here to face Sri Lanka on Wednesday and try to enter the semi final stage.

Parties seek recognition in Jammu and Kashmir

PIONEER NEWS SERC ■ JAMMU/ NEW DELHI/ CHANDIGARH



Haryana and Jammu Kashmir assembly 2024 polls

With Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir polls becoming crucial and a matter of prestige for both the major political parties — BJP and Congress — the duo soon after the Exit Poll predictions huddled for the Government formation in both the places with 90 members of Assembly each.

While Congress exuded confidence and rallied behind the exit polls saying they shall better the mark even more, BJP which is in power in Haryana for last 10 years rejected exit poll predictions. BJP, Congress, the INLD-BSP and the JJP-Azad Samaj Party alliances, and the Aam Aadmi Party are the key poll contestants. However, a direct fight between the ruling BJP and Congress was expected in most seats.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini claimed his party BJP will form the Government in the state with full majority for a third time when the results are announced on October 8. Congress will blame the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for their defeat, he said, attacking the opposition party, which is ahead in the race, according to most exit polls.

Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said he was expecting a

comfortable majority for the Congress and cited the exit polls reports. Congress stalwarts Hooda, Kumari Selja and Randeep Singh Surjewala, who also exercised their right to vote, said their party would form the next Government.

Post the exit poll results the political parties in Jammu and Kashmir were not enthused with the predictions and are now waiting for the 'janta ka report card' on October 8. Various exit polls have predicted a hung assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, with the National Conference-Congress alliance expected to come closer to the halfway mark in the 95-member house. The Independent candidates from both regions are expected to play the crucial role of 'Kingmakers'.

BJP J and State Unit Chief Ravinder Raina, who has contested from the Nowshera Assembly segment, claimed the BJP will emerge as the single largest political party winning close to 35 seats. Raina also clarified the party will not join hands with the

Sheikh Abdul Rashid-led Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) or Independent candidates supported by the banned Jamaat-e-Islami.

Senior party leaders also took stock of the situation and briefed the central leadership. BJP national General Secretary Tarun Chugh on Sunday said that his party will form the Government in both Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir in the recently concluded Assembly elections, adding that BJP will get the blessings of the people.

In Srinagar, former Chief Minister and Vice President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Omar Abdullah reacted along the expected lines. He labelled the exit poll a 'time pass'. JKPC Chief Tariq Hamid Karra said, "We are eagerly waiting for the actual results on October 8.

A PDP candidate from the Lal Chowk Assembly segment Zuhaib Yousuf Mir hinted that they can join the National Conference-Congress alliance to keep the BJP out of power.

CM Majhi embarks on 3-day Delhi visit

To attend a plethora of programmes

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi left for New Delhi on Sunday on a three-day visit to the national capital. As per official sources, Majhi is scheduled to attend a meeting of Chief Ministers and Home Ministers of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected States convened by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The meeting, to be chaired by Shah, is aimed to take an update on the extremists' ongoing offensive and also discuss developmental projects being implanted in their respective jurisdictions.

In Keonjhar

Girl raped while returning from school

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

A 13-year-old girl was allegedly raped while returning home from the school on Saturday under Banpal block in Keonjhar district.

The victim along with her friends was returning after completing her class examination when the accused Shakti Karjee dragged her into the forest and raped her.

When the girl screamed for help, the accused fled from the spot.

This apart, the CM is also scheduled to attend a few other programmes in Delhi. He is also likely to meet some Union Ministers and discuss important issues relating to development and welfare schemes in the State.

Majhi is also likely to meet some senior BJP national leaders and discuss organisational matters as the party is stepping up its membership drive to strengthen its base in the State. This will be Majhi's second visit to Delhi in a week after his two-day trip to the national capital when he met envoys of 34 countries and business tycoons to attract investment ahead of the Utkarsh Odisha: Make In Odisha Conclave-2025.

Rape and murder find more voice in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KULTALI/JOYNAGAR

Der lokkho taka nin aar kete porun (Have Rs 1.5 lakh and get lost)." That is what the parents of a rape victim was told by the cops of Narendrapur Police Station in South 24 Parganas after the girl committed suicide failing to bear the ignominy and harassment of her parents who ran from pillar to post spending Rs 9 lakh for two years to get justice. All this while, the rapists who roamed freely — after obtaining bail — threatened the victim's family and even got her house robbed when they did not withdraw their complaints. The police simply looked the other way. The teenager was raped in 2020 and she ended her life in 2022 as her parents failed to get her justice. The incident — dating back two years — that was nearly dead and forgotten suddenly rematerialised on Saturday after an 11-year-old girl was raped and murdered at Mahishmari village in Joynagar sub-division once again in South 24 Parganas district. Not wholly out of coincidence perhaps, the Saturday's victim and the previous one who committed suicide happened to be first cousins. "We have no security ... is this the price of being born a girl in



Representative file photo

Bengal ... you get out of your house to be seized, consumed and scythed by the wild beasts and you have nowhere to go ... because the police are all brought over ... I have been knocking every possible door but in vain ... I lost my daughter ... a hard-earned Rs 9 lakh and an additional punishment by way of my house getting robbed for not withdrawing the case," said Amrita (name changed) insisting "today no woman is safe. There tends to be one similarity between the rape that took place at Narendrapur and the one at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital where a lady doctor was raped and

murdered on August 9. In both the cases the police offered money to hush up the case. While in the RG Kar case a senior IPS officer had offered a fat packet stuffed with notes to the father of the victim, in the Narendrapur incident the mother of the victim was offered Rs 1.5 lakhs. "As though everything can be sold ... even honour or life ... the police officers told me to get lost taking Rs 1.5 lakhs ... I know because we are poor we will not get justice ... and now brother's daughter is dead ... Why would not they take me ... I would have gone with them ... why would they tear my daughter off and eat her," she wailed at the heavens.

UN out of sync with reality: India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday described United Nations as an old company that does not entirely keep up with the market but occupies space. Citing many examples of inactions, he said that UN does not step up on key issues around the world. Jaishankar was speaking at the third Kautilya Economic Conclave, here. Jaishankar also drew symmetry between companies and countries, giving an example of the UN being an old company, not keeping up with the markets but occupying space for the same. "In a way, the UN is like an old company, not entirely keeping up with the market but occupying the space. When it's behind times, in this world to have start-ups, and innovations, different people start doing their own things," said Jaishankar in the conclave. The External Affairs Minister also highlighted the United Nations' global function, even though the organisation may function sub-optimally, "it is still the only multilateral game in town," he said. "So, what you have today, is yes there is an UN at the end of the day, however suboptimal it is in functioning, it is still

the only multilateral game in town but when it does not step up on key issues, countries figure out their own ways of doing it," said Jaishankar.

He also highlighted that when the United Nations is behind, it is time to have start-ups and innovations, the people start to do their own things. Jaishankar highlighted the UN's goal to mainstream principal players with the market trends, in the situation when they are not, he said that countries like companies start doing their own thing. "Now, they would like to mainstream that into the market and see that the principal players are in-tune with these trends, but when they are not, I think countries, as companies do, start doing their own things," said the External Affairs Minister.

He also highlighted the organisation's lack of action during global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. "Think about what the UN did on COVID. I think the answer is not very much," he said. The Minister said that countries had to come up with their own initiatives, like COVAX. "I think increasingly you find combinations of countries who come together and say, let's agree on this and let's go and do it...the UN will continue, but increasingly there's a non-UN space," said Jaishankar.

Berhampur Varsity ragging Four students expelled from hostel; 13 fined

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The Berhampur University authorities on Sunday expelled four students from the hostel and imposed a penalty of Rs 1,000 each on 13 other second-year students for allegedly mentally harassing and ragging a first-year student in the university campus.

"Four students of the third semester have been expelled from the hostel. Another 13 students have been imposed a penalty of Rs 1,000 each. They have directed to submit written undertakings," said Berhampur University Vice-Chancellor Gitanjali Das. According to sources, at



least 17 students of the second year had allegedly ragged a first-year student on September 21. Based on the victim's complaint, the UGC Anti-ragging Cell had directed the university authorities to conduct a probe into the incident. Based on CCTV footage, a 12-member anti-ragging com-

mittee along with a DSP investigated the case, following which action was initiated against the 17 students.

The four inmates have been asked to vacate the hostel within a week for their direct involvement in the ragging while the 13 other students have been directed to submit

written undertakings as part of the disciplinary measures.

"Steps are being taken to sensitise all the students. The Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents are going on rounds in the evening. We have also deployed security guards in the new hostel to protect the new students. Steps are being taken to make the students more comfortable in the campus," the Vice-Chancellor said.

"Moreover, we have installed CCTV cameras all around to keep a tab on the movements of students. We have warned senior students not to visit places meant for new students," she stated.

Man pays unique tribute to late wife with silicone statue

NALINI SAHU ■ BRAHMAMPUR

True love, they say, never dies, even when a loved one passes away. This sentiment is beautifully exemplified by a businessman from Brahmampur, who has found a unique way to keep his wife's memory alive.

After losing his wife Kiran Nayak, to COVID-19 on April 25, 2021, Prashant Kumar Nayak commissioned a life-size silicone statue of her, now placed in their home to fill the void left by her absence.

The 52-year-old Prashant shares how the statue has brought comfort to him and his family. "When I look at the statue, it feels like she's still here talking to me. My children feel the same. Her aura



fills the house," he says.

The statue, dressed in a saree, sits gracefully on a sofa. Kiran's younger daughter Mehak, an MBA student, lovingly cares for the statue, frequently changing its sarees and ornaments.

Prashant explains, "After

Kiran's passing, my children and I were devastated. We found a Bengaluru-based sculptor, who took about a year and a half to craft a perfect likeness using fibre, rubber and silicone."

The statue, including its production and transporta-

tion, cost around Rs 8 lakh.

The statue was installed before his elder daughter's wedding in 2023, ensuring Kiran's presence was felt during the celebration. Married to Kiran in 1997, Prashant and Kiran had three children, two daughters and a son.

In city Notorious criminal detained for extortion bid

Demanded Rs 5L from sweets shop owner

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Of late, notorious criminals are attempting to extort money from businessmen after being released from jail, particularly on the outskirts of the capital city.

In such an incident, a sweets shop owner was threatened by a youth, who demanded extortion money of Rs 5 lakh. Moreover, the accused dumped stones in front of the victim's sweets shop at Chandi Bazaar under the Airfield police station after its owner refused to pay him the money.

The accused, identified as



Raghunath Barik, had recently been released from jail and tried to extort money from the trader. He also threatened the trader to shut down his shop. The entire incident has been captured in the CCTV camera.

Based on the extortion bid allegations, Barik was subsequently detained by police after carrying out a probe by examining the CCTV footage. Barik had earlier been arrested in connection with the murder of one Amaresh Nayak a couple of years ago in the Sundarpada area.

'Media freedom was curbed by BJD govt'

Says CM Mohan Majhi

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday accused the previous BJD government of "suppressing" media freedom, revealing that certain media houses were denied advertisements in an attempt to control their voice.

Addressing the annual function of Odia daily 'The Nirbhaya', Majhi claimed that the BJD government imposed an "undeclared whip" on media outlets that refused to toe the government's line.

"There was an orchestrated effort to ensure that media outlets critical of the government were starved of revenue," he alleged.

Majhi emphasised the dif-

ference his government has made since coming to power, stating that under his leadership, the government has become more people-centric and transparent.

"The situation has changed. There is no longer any fear or suppression; media houses are free to report," he assured.

The BJD has so far not responded to the allegations.

"During the BJD government, many restrictions were imposed on journalists. Any journalist critical of the government policies or lapses were harassed. Some scribes were even put behind the bars on false cases. Restrictions were also imposed on the entry of scribes into the State Secretariat," said senior journalist Prasanna Mohanty, hailing Majhi's statement on media freedom.

DSBM holds Lit Fest 'INKIMPACT'

For HS school, jr. college students

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The VETTRIVA - DSBM Literary Club, under the aegis of DAV School of Business Management, organised INKIMPACT-A Literary Festival on Saturday wherein young participants from different higher secondary schools and junior colleges participated in sub-events like Debate, Slam Poetry, Talk Fest and Face Painting.

Editor, Sambad and Kanak News, Tanaya Patnaik graced the Valedictory Session as the chief guest and congratulated the winners of all events. She appealed the congregation to cultivate a culture of asking

questions. By fostering creativity and innovation, students can unlock new perspectives and solutions to various challenges they may face in future, she said.

DGM, JSPL Dr Sanjay Kumar Sahoo and Prof Sarat Chandra Satapathy also adorned the event as guests of eminence.

President, DSBM MM Panda motivated and encouraged the budding talents to leverage these opportunities to nurture their employability skills.

Principal, DSBM Dr DN Mishra delivered the welcome address and oriented the students about the importance of content writing skills and its relevance in the corporate world.

Private bus owners call for 24-hr bandh

To protest LAccMI transport scheme

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Private Bus Owners' Association in western and southern Odisha has called for a 24-hour bandh starting at 6 pm on Monday to protest the government's decision to launch tier-II buses under the Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAccMI), which aims to improve public transport in rural areas.

The association, representing bus owners from 13 districts, expressed dissatisfaction with the government's lack of response to their concerns.

During a general body meeting on Sunday, they claimed that the introduction of tier-II LAccMI buses, which will operate between district headquarters and blocks, would lead to significant financial losses for private operators.

"We initially supported the government's tier-II LAccMI buses. However, the tier-II services will negatively impact us. The private bus business cannot survive with both the government and private operators plying on the same routes," said a bus owner.

The association warned that if its demands are not addressed, they may escalate their protest into an indefinite strike.

Srikant urges CM 'Bring new law on State's tax on minerals'

Scrap ORISED Act, 2004

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Senior Congress leader Srikant Jena has urged the Odisha CM to repeal the ORISED (Orissa Rural Infrastructure & Social & Economic Development) Act, 2004 and introduce a new Bill in the Assembly concerning collection of tax and cess on minerals and their utilisation by the State.

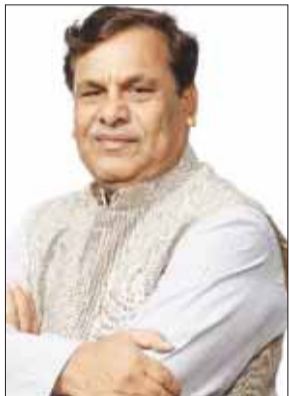
Jena appealed to the CM in view of the Supreme Court's landmark decision on October 4 rejecting the Union Government's review petition upholding its own Judgment dated July 25 and August 14, which allow the mineral bearing States to levy taxes and cess on minerals and mineral-bearing lands.

"This will undoubtedly bring much-needed economic relief to Odisha, which has long struggled with poverty and underdevelopment," Jena

said. He urged the Odisha Government to call the special session of the Assembly for a detailed discussion on a new Bill replacing the ORISED Act of 2004 as this will be a roadmap for the socio-economic development of the State.

The New Bill can include several important provisions to better serve the interests of Odisha, which was completely ignored in the ORISED Act of 2004, said Jena.

He suggested that a com-



mittee of experts be established to determine the mar-

ket value of minerals. The committee must be chaired by a High Court judge, to ensure transparency and fairness in the valuation process. The committee will assess the true market value based on quality, demand, and location advantages, ensuring Odisha receives a fair share of the wealth from its mineral resources, he said.

Bauxite and chromite are in abundance in Odisha. The State should take the locational and qualitative ad-

vantage of these specifically located minerals in Odisha and fix cess at 50% of the market value, instead of 20% as per the ORISED Act, Jena said, adding that in case of iron, manganese and coal, cess should be increased to 30-40% of the market value.

Jena further suggested that 50% of the collected cess and taxes from the minerals and mineral bearing lands should be spent in that respective area and in those particular districts.

OES Wildlife Week event 'It's imperative to safeguard our natural heritage'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Our natural heritage encompasses the ecosystems, biodiversity and landscapes that are intrinsic to our planet's identity. It includes not only the majestic mountains and vast forests but also the myriad species that inhabit these environments. Protecting these elements is essential for maintaining ecological balance, supporting human wellbeing and preserving cultural identity.

One of the primary threats to our natural heritage at the present juncture is climate change, which leads to habitat loss, altered weather patterns, and increased frequency of natural disasters. To com-

bat these effects, it is crucial to adopt sustainable practices in agriculture, industry and urban development. This involves minimising pollution, conserving water, reducing carbon footprints and combating climate change. Another critical aspect of preserving our natural heritage is the protection of endangered species and their habitats.

Environment experts presented such views in a seminar titled 'Safeguarding our natural heritage' organised under the auspices of the Orissa Environmental Society (OES) while observing the Wildlife Week.

OES president Dr Sundara Narayana Patro chaired the programme. Chief speaker

Shri Gaurav, Scientist-C and Head of the Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhubaneswar, explained that our traditional methods of conservation are very much significant; and education and awareness are vital components for safeguarding our natural heritage. "By teaching individuals about the importance of ecosystems and the threats they face, we can inspire action and foster a culture of conservation," he said. He further emphasised that engaging with local communities, educational institutions and other organisations can amplify these efforts, creating a unified front in the battle against environmental degradation.

Dr Patro stressed on understanding the intricacies of natural ecosystems and biodiversity conservation in addition to enhancing political commitment for the cause.

OES secretary Dr Jayakrushna Panigrahi said, "By prioritising conservation and fostering a deep respect for nature, we can protect the irreplaceable treasures of our planet for the future generations."

Former PCCF Dr Bijay Ketan Patnaik discussed how over-exploitation of the biological resources causes hindrance in natural heritage conservation. OES vice-president Dr Lala AK Singh focused on giving priority to research in conservation science.

'Biomanufacturing to get a big boost in India'

3rd Life Sciences Start-up Summit inaugurated at BRIC-ILS

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 3rd Life Sciences Start-up Summit was inaugurated by Director General, Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) and Union Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Prof Rajesh S Gokhale on Friday at the BRIC-ILS here.

Prof Gokhale spoke on the recent Bio-E3 policy (Biotechnology for Economy, Employment and Environment) and the Bio-RIDER (Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneur-



ship Development) scheme and said it will give a big boost to Biomanufacturing in India, and Biotechnology is expected to contribute to 4-6 percent of the Indian economy by 2030.

He further said that the BRIC-ILS is expected to contribute to 5 out of 6 thematic areas under the new Bio-E3 policy. These include, high-value biobased chemicals, biopolymers and enzymes; smart proteins and func-

Director, ILS Dr Debasish Dash mentioned that BRICILS bioincubator has advanced equipment and infrastructure facilities for carrying out cutting-edge biotechnology research and focuses on cost-effective and affordable product development.

Joint Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology Puja Mishra spoke about the opportunities in the State for promoting an innovation ecosystem for startups and entrepreneurship in the area of biotechnology.

Plant-based protein powders developed by Shrestha Patel and Amit Kumar Sahu, co-founders of Scylene Wellness Private Limited under WishFit Wellness products, were launched at the event.

CONTEMPORARIES

Significant: SC abolishes caste discrimination in prisons

In the recent judgment in Sukanya Shantha v. Union of India, the Supreme Court has once again demonstrated its role as the sentinel of constitutional morality by addressing a particularly egregious manifestation of India's societal inequities, i.e., caste-based discrimination in prisons. This judgment not only resonates with the egalitarian promises embedded in the Constitution but also reaffirms the nation's ongoing struggle to extricate itself from the residual legacies of both colonialism and the oppressive hierarchies of its pre-colonial past.



S JYOTIRANJAN

At the heart of this decision is the recognition of equality and dignity as non-negotiable constitutional imperatives and this was quite eloquently observed by Chief Justice Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud in the judgment. The Indian Constitution is a document crafted to redress centuries of social stratification and systemic discrimination. The Constitution is not a passive instrument; it is a living document imbued with transformative

power, meant to catalyse social change and rectify historical wrongs.

The Supreme Court's directive mandating the revision of Prison Manuals across India to expunge caste-based provisions is a testament to this transformative vision. The prisons, as the court emphasised, must not become microcosms of the very social hierarchies they are meant to transcend; instead, they should serve as institutions where the foundational val-

ues of the Constitution, such as, liberty, equality, fraternity are upheld, even for those deprived of their personal liberty due to incarceration.

The judgment meticulously dissects the colonial origins of caste-based discrimination in the Indian prisons. For example, the infamous Criminal Tribes Act and its lingering influence on post-colonial India are stark reminders of how colonial rulers institutionalised caste hierarchies to dehumanise and control marginalised communities. As observed in the judgment, colonial prison manuals segregated prisoners based on caste and ethnicity, reinforcing the rigid boundaries of the caste system within the prison walls.

Besides, the Prison Codes such as those in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal perpetuate these discriminatory practices. The Uttar Pradesh Jail Manual, for instance, still contains references to "convicts of the scavenger class", while the West Bengal Jail Code requires prisoner-cooks to belong to "suit-

able castes", such provisions are not merely relics of the past but active instruments of dehumanisation that perpetuate the stigma of caste. It is a fact that the persistence of such laws in post-independence India illustrates the slow pace of decolonisation in the country's legal and penal systems.

As the court pointed out, failing to provide dignity to the incarcerated is a vestige of both colonial and pre-colonial systems that were designed to degrade those under the control of the state. The Madhya Pradesh Jail Manual is another egregious example as it continues to label certain de-notified tribes, once classified as "criminal" under British rule, as "habitual offenders".

Decolonisation and the broader Constitutional vision

This judgment comes at a time when India is increasingly engaging in a broader conversation about decolonisation, not just of its laws but of its societal structures. The introduction of the Model Prisons and Correctional

Services Act, 2023 is an important step in this direction and as the judgment rightly underscores, decolonisation is not merely about rewriting laws but it requires dismantling the deeply entrenched ideologies that perpetuate inequality and oppression.

Chief Justice Chandrachud's analysis invokes a powerful constitutional interpretation that places human dignity at the centre of the nation's legal and moral architecture and this perspective draws from the Indian Constitution's commitment to substantive equality, ensuring not just formal equality before the law but equal treatment in practice, especially for marginalised communities.

The judgment also references several landmark rulings that have shaped India's evolving constitutional jurisprudence. For instance, the 2018 ruling in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India decriminalized consensual same-sex relations, signalling the court's commitment to expanding the scope of individual freedoms and protecting

against discrimination based on identity. The ruling in Arneesh Kumar v. State of Bihar is also recalled, where the court had earlier criticized the Indian police force for retaining its colonial image as an instrument of oppression rather than public service.

Institutional reform and public vigilance

No doubt, the Supreme Court's ruling is a significant milestone, but the true test lies in its implementation and the directive to revise prison manuals is a step towards creating an equitable system, but it is far from being a panacea. It is important that, the state governments must not only revise these manuals but also ensure their strict enforcement through regular audits of prisons, alongside comprehensive training programmes for prison staffs to root out caste-based discrimination in practice.

The Supreme Court's judgment on caste-based discrimination in prisons is a reaffirmation of the Constitution's enduring relevance and transformative potential and it

is a bold statement that the values of equality and dignity must be upheld in every corner of the republic, even within the walls of its prisons.

In the words of Dr BR Ambedkar, "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it." And this judgment is a critical step in that direction, a reminder that for India to truly realise its Constitutional vision, it must confront and dismantle the social hierarchies that continue to haunt its institutions. So, by insisting on abolition of caste-based practices in prison, the court has paved the way for a broader reckoning with the vestiges of caste in Indian society.

(The writer is an advocate, Orissa High Court, Addl. Central Government Standing Counsel, CAT, Cuttack Bench, Consulting Editor-Legal Affairs and Public Policy, The Pioneer and a Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Law and Media Studies, School of Mass Communication, KIIT University. Views are personal)

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In Nayagarh BJD leader fined Rs 24 cr for excess mining

PNS ■ NAYAGARH
The Nayagarh Mining Officer-cum-Competent Authority (Minor Minerals) has imposed a fine of Rs 24 crore on an lessee, Benudhar Pradhan for carrying out excess mining at the Kasia stone quarry under Bhapur Tehsil in Nayagarh district.

The Mining Officer has also imposed BNSS 163 in the quarry. A team from Bhubaneswar conducted a joint inspection that showed excess mining by Pradhan. He has been penalised with Rs 21.46 crore including TCS and penalty for outside lease area and Rs 2.74 crore for inside lease area excess wining of stone gross amounting to Rs 24.21 crore. The Mining Officer directed him to deposit the said amount before October 20. "We have booked a case for violation of the Odisha For-

est Act and Indian Forest Act. Beyond that we have also booked a case under the Mining Act for excess volume extraction," said Nayagarh DFO Khyama Sadangi. SS Construction Company PRO Bharat Kumar Behera, said, "The case is currently in the High Court. So, we do not want to make any comments as the case is pending. We have high trust in the court and will surely get justice. They have just written in one line that we will have to pay Rs 24 crore. They have not given any details."

Thanks to DMF Ashraya Missing for 8 yrs, D'nal youth rescued from K'jhar forest

United with family
NARESH PATTANAYAK
KEONJHAR
A youth aged about 28 years from Dhenkanal district, who was separated from his family for eight long years, has finally been reunited with his family thanks to "DMF Ashraya," that is functioning in collaboration with District Mining Institute (DMF) and District Social Security Office, Keonjhar.

However, in 2016, he disappeared from the premises of the hospital while under treatment. Even after a long search by the family, no trace of him was found. Everyone had given up hope that the only son would ever return. Recently, the DMF shelter team was informed to rescue a mentally challenged youth from the Banspal area, who had been living in the local forest for two years. Locals called him "Tarzan". Despite all odds, he was living in the forest, be it a rainy, summer or winter season.

On June 8, the asylum team reached there and rescued him and took him to Nayakote police station. Later, they brought him to the shelter home. After thorough investigation about his past and address, his family reached Keonjhar on Friday and identified him.

Rayagada DFO axed over Forester's death

PNS ■ RAYAGADA / BHAWANIPATNA
In the wake of the alleged suicide of Forester Sanjay Nayak, Rayagada Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Debendra Behera has been suspended over the incident. The government on Saturday issued the suspension order after a probe when Behera was also quizzed for two days during the departmental probe.



20,000-30,000 to the DFO every month and I am aware of it," she said.

A case has been filed against Behera at the Bhawanipatna Town police station. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Devidutta Biswal had directed the Chief Conservator of Forests (T&D), Cuttack Circle, to conduct an inquiry and submit a report on the matter. A departmental inquiry into the incident was subsequently conducted.

In Jagatsinghpur Major antique idol theft racket busted

3 brothers arrested; 50 idols recovered
PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR



Police busted a major antique idol theft racket and recovered more than 50 idols in Jagatsinghpur district by arresting three brothers for their alleged involvement in the cases.

While the Balipatna police in Khordha district arrested two siblings, Barada Prasanna Acharya and Annada Prasann, on Friday, the Jagatsinghpur Sadar police nabbed their elder brother Sarada Acharya from Chandhei village on Saturday. Following their arrests, po-

lice with the help of locals dug out more than 50 antique idols made up of different metals, brass cobra idols and other items of temples buried beneath their houses. The trio used to steal valuables from temples in Cuttack, Khordha, Jagatsinghpur and Puri districts.

"The investigation into the matter is on and we are hopeful that the number of stolen idols will increase. A team, headed by the Jagatsinghpur police station IIC and the SDPO, was formed to probe the case. The team first arrested Barada Acharya and later apprehended two of his brothers," said Jagatsinghpur SP Bhabani Shankar Udgata. "During the investigation, the accused confessed that they buried the idols beneath their houses. Subsequently, the idols were exhumed. Those who have bought the idols from the accused will also face legal action," Udgata added.

Frequent power cuts, internet issue Rs 80-cr Smart Class project a nonstarter in K'jhar

350 schools revert to blackboard teaching as usual
PNS ■ KEONJHAR



Schools, especially in Keonjhar district, report unused smart boards and dysfunctional computers due to frequent power cuts and internet issues. Allegations of corruption in the tender process have surfaced, questioning the effectiveness of the 5T initiative of the previous BJD Government.

BJD's tall claims of massive transformation of schools under the 5T initiative have proved hollow as the ground reality is far from being true. The former State Government boasted of developing infrastructure, installing new desks, and replacing blackboards with smart boards, but the scenes in rural areas speak otherwise.

Most schools still lack smart boards while many oth-

ers continue to use blackboards. However, the smart boards are lying unused and computers have become dysfunctional with frequent power cuts and low voltage hindering the dream of smart classes.

"There is a severe internet connectivity problem. Additionally, power cuts and low voltage make it hard to use smart boards and online classes. Most of the computers and smart boards are lying unused for months now,"

alleged a student. Similarly, another student said, "Our school does not even have a smart board. We have seen it in other classes. But, we have got used to it till now." When contacted, a teacher, Tapan Kumar Sahu said, "Due to frequent power cuts, we cannot use the smart boards and are forced to use blackboards. Teachers also want to teach students smartly using smart boards, but since it is a rural area, there are frequent

power cuts. There are a lot of internet issues." As per reports, at least Rs 80.44 crore was spent from the DMF fund for the modification in the number of smart classrooms in 350 schools, ashrams, and other educational institutions under the 5T school transformation programme in Keonjhar district. Massive corruption has been alleged in the tender process with the former Odisha Government allegedly favouring a private company. An MoU was signed with the company to install computers, speakers, smart boards, web cameras, and microphones in the smart classrooms. However, most schools are yet to benefit from the 5T initiative while others have complained of computers already developing glitches. Meanwhile, no comments could be obtained from the company empowered with the tender to install the smart boards.

rect and indirect job opportunities in the country. The ISL too has reached a level where new guidelines allow clubs to remove salary caps and spend freely on players salaries. With clubs being co-owned by celebrities and business tycoons, it has attracted foreign investment; and this influx of capital has improved infrastructure, including stadiums and training facilities, which benefits the local economy. According to a case study, the Pro Kabaddi League generated an estimated \$2 billion (USD 160 million) in revenue and created approximately 10,000 jobs in 2023.

The leagues have also played a vital role in the socio-economic upliftment of players, many of whom from rural backgrounds have become household names, earning crores per season. The success of sporting leagues has led to increased investment in grassroots development which will have a long-term impact on growth in India's sporting

avenues. Further the BCCI's efforts in promoting the Women's Premier League (WPL), has a significant impact on creating a level playing field for women, leading by example not just for sporting leagues but other industries in general. The economic impact of these leagues extends beyond sports; for instance, the IPL's media rights deal with Star India is one of the most lucrative in the world. The league attracts advertisers from various sectors, including FMCG, automotive, and technology; with IPL's advertising revenue crossing \$100 billion (USD 1.2 billion) in 2023. Cities hosting PKL matches experienced increased activity in sectors such as food and beverage, retail and tourism; restaurants in Hyderabad reported a 30% rise in business and Bengaluru saw a 15% increase in tourism-related expenditure during the PKL season.

Challenges
It has not always been smooth sail-

ing - The original teams at the IPL took approximately 7 years to reach a financial breakeven. The Premier Hockey League established in 2004 shut down in 4 years. This was succeeded by The Hockey India league (HIL), which due to financial constraint had to halt its activities in 2017. Relunched after a hiatus of 7 years with a new partner, HIL will make a comeback in Dec 2024 with 8 men's teams and 6 women's teams.

Over the years, several factors such as the Covid 19 pandemic, advertising revenues and limited infrastructure make leagues vulnerable to economic downturn. However, the resilience shown by these leagues, in adopting bio-secure bubbles and leveraging digital platforms amongst others, has set a precedent for future challenges.

Conclusion
Sports leagues in India, though relatively recent compared to international counterparts like the En-

'Woes of Suktel-displaced not mitigated'



Singh Deo blames lack of coordination among depts
PNS ■ BALANGIR

Balangir MLA Kalikesh Singh Deo has expressed concern over tardy progress of development works for the people displaced in the Lower Suktel Irrigation Project. "Due to lack of coordination among various departments, development work for the displaced people has been affected. I have reviewed the work and directed officials to streamline the process and take necessary steps, so that displaced people's woes could

be mitigated," Singh Deo said here on Saturday. Singh Deo was concerned over the absence of a cardiologist and a neurologist in the Bimbhoi Medical College Hospital. Every day, road accidents are taking place in Balangir and in the absence of a neurologist, patients are forced to move outside Balangir to get treated which is expensive and also at times proves fatal due to the transportation delay, he said. "I would raise this issue in the forthcoming Assembly session, as the Government says it is committed to ensure health for all and every life is precious," Singh Deo said further.

In Sambalpur Driver charred in container-truck collision

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR
The driver of a container was charred to death while the helper sustained critical burn injuries after the vehicle caught fire following a collision with a truck near the Kadalipala area under the Jamankira police station on NH-53 in Kuchinda of Sambalpur district on Sunday evening. The deceased was identified as Rehman Khan.

According to sources, the mishap took place when the container and truck collided head on. The impact of the collision was so powerful that both vehicles caught fire. While the driver of the container was charred to death on the spot, the helper sustained serious burn injuries and was undergoing treatment at the District Headquarters Hospital. Vehicular movement on the NH was affected as the fire was yet to be doused.

In Baleswar Manch completes 10 yrs of SBM activity



PNS ■ BALESWAR
Members of the Nagarika Manch, Gopalpur in Baleswar district started cleaning and awareness activities from Gandhi Jayanti 2014 and this year they completed 10 years. In response to the call to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti 2014, the members of the Manch in their two hours continuous weekly programme cleaned schools, colleges, office premises, hospitals, picnic spots, market places and temple premises etc and conducted several awareness meetings during last 10 years. During cy-

clones like Fani, Amphan and Yaas etc, they never were distracted from their weekly services. On their 10th year completion activity, 60 volunteers of the Manch cleaned Bahanaga Block premises. Later, a meeting was organized which was presided over by Block chairman Biswanath Mishra. BDO Rabindra Kumar Sethi, convener of the Abhiyan Sudarshan Mohapatra and Zilla Parishad member Sisir Agasti joined as guests of honour. AEE and nodal officer, Swachha Bharat Mission (SBM) Laxmikanta Das highly praised the continuous efforts of the volunteers.

Scoring careers: Impact of Indian Sports League

Over the last decade, following the unprecedented success of the Indian Premier League (IPL), launched in 2008, several national sports leagues have made a mark for themselves alongside the evolution of the sports environment in India. While cricket remains India's most popular game, the success of the Indian Super League (ISL) in football and the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL), both inspired by IPL, has validated the premise that sports other than cricket have a future. The traction received by these respective games galvanized the formation of the Premier Badminton League, Pro Wrestling League (PWL), Prime Volleyball League (PVL) and Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT).



RAEMANA RASHNA PANDA

league's economic contributions go far beyond just brand value, as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) earned a staggering USD 6 billion from the sale of media rights to Disney Star and Viacom18 in 2022 and USD 300 million from title sponsorship deal with Tata Sons in 2023, making it the most significant sporting success story in India. Launched in 2014, the Indian Su-

per League has rapidly grown into one of the top football leagues in Asia and as per The Ormax Sports Audiences Report 2024, Football reached a record audience base of 305 million viewers. Kabaddi, a traditional Indian sport, has seen a remarkable revival thanks to the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) launched in 2014, with viewership numbers surprisingly rivalling those of the IPL. **Economic growth: A ripple effect** Going beyond the euphoria and passion for watching sports, these leagues have directly impacted economic growth. Besides players' salaries, the IPL is a significant employer, creating direct employment opportunities in team management, coaching, support staff and physiotherapists. It also provides indirect employment in hospitality, travel, merchandising, and media production. During the 2023 season, the IPL has created over 1,20,000 di-

rect and indirect job opportunities in the country. The ISL too has reached a level where new guidelines allow clubs to remove salary caps and spend freely on players salaries. With clubs being co-owned by celebrities and business tycoons, it has attracted foreign investment; and this influx of capital has improved infrastructure, including stadiums and training facilities, which benefits the local economy. According to a case study, the Pro Kabaddi League generated an estimated \$2 billion (USD 160 million) in revenue and created approximately 10,000 jobs in 2023. The leagues have also played a vital role in the socio-economic upliftment of players, many of whom from rural backgrounds have become household names, earning crores per season. The success of sporting leagues has led to increased investment in grassroots development which will have a long-term impact on growth in India's sporting

avenues. Further the BCCI's efforts in promoting the Women's Premier League (WPL), has a significant impact on creating a level playing field for women, leading by example not just for sporting leagues but other industries in general. The economic impact of these leagues extends beyond sports; for instance, the IPL's media rights deal with Star India is one of the most lucrative in the world. The league attracts advertisers from various sectors, including FMCG, automotive, and technology; with IPL's advertising revenue crossing \$100 billion (USD 1.2 billion) in 2023. Cities hosting PKL matches experienced increased activity in sectors such as food and beverage, retail and tourism; restaurants in Hyderabad reported a 30% rise in business and Bengaluru saw a 15% increase in tourism-related expenditure during the PKL season. **Challenges** It has not always been smooth sail-

ing - The original teams at the IPL took approximately 7 years to reach a financial breakeven. The Premier Hockey League established in 2004 shut down in 4 years. This was succeeded by The Hockey India league (HIL), which due to financial constraint had to halt its activities in 2017. Relunched after a hiatus of 7 years with a new partner, HIL will make a comeback in Dec 2024 with 8 men's teams and 6 women's teams. Over the years, several factors such as the Covid 19 pandemic, advertising revenues and limited infrastructure make leagues vulnerable to economic downturn. However, the resilience shown by these leagues, in adopting bio-secure bubbles and leveraging digital platforms amongst others, has set a precedent for future challenges. **Conclusion** Sports leagues in India, though relatively recent compared to international counterparts like the En-

glish Premier League, NBA, and La Liga, have already begun to make their mark. Around the globe, the average contribution of sports sector to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is ~0.5 per cent, however in India, it's merely 0.1 per cent to the GDP. With continued investment in infrastructure, talent development, and sponsorship, these professional leagues hold immense potential to expand rapidly and make substantial contributions to GDP, employment, and the country's overall development. Indian sports leagues have not only transformed our sports industry but also the broader outlook by reshaping societal perceptions of sports careers, fostering a robust athletic culture and even promoting gender equity; underscoring the potential for greater economic and cultural impacts in the future. (The writer is a research scholar. She can be reached at raemana.panda@gmail.com)

Maldivian President visits India for bilateral talks amid strained ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu arrived here on Sunday for a four-day bilateral visit to India. The First Lady of the Maldives, Sajidha Mohamed, accompanied Muizzu. This is Muizzu's second state visit to India in four months and his first bilateral visit. During his visit to India, from October six to ten, Muizzu will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest, according to the Ministry of External Affairs. The Maldivian President will also visit Mumbai and Bengaluru, where he will be attending business events, it said. "Maldives is India's key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and holds a special place in Prime



Minister's vision of 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and India's 'Neighbourhood First Policy,' the Ministry said in a statement. The Maldivian President visited New Delhi in June to attend Modi's swearing-in ceremony. The ties between India and the Maldives got strained after Muizzu became the President

of the Maldives. Notably, Muizzu rose to power based on his 'India Out' where he demanded the withdrawal of Indian troops and support staff from the Maldives. The diplomatic row further intensified after some ministers in the Muizzu cabinet used derogatory language against Prime Minister Modi after he posted pictures of his trip to

Lakshadweep. While the said ministers were removed from the cabinet, tourism in the Maldives took a hit as tourist footfall decreased from India. However, both sides tried to repair ties after the Maldives underlined India's pivotal role in its economic development, security and infrastructure projects.

CBI warns against 'digital arrest' scams



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI, police, customs, ED or judges do not arrest people through video calls, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) said in a public advisory issued in view of the rising cases of 'digital arrest' crimes in the country. Terming it a scam, the federal cyber security agency cautioned people against falling victim to such crimes committed using the Internet. "Don't Panic, Stay Alert. CBI/Police/Custom/ED/Judges DO NOT arrest you on video call," stated the advisory issued on Sunday. The advisory depicted the logos of social media platforms like WhatsApp and Skype to showcase that calls for such scams

are made using such platforms. These social media platforms have said in the past that they are coordinating with cyber security agencies of the government to provide users enhanced safety against such crimes. The I4C urged people to report such crimes at the central helpline number 1930 or the website www.Cybercrime.Gov.In. Digital arrest is the name given to a cyber crime technique where fraudsters send an SMS or make video calls to a person posing as law enforcement agency officials fraudulently claiming that the individual or his close family members have been caught by a government investigative agency in a criminal activity like drugs trafficking or money laundering.

Rajnath Singh to inaugurate DefConnect 4.0 to showcase India's defence innovation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday will inaugurate DefConnect here, a significant step towards advancing indigenous innovation and celebrating the growing defence ecosystem of the country, defence ministry said on Sunday. Giving details, officials said the event is being organised by Innovations for Defence Excellence - Defence Innovation Organisation (iDEX-DIO), under Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence. DefConnect 4.0 marks a milestone in India's defence innovation journey, bringing together the Armed Forces, Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), industry leaders, innovators, start-ups and MSMEs, academia, incubators, investors and policymakers. The event will feature an exciting Technology Showcase, presenting iDEX innovators with a unique opportunity to exhibit their cutting-edge technologies,

advanced capabilities and ground-breaking products. This showcase is designed to engage a diverse audience of stakeholders, fostering collaboration and sparking dialogue that drives innovation forward with focus on forging powerful collaborations. DefConnect 4.0 will feature launches and announcements by the defence minister, alongside interactive and engaging sessions featuring industry leaders and defence stalwarts. The event will also include a themed session focusing on recent budget announcements, key takeaways for the defence innovation ecosystem, and the latest initiatives in the semiconductor domain. Till date, iDEX has launched 11 editions of Defence India Start-up Challenges, and has garnered over 9,000 applications. It is currently collaborating with more than 450 start-ups/MSMEs on important projects. Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018, iDEX continues to provide a unified platform for various stakeholders in the defence and aerospace sectors.



SC: Removal of elected women representative can't be treated lightly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Removal of an elected public representative should not be treated lightly, especially when it concerns women belonging to rural areas. The bench was dealing with a plea of Manish Ravindra Panpatil, an elected sarpanch of gram panchayat, Vichkheda situated in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. She was ordered to be removed from her post after a complaint by fellow villagers that she was allegedly residing with her mother-in-law in a house constructed on government land. The allegation was denied by Panpatil, who claimed she does not reside in that particular dwelling, and that she lives separately with her husband and children in a rented accommodation. However, without appropriately verifying these facts and on the basis of "bald statements," the Collector concerned passed an order disqualifying her from continuing as sarpanch. "This order was thereafter confirmed by the divisional commissioner. Subsequently, the high court vide the impugned order, dismissed the appellant's writ petition against the commissioner's order on a technical ground, thus putting a seal of approval on her removal from office," the bench noted. The bench noted that the villagers grasped at straws in their bid to evict Panpatil from her position and their cause was perhaps aided by the mechanical and summary orders passed by government authorities at

various levels. "These orders were passed in a lackadaisical manner, without making any effort towards conducting a fact-finding exercise, so as to confirm whether the allegations levied by the private respondents were sufficiently made out. There is nothing on record to suggest that any objection of the appellant's family having encroached upon government land was ever raised when she filed her nomination papers," the bench said. While noting that the vagaries of the present factual matrix is far from unique and is unfortunately somewhat of a norm, the bench said there is no doubt that the private respondents (villagers) may have operated in a discriminatory manner. It said what is more worrying is the casual approach adopted by government authorities in summarily removing an elected representative. "This is all the more concerning when the representative in question is a woman and elected in the reservation quota, thereby indicating a systemic pattern of prejudicial treatment, permeating through all levels of administrative functioning," it said. The top court said having regard to the facts and circumstances of the case at hand, it sees no credible and convincing material on record to substantiate the allegations of encroachment of government land by Panpatil before or post her election as sarpanch.

matter of removal of an elected public representative should not be treated so lightly, especially when it concerns women belonging to rural areas. The bench was dealing with a plea of Manish Ravindra Panpatil, an elected sarpanch of gram panchayat, Vichkheda situated in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. She was ordered to be removed from her post after a complaint by fellow villagers that she was allegedly residing with her mother-in-law in a house constructed on government land. The allegation was denied by Panpatil, who claimed she does not reside in that particular dwelling, and that she lives separately with her husband and children in a rented accommodation. However, without appropriately verifying these facts and on the basis of "bald statements," the Collector concerned passed an order disqualifying her from continuing as sarpanch. "This order was thereafter confirmed by the divisional commissioner. Subsequently, the high court vide the impugned order, dismissed the appellant's writ petition against the commissioner's order on a technical ground, thus putting a seal of approval on her removal from office," the bench noted. The bench noted that the villagers grasped at straws in their bid to evict Panpatil from her position and their cause was perhaps aided by the mechanical and summary orders passed by government authorities at

Three dark clouds still loom over the Indian economy: Jairam Ramesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that the last 10 years have seen "highly detrimental economic trends," the Congress on Sunday said the monsoon has receded but at least "three dark clouds" of languishing private sector investment, stagnating manufacturing and decline in real wages and productivity for labourers, still loom over the Indian economy. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said bombastic claims on the economy are being made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his drumbeaters but what these claims conceal are the choke points that will strangle growth in the years to come if not taken seriously now, in a spirit of humility. "The monsoon has receded. But new evidence has shown that at least three dark clouds still loom over the Indian economy," Ramesh said in a

statement. "First, after a brief surge in private sector investment during 2022-23 on the back of the COVID-19 recovery, investment has returned to an unsteady path," he said. New project announcements by the private sector fell by 21 per cent between FY23 and FY24, he pointed out. "This reflects a lack of investor confidence in India's consumer markets, and the uncertain investment climate generated by the Government's inconsistent policy making and Raid Raj," he said. In this context, rather than grow their businesses, companies are using profits to reduce debt burdens, he claimed. "We are witnessing a growing financialisation of the Indian economy, with India Inc - perhaps taking its cue from the government - focusing on stock market valuations rather than top-line revenue growth," Ramesh said. This bodes poorly for the medium- and long-term future of the Indian economy, as the



growth engine of the economy - private sector investment - continues to languish, he said. "Second, ten years after the Government's flagship Make in India scheme was launched, India's manufacturing is stagnating. As share of GDP, manufacturing is the same as it was ten years ago," the Congress leader said. Ramesh pointed out that as a share of total employment, manufacturing has marginally declined. India's share in global merchandise exports has also largely stagnated, and

exports are falling as a share of India's GDP, he said. "In fact, growth in India's share of global exports grew much faster in the 2005-15 period, largely corresponding to Dr. Manmohan Singh's tenure as Prime Minister. In labour-intensive sectors like garments, exports have fallen from USD 15 billion in 2013-14 to USD 14.5 billion in 2023-24," he said. This shrinking of manufacturing is largely attributable to the PM's inexplicable trade policy - where it disincentivizes participation in global value chains (GVCs) through high tariffs while silently permitting Chinese dumping of mass imports, Ramesh alleged. "Third, the latest Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) for 2022-2023 has revealed a decline in real wages and productivity for India's labourers. The growth in GVA per worker (a measure of labour productivity) slowed from 6.6% in 2014-15 to 0.6% by 2018-19," he said.

After Covid era statistical irregularity, worker productivity contracted in FY23 again, Ramesh said, adding that this decrease in labour productivity has impacted real wage growth, especially amidst rising inflation. As real wages stagnate, consumption will remain weak - resulting in the low investment that has been a consistent restraint on India's growth, he said. "These are merely the issues that have surfaced in the past few weeks but the last ten years have seen other highly detrimental economic trends, including rising oligopolisation, mass unemployment, and high inflation," he said. "Bombastic claims on the economy are being made by the non-biological PM and his drumbeaters. But what these claims conceal are the choke points that will strangle growth in the years to come if not taken seriously now, in a spirit of humility," Ramesh said in his statement.

Indian naval ships arrive in Oman for joint exercise



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Signifying close defence ties between the two countries, Indian naval ships Tir, Shardul and

Indian Coast Guard Ship Veera of First Training Squadron (ITS) of the Indian Navy on long range training deployment arrived at Muscat, Oman on Saturday, navy said here on Sunday.

Giving details, officials said during the visit from October five to nine, the Indian Navy will engage with Royal Navy of Oman on various aspects of maritime security and interoperability, including harbour interactions and joint exercises. The deployment will also focus on training exchanges, professional interactions and friendly sports fixtures between the two Navies. In the last ten years, this is the third visit of ITS to Muscat, Oman. These interactions play a key role in consolidating gains in Naval cooperation and keeping the existing partnerships between both the Navies. Coinciding with the visit of ITS, Vice Admiral V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command will be on an official visit to Sultanate of Oman from October six and nine. During the visit, FOCINC South will hold bilateral discussions with Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of Sultan's Armed Forces (COS- SAF) and Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser bin Mohsen Al -Rahbi, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman (CRNO). He will also visit key defence and training installations in Oman. Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman engage with each other on avenues of operations, training and collaborative efforts in various fields. Recently, the sixth edition of Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman Staff talks were held in New Delhi. The visit of ITS and the CinC, SNC further cement bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

RaGa advocates for increased women's participation in politics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Flagging inequality in leadership roles in Parliament and state assemblies, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said for true equality, more and more women's participation is necessary in these institutions. The former Congress chief urged women to participate in his party's 'Shakti Abhiyan', which aims to create an equal space for 'women's interests' in politics. "Women have always been an important force in our society and politics, but still there is inequality in leadership roles in Parliament and assemblies," he said in a post in Hindi on Facebook.



"For true equality, more and more women's participation in these places is necessary," Rahul said. "With the thought of 'Aadhi Abadi, Poora Haq', we are dedicated to this goal.

If you too are ready to bring this change, then join 'Shakti Abhiyan', the Congress leader said. "Your participation is very important to bring real change by strengthening the organi-

sation at the grassroots level," he said. "Let us become participants of this change, from the village to the nation," Gandhi said and shared a link to register for 'Shakti Abhiyan'. The Indian Youth Congress' Shakti Abhiyan initiative aims to create an equal space for 'women's interests' in politics and decision-making, driven by the representation 'of women by women' at all levels of governance - local bodies, legislative assemblies and Parliament. The Indira Fellowship is an initiative in honour of former prime minister Indira Gandhi to amplify the voices of women in the political arena and drive a much-needed transformation in our society.

Haryana CM confident of BJP majority despite exit polls

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Rejecting exit poll predictions, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday claimed his party BJP will form the government in the state with full majority for a third time when the results are announced on October 8. The Congress will blame the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for their defeat, he said, attacking the opposition party, which is ahead in the race, according to most exit polls. Replying to a question about the exit polls predicting a Congress win, Saini said, "On October 8, we are going to form the government." He said, "8 tareekh ko janata degi jawab, aur yeh (Congress)



kahenge EVM hai kharab (People will have their say on October 8, and they Congress will blame the EVMs)." Asked how many seats the BJP will win in the 90-strong assembly, Saini said, "I have said we will form the govern-

ment with full majority." The BJP will form the government on the basis of works done in the state, he added. The BJP worked for every section without any discrimination and on the basis of this work, the party will form the government with full majority.

Commenting further on the exit poll predictions for Haryana, he said they forecast a Congress victory in Chhattisgarh and showed the party ahead in Uttarakhand as well. "The exit polls have their own theory and they have their own system, but we work on ground. Our leaders are directly connected with people. The people of Haryana want the BJP to come to power for a third time. We are forming the government for a third time," he said. The Haryana assembly elections on Saturday saw a turnout of nearly 67 per cent, with several exit polls predicting a clear majority for the Congress, which is eyeing a comeback after a decade.

India is essentially a Hindu nation: RSS chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOTA (RAJASTHAN)

Asserting that India is essentially a Hindu nation, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has said the Hindu society must unite for its security by eliminating differences in language, caste and regional disputes. He also underlined that the functioning of the RSS is not mechanical but idea-based. Addressing a 'Swayamsevak Ekatrikaran' event in Rajasthan's Baran on Saturday evening, Bhagwat said the Hindus consider everyone as their own and embrace everyone. "We have lived here since ancient times even though the term Hindu came later. Hindus embrace everyone. They live in harmony through continuous dialogue," he said. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief stressed the "Hindu society must unite for its security by eliminating language, caste, and regional differences and disputes". RSS Chief also stressed that discipline in conduct, duty towards the state and dedication to goals are essential qualities. "A society is not just formed by individuals and



their families, but by considering the comprehensive concerns through which one can attain spiritual fulfilment," said Bhagwat. "The functioning of the RSS is not mechanical but idea based. It is an unparalleled organisation whose values trickle down from the group leaders to the volunteers, their families and to the society at large," he added. Urging the volunteers to maintain widespread contact within communities, the RSS chief said that efforts should be made to alleviate community deficiencies by empowering the society. "The focus should be on social harmony, justice, health, education, and

self-reliance. The volunteers should always remain active and foster harmony, environmental awareness, indigenous values, and civic consciousness within families, which are the basic components of a society," said Bhagwat. The RSS chief said India's global reputation and standing is attributed to its strength and the safety of its expatriates is assured only when their nation becomes strong. A total of 3,827 RSS volunteers attended the event. The event was also attended by senior RSS functionaries Ramesh Agarwal, Jagdish Singh Rana, Ramesh Chand Mehta and Vaidya Radheshyam Garg, among others.

Petition filed in SC for Gyanvapi cases to be heard by Allahabad HC's three-judge bench



BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

In a development mirroring the Ram Mandir case, a petition has been filed in the Supreme Court requesting that all cases related to the Gyanvapi issue be heard by a three-judge bench of the Allahabad High Court. The Supreme Court is expected to hear the petition soon, according to Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, who disclosed the information at the Civil Court complex in Varanasi. Advocate Jain explained that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had submitted its survey report to the court on December 25, 2023. However, despite more than nine months passing, no objections have been sought from the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee regarding the report.

Jain emphasized that repeated requests have been made from their side, urging the court to seek objections from the Masjid Committee on the ASI report. He added that this is crucial for moving the case forward, as it would determine whether the ASI's report becomes part of the court's records. Additionally, the key issues of the case would be framed accordingly. The advocate further mentioned that the actual trial concerning the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi case in Mathura is also being conducted at the Allahabad High Court. Therefore, a similar petition has been filed in the Supreme Court, requesting that Gyanvapi-related cases also be heard by a three-judge bench of the Allahabad High Court, he said.

RG Kar case: Junior doctors begin indefinite fast

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The agitating junior doctors withdrew their second round of cease work and began an indefinite fast instead demanding justice for their woman colleague who was on August 9 raped and murdered inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The doctors who started their fast from 9 pm on Saturday said that "initially six of us will be sitting on a fast." The second phase of the doctors' movement started following frequent attacks on doctors at Sagore Dutta Medical College, Ramurhat Medical College, CNM Medical College in the past couple of weeks. Debashis Haldar one of their leaders said that "besides asking for speedy disposal of justice of Abhya our colleague who was so brutally raped and murdered ... we had also demanded removal of the Principal Health Secretary NS Nigam which the Government would not do ... we had also demanded adequate security personnel ... installation of CCTV camera and of course timely general body elections to students' unions so that the ongoing



threat culture and sexual exploitations perpetrated by the student leaders of the ruling party can be stopped ... the Government can easily take these small measures but they would not do that as this will hurt their ego." The doctors also said that a team representing them would soon visit the Kultali village where the brutal rape and murder of a minor girl had taken place on Saturday. "We are considering a visit to Kultali ... soon we will visit that village and interact with the villagers so that their movement too gets stronger," one of the doctors said. Meanwhile, to make the matter more embarrassing for the Government the senior doctors too offered to join the fasting protest. "We will also join them in a relay fasting," said Dr Subarna Goswami a senior doctor.

Fire in building claims seven lives in Mumbai

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Seven persons, including three Sminors, were killed after a fire broke out in a double-storey shop-cum-residential structure in Mumbai on Sunday morning, a fire official said. The incident took place at 5.20 am at Siddharth Colony in Chembur area, he said. Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde later visited the site. He announced a high-level probe into the incident and a compensation of Rs 5 lakh for the kin of the deceased. The ground floor of the structure was used as a shop and the upper floor as residence, an official said. The blaze was confined to the electric wiring and installations in the shop at the ground floor and spread to the upper floor, he said, adding it was a 'level-one' fire. Seven persons were injured in the incident. They were taken to the Rajawadi Hospital where all of them were declared brought dead, the official said. Fire engines, water tankers and other assistance were rushed to the spot and the blaze was doused by 9.15 am, the official said. The deceased have been identified as Paris Gupta (7), Manju Prem Gupta (30), Anita Gupta (39), Prem Gupta (30), Narendra Gupta (10), Vidhi Chidiram Gupta (15) and Gitadevi Dharamdev Gupta (60), he said.

Look like 25: Kanpur couple defrauds over ₹35 crores with false 'age-reversing' therapy claim

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

A shocking case of fraud has come to light in Kanpur, where a couple from Swaroop Nagar allegedly duped people of nearly ₹35 crore by promising to make 65-year-olds look 25 again using an Israel-made machine.

The accused, Rajiv Kumar and his wife Rashmi Dubey, launched an organization called "Revival Word" in Saket Nagar to carry out the scam. According to the victim, Renu Singh Chandel, the couple convinced people that Israeli scientists had successfully rejuvenated 35 elderly individuals—aged 64 and above—by giving them pure oxygen in a pressurized chamber for five days. They claimed that the process made them appear 25 years old within three months. For more than a year, the couple lured hundreds of people into their scam, even invoking the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make their claims more convincing. The fraudsters, operating out of an "Any Time Gym" franchise in Swaroop Nagar, Kanpur, would tell their clients that Prime Minister Modi's energy and ability to work long hours were due to a secret age-reversing technology from Israel.

"How does Modi remain so energetic, working 20 hours a day and always glowing?" they would ask. They claimed that Modi had used oxygen therapy to reverse his aging process, leading many to believe in the effectiveness of their so-called therapy. The couple charged unsuspecting victims between ₹50,000 and ₹2 lakh, promising miraculous results through what they described as cutting-edge Israeli technology. Using network marketing tactics, they added more than 500 people to their fraudulent scheme. Victims were told that they would receive treatment with an



"Israeli time machine," supposedly valued at ₹25 crores, which would make them young again. However, it was later revealed that the so-called time

machine was nothing more than a crude apparatus built from junk materials worth just ₹2.5 lakh. The scam caused significant harm to many of the victims. Some reported severe side effects, including facial burns and the appearance of white marks on their skin.

How the Scam Unfolded According to Renu Singh Chandel, a whistleblower in the case, the couple operated out of Flat No. 10 of Prabhu Mahila Apartment, where they ran the gym franchise. The couple showed photos and videos claiming that Israeli scientists had conducted successful research in which 35 elderly individuals were treated with pure oxygen in a pressurized chamber for five days a week. After three months, they said, these individuals' organs and skin had transformed to resemble

those of people in their mid-20s. By showing these fake visuals, the couple managed to gain the trust of their clients. The couple reportedly introduced two investment schemes, one costing ₹6,000 and another ₹90,000, under the pretext that the funds would be used to purchase the rejuvenation machine from Israel for ₹25 crore. Additionally, they promised lucrative rewards for those who recruited others into the scheme, with gift hampers for anyone who provided 50 new IDs. Renu Singh said she invested ₹9 lakh for 150 IDs and another ₹3.5 lakh to expand

the business. The couple initially promised her a return of ₹3.5 lakh and ₹2.1 lakh within a year, but after a year, they only returned ₹1.75 lakh. When asked about the remaining amount, the couple assured her that the plant would soon start operating. Over time, it became clear that the couple had taken nearly ₹35 crore from various individuals under false pretext. After realizing the scale of the scam, Renu lodged a complaint with Police Commissioner Akhil Kumar. The Kidwai Nagar Police have now registered a report on the Police Commissioner's orders, with investigations underway.

Authorities seize mephedrone drug worth ₹1.814 crore, raw materials from factory in Bhopal



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AHMEDABAD

Authorities have seized Amephedrone (MD) drug valued at Rs 1,814 crore and its raw materials from a factory on the outskirts of Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal and arrested two persons in this connection, officials said on Sunday. Total 907.09 kg of mephedrone, both in solid and liquid forms, was seized in the raid and search operation carried out jointly by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Delhi, at the factory located in Bagroda industrial estate near Bhopal on Saturday, they said. This is the largest illegal factory ever busted by the Gujarat ATS. The unit had the capacity to manufacture 25 kg of MD drug per day, the ATS said in a statement. A process was underway to manufacture a large amount of the contraband when the raid was carried out, it said. During the operation, authorities seized 907.09 kg of mephedrone, both in solid and liquid forms, with an estimated value of Rs 1,814.18 crore in the international market, the ATS said. Two persons, identified as Amit Chaturvedi (57) and Sanyal Prakash Bane (40), were arrested during the raid, it said. During their preliminary interrogation, it came to light that Bane was earlier arrested in 2017 in a MD drug

seizure case at Amboli in Maharashtra and served five years in jail. "After his release, he conspired with co-accused Chaturvedi to illegally manufacture and sell MD to earn substantial financial profits. And decided to rent a factory on the outskirts of Bhopal," the ATS said. They took the factory on rent six-seven months ago, it said. Three-four months back, they collected the raw material and equipment and started manufacturing MD and selling it, the ATS said. In addition to the contraband, around 5,000 kg of raw materials, comprising chemicals and equipment, used for the production of MD, including grinders, motors, glass flasks, heaters and other apparatus, were also found during the raid, it said. Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi lauded efforts of the law enforcement agencies in combating drug-trafficking. "Kudos to Gujarat ATS and NCB (Ops), Delhi, for a massive win in the fight against drugs! Recently, they raided a factory in Bhopal and seized MD and materials used to manufacture MD, with a staggering total value of Rs 1814 crores!" Sanghavi said in a post on X. "This achievement showcases the tireless efforts of our law enforcement agencies in combating drug trafficking and abuse. Their collaborative efforts are crucial in safeguarding the health and security of our society," he said.

TN Governor blames police for failure on tackling synthetic drugs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHENNAI

Expressing concern over the drug menace, Governor R N Ravi on Sunday flayed the Tamil Nadu Police, alleging that the state sleuths were unable to seize even one gram of synthetic drug, whereas their counterparts in Central agencies were recovering hundreds of kilograms in the state. Terming the prevalence of drugs among youngsters as a "serious problem", Ravi said the Government alone cannot eradicate it, but only through a mass movement it can be done. "Our country is celebrating the festival of Navratri, and normally I do not move out of Chennai during these nine days to ensure that I attend the pooja in the evening at Raj Bhavan. However, when I was invited to this event, I decid-

ed I must not miss it. The issue of drugs is close to my heart. Because I have seen prosperous and happy families getting destroyed, society getting destroyed because of this drug," he said at an event in Tenkasi, 650 kms south of Chennai. Citing some examples of the use of drugs, he said there are some states in the North East which suffer enormously because of it. "Even, we have a case in Punjab. Remember, till about 40 years back, it was the most advanced and front-ranking state in the country. Within three decades, drugs destroyed it and today it (Punjab) is struggling to come out of it (drug culture). There are many areas in our country which are affected by drugs. We must fight to finish it," he said, after inaugurating the 'Rally for a Drug-Free Tenkasi', organised by the Voice of Tenkasi



Foundation. The use of drugs in Tamil Nadu is also "very serious" and the synthetic drug is referred to as ganja here, but in Kerala or Karnataka it is called heroin, hashish or meth crystals, he said. Describing synthetic drugs as a "bigger threat", the Governor said opium, heroin, hashish and various kinds of synthetic drugs are highly addictive, and the victims are mostly

young people, school and college students. "What I am worried about our State is Central agencies have seized hundreds and hundreds of kilograms of synthetic and chemical drugs from different parts of our state. From the land, from the sea, from the airport, large amount of drugs, chemical and synthetic drugs are seized. "Three years down the line, I

have come across seizures of ganja, tons and tons of ganja seized but no synthetic nor chemical drug. How come Central agencies are able to seize hundreds of kilograms of these synthetic and chemical drugs, whereas our state enforcement agencies are not able to seize even one gram," he asked. Soon after he assumed office in Tamil Nadu, the Governor said he invited the then Police chief and requested him to pay attention to the prevalence of drugs in the state. "This is a serious problem, because I have seen it with my own eyes. How a prosperous family, prosperous society completely gets destroyed. We must act tough," he said. Observing that the drugs comprise two aspects -- demand and supply -- he said that there are some countries which sustain themselves on money by supplying the drugs.

"We have the case of Afghanistan. They grow heroin, they grow opium and make heroin and other variants of it and push it in the international market. We know our western neighbours and their forces have been supplying drugs and getting money to run terrorism, which is called 'narco terrorism' involving billions and billions of dollars," he said. With supply side pressure from the international market, the drugs are getting pushed into India as a transit route by the drug cartels, he said. "Initially they (drug cartels) said that India is only a transit route because it goes to Sri Lanka and other international countries. But, I think they have fooled us for long. While transiting into India, I think the whole amount of drugs does not get moved as we are becoming a drug consuming society," he claimed.

Muslim MLA blames community members for gold smuggling, hawala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

KT Jaleel, an independent MLA belonging to the ruling LDF, turned the tables on Muslim League, various Islamist organizations and spiritual leaders by asking them to declare that gold smuggling and hawala cash operations were anti-national and anti-Islamic. He further stated that gold smuggling and hawala operations have been monopolized by the Muslim community in the State. The CPI(M) which was put on the defensive by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's disclosure in the 20th September 2024 press meet that Malappuram district which has 75 per cent Muslim population topped the table in the seizure of smuggled gold and hawala cash transactions



and the profit generated out of the operations were diverted to anti-national activities. This has upset the Muslim cleric and Islamist organizations which had demanded the chief minister to apologize to the Muslim community for the controversial statement. Jaleel, who was president of the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) before he crossed over to the

CPI(M) camp took to the social media on Sunday morning and declared that a big majority of people engaged in gold smuggling and hawala operations were from the Muslim community. "Most of the people engaged in gold smuggling and hawala operations do not believe that they were associated with anti-national activities. The political leaders and clerics do not instruct the faithful that gold smuggling and hawala were acts of sin. If only the clerics come forward and tell the community members that these were un-Islamic acts and should be discontinued forthwith, the Muslims would continue with these activities. We cannot blame other religions if they are indicting us for gold smuggling and hawala transactions," said Jaleel in his post.

Priyanka Gandhi slams Government over IMPCL 'privatisation' bid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday slammed the Modi government over the reported plans to privatise the Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited, and wondered what could be its motive other than "filling the coffers of selected friends". The Congress general secretary's remarks come amid reports that the government's plan to divest the pharmaceutical company has sparked concern among several local residents, whose livelihoods are likely to get affected. What is the government's intention behind selling the profit-making Mini Ratna pharmaceutical company, Priyanka Gandhi asked. "Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation



Limited (IMPCL) located in Mohaan, Almora, Uttarakhand was established in 1978 by the Central and state governments together," she said in her post in Hindi. It is a major factory of Ayurveda and Unani medicines which supplies medicines across the country and abroad, Priyanka Gandhi pointed out. Last year it made a profit of 18 crore and is preparing to give a dividend of 6 crore to the government, she said.

This unit has more than 500 employees and thousands of small farmers supply their small produce and raw materials to it, she said. "The plan to sell the profit-making drug factory is exposing the truth of the hypocrisy of promoting Ayurveda and AYUSH," Priyanka Gandhi said. "What could be its motive other than filling the coffers of selected friends by handing over the country's precious assets?" she said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Change on the cards

Exit polls predict change in Haryana and a hung assembly in J and K; if true, would indicate Indian politics is in transition

Exit polls from the state elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir are indicating a decisive win for the Congress in Haryana and a hung assembly in Jammu and Kashmir. As these predictions dominate political discourse, they offer a glimpse into possible power shifts in these two critical regions. In Haryana, the exit polls suggest that the Congress is set to reclaim power, ousting the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government, which has been in office since 2014. If these predictions hold true, it would also underscore the growing discontent among Haryana's electorate, particularly farmers and rural voters, who have been dissatisfied with the BJP's handling of agricultural reforms and the aftermath of the 2020 farmers' protests. The Congress, capitalising on this unrest, appears to have successfully mobilised voters, especially in the rural areas and among the Jat community. Meanwhile, in Jammu and Kashmir, exit polls point towards a hung assembly, signaling the challenges of forming a stable government in the Union Territory. With no single party projected to secure a majority, political maneuvering and coalition-building will become crucial in the coming weeks. The fractured verdict reflects the complexity of the region's political landscape post the revocation of Article 370 in 2019. The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) is expected to emerge as a significant player, but the BJP has also made inroads, particularly in the Jammu region. So not only numbers but post-result alliances would decide the formation of the government. Indeed, a hung assembly could lead to prolonged negotiations and possibly a fragile coalition, underscoring the political uncertainty that has



plagued the region in recent years.

A Congress victory in Haryana could be a defining moment in national politics. It would signal that the BJP's stronghold in the Hindi heartland is weakening and Jats (who have significant presence in western UP) are returning to Congress fold and non-Jats — upper castes — the traditional BJP voters are also have also splitted. Congress couldn't be happier as it could also galvanise Congress supporters across other northern states, particularly Rajasthan and Punjab, where state elections are due soon. But it would have a daunting task of keeping the rebels happy as they could turn the tables. In contrast, the outcome in Jammu and Kashmir-if a hung assembly materializes-could deepen political instability in the Union Territory. A coalition government would have to balance the diverse and often conflicting interests of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, complicating governance. Moreover, this result could prompt national parties, particularly the BJP, to reassess their strategies in sensitive regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where identity politics and security concerns dominate. However, as with all exit polls, it's important to approach these predictions with skepticism, given how they have been inaccurate in past elections.

PICTALK



Artistes take part in 'Garba', in Ahmedabad

Why 'Make in India' can be a game changer



ANURAG SAXENA

By fostering indigenous innovation and cutting-edge technology, India is challenging long-held economic paradigms and rewriting its own narrative on the world stage

For centuries, Western nations have reaped the rewards of their focus on innovation, intellectual property (IP), and the relentless pursuit of technological advancement. By glorifying creation, often over manufacturing and service, these nations have not only monetised their inventions but also exported their ideas globally, establishing themselves as economic powerhouses. The United States, for instance, transformed industries through disruptive technologies like the internet, pharmaceuticals, and aerospace, creating global demand for their products and services. Similarly, European nations have led in sectors like infrastructure (think about the economic advantage of railroads), automotive engineering and luxury goods, where innovation and IP are at the core of their global dominance. In contrast, economies like India and China historically anchored their growth on manufacturing and services—both positioned lower on the value-addition spectrum.

This approach, while effective for driving industrialisation and job creation, did not prioritise innovation or IP creation, the intellectual asset that is monetizable, leaving these nations as consumers rather than creators of advanced technologies. China, however, has broken away from this model in recent years, making massive investments in innovation, intellectual property, and tech platforms. The country has developed cutting-edge technologies in fields like telecommunications, social media, and gaming, exemplified by global giants such as Huawei, TikTok, and Tencent. These efforts have not only strengthened China's domestic economy, positioned it as a formidable global exporter, and given it access to priceless data from across the world. India, on the other hand, followed a different trajectory. Instead of focusing on production and technology creation, India became synonymous with contact centres, Global Capability Centers



(GCCs), and IT services. This positioning earned India the moniker of the "backroom of the world," a role that, while economically beneficial, left the nation lagging in terms of innovation and high-value technology creation. While India excelled in providing services, it often supported the innovation and product development efforts of other nations rather than leading them. However, the past decade has witnessed a significant shift in India's global stance. India has emerged as a geopolitical force, flexing its muscles in various domains. Diplomatically, India has taken a more assertive position on the global stage, engaging in strategic partnerships with major powers while maintaining its autonomy in international affairs. In the geopolitical arena, India has strengthened its defence capabilities and has been pivotal in initiatives like the Quad, countering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region. On the trade front, India has renegotiated trade deals and is increasingly seen as a critical player in global supply chains, particularly in the wake of global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This newfound



INDIA HAS EMERGED AS A GEOPOLITICAL FORCE, FLEXING ITS MUSCLES IN VARIOUS DOMAINS. DIPLOMATICALLY, INDIA HAS TAKEN A MORE ASSERTIVE POSITION ON THE GLOBAL STAGE, ENGAGING IN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH MAJOR POWERS WHILE MAINTAINING ITS AUTONOMY IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

assertiveness underscores why India's current focus on "Create in India" is both timely and strategically crucial. By fostering a culture of innovation and supporting the development of indigenous technologies, India is positioning itself to dominate the next century, both economically and in terms of soft power. Economically, a focus on creation will enable India to move up the value chain, generating higher returns on its intellectual assets and reducing its dependency on foreign technologies. In terms of soft power, leading in fields such as media and entertainment will allow India to shape its narrative, instead of continually reacting to distorted Western narratives. When PM Narendra Modi made the call, "Let us together start a 'Create in India' movement," not everyone understood its second and third-order effects, especially the ramifications on narrative-correction, and exporting our civilizational ideas globally. The "technologies" of Eastman colour and vinyl records helped America prop its heroes and rockstars. The era of XR and gaming will help India prop ours. The Ministry of Information and

Broadcasting recently announced the 'Create in India Challenge' under the aegis of World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025; a first-of-its-kind event showcasing the future of our AVGC sector to the world. This broad-spectrum challenge showcases the best of our talent across 25 types of content and games. India needs more of these visible celebrations. It's time the world saw our creativity and our ambition. However, to fully unlock this potential, India must also invest heavily. The AVGC sector represents the future of digital interaction and entertainment. Unlocking this future needs skill development, investment pipelines, platforms that scale, a progressive regulatory regime, and much more. It is indeed a tall order, but by establishing the Gangotri here, India can ensure its leadership in the global economy and narrative for years to come.

(The writer is a policy affairs expert. He is a nominated member of the National Tourism Advisory Council, Govt. of India and Board Member, Centre for Insolvency and Financial Laws; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SECULAR CREDENTIALS INTACT

Madam — Apropos of the editorial 'How secular in India' (October 5) based on the report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, certain ground realities of the present circumstances emanating from Israel-Hamas war wrapping Lebanon, Iran and Syria, extremist groups of Pakistan operating in India, terrorist attacks from across the border and coup in Bangladesh, which are directly boiling the Indian Muslims against Israel, US etc, can't be factored for any judgment by a US group.

It is true that there are serious violations of human rights and religious freedom in the US. India has very peculiar problems relating to religious issues. The Waqf Act has embroiled the sentiments on possession of their lands and temples, the insurgency from Bangladesh and Myanmar have changed the demography of the North East, Bengal and other bordering states. Our neighbourhood has been troubled with army coups, dictatorships, religious violence against Hindus and anti-India governments. Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar are failing in economies with unstable governments. Hindus are restive not against Muslims and minorities but against indiscriminate appeasement politics. These aspects have not been factored in the report of USCIRF. It is surprising & unfortunate, highly biased and discriminatory that such organisations don't carry out similar investigations and publish reports on Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Maldives, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria and China. However, such extraneous reports are mostly inconsequential in Indian politics.

Such reports don't help Muslims too. US should also denounce and discredit such organisations and their reports. Such reports vitiolate diplomatic relations and mutual cooperation.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Address the demands of Ladakh



The people of Ladakh are deeply concerned about pressing environmental issues, regional affairs, and the lack of essential services, all of which continue to plague the region. The key issues they are raising include the demand for tribal status under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, full-fledged statehood, separate parliamentary constituencies for Leh and Kargil, and the establishment of a Public Service Commission. Sadly, even as they did 21

days fasting protest, getting no results they began another Delhi Chalo Padyatra for their rightful claims, despite being totally peaceful protest, were detained by the Delhi police, sparking outrage across the country.

It is alarming to see the government's apathy and the Indian media's strange silence on such critical matters. Ladakh is an integral part of India, and its people deserve to be treated with the same respect and consideration as any other citizens. Their development is India's development, and their issues must be addressed without further delay. I urge the government to fulfill the demands of the people of Ladakh promptly and work towards ensuring their welfare and dignity. Jakir Hussain, Kanpur

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

JUSTICE RESTORED

Madam— The recent Supreme Court decision against prejudice based on caste in jails is a major step towards ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and equality. But how can we make sure that every state implements these changes in an effective way? Concerns regarding the extent of social injustice are raised by the practices from the colonial past that remain present in jail manuals. What steps will be implemented to monitor compliance and permanently end this prejudiced conduct as we work towards a more equal system? The Court's order is an important first step, but more work needs to be done.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

A BETRAYAL OF TRUST

Madam — I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the adulteration of Tirupati laddus. The Supreme Court's decision to form a five-member independent SIT is a commendable step. Any allegations of adulteration or misusing of any ingredients in the Tirumala

Tirupati laddus are disrespectful to the sentiments of crores of devotees. It also questions about the quality control and the safety standard that is being maintained by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). I urge the SIT to conduct an impartial investigation turning no stone unturned. The findings of the investigation should be made public which would restore the faith of devotees in the TTD and also prevent such incidents from happening in future. The investigation must be done in such a manner that it does not become a political issue as Tirupati laddus is connected to crores of people and their beliefs, it deals with the sentiments of devotees. I urge the SIT to conduct an impartial investigation which would not just resolve this issue but also ensure that next time such thing doesn't happen by ensuring regular maintenance and laboratory tests are done.

Fiza Fatima | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Overcoming Phobia: A Journey of inner strength and inspiration



SANJAY CHANDRA

Resilience and determination can help us overcome even the toughest challenges. All you need is a spark to ignite your spirit

I had a phobia of speaking in public. It is quite surprising given that I was good at debates during school and college. I was also a successful manager as I traversed my professional journey. I dealt with hundreds of staff since I joined the railways as a young officer.

I also interacted confidently with my peers and the seniors. However, I would break out in a sweat and lose my sleep each time I had to be on stage. I was envious of those who could spontaneously break into a joke or recite a poem. I decided to do something about it. I started preparing notes days in advance. I would keep memorising the lines by rote till they were branded in my memory. I would even repeat them standing in front of the mirror watching intently my facial expressions. This was the best that I could do. I realised in later years that my handicap was nothing when compared to the challenges faced by many. Recently, I watched The King's Speech, a movie on the life of King George



VI, who found himself on the throne after his older brother, King Edward VIII abdicated. The film largely dealt with King George's determination to overcome his stutter with the help of a speech therapist. I understood that the will to beat the odds comes from within.

No therapy can help an unwilling person. There are many instances of people overcoming their handicaps to pursue their dreams. We have all heard of Stephen Hawking. He was diagnosed with motor neuron disease at age 21 and was not expected to live more than a couple of years. He survived the odds but the disease paralysed him over decades. After he lost his speech, he communicat-

ed through a hand-held speech-generating device, and then through a cheek muscle. Helen Keller was an American author. Medical science was much less advanced than what we know today.

An unknown illness, when she was only 19 months old, left her permanently blind and deaf. She painstakingly learned to recognise words through hand movements. We, who are blessed, cannot even fathom the hard work that would have gone into her transformation to be the voice that she became. The famous Bharatnatyam danseuse Sudha Chandran underwent amputation of her right leg at the age of 18 due to a road accident. Many would have lost hope and might have ended up wallowing in self-pity. The lady regained her mobility with the help of a prosthetic. She also pushed herself to accomplish the unthinkable. One need not look up to only the famous to witness these stories of human courage and conviction. My maternal grandfather was comatose for a few

months after a botched-up surgery. The doctors were not even certain about his coming out of the coma. He was paralyzed on his right side. He worked painstakingly to lead as normal a life as he could, he even developed writing skills with his left hand. Many in our country are differently abled but do not have the means to pursue their dreams. On the other hand, we have big business houses that do not even bat an eyelid before spending more than the GDP of a small country on lavish events. We, many other individuals, and the business houses have the means to make a difference in the lives of others. Stephen Hawking said, "Concentrate on the abilities your disability doesn't hinder and don't dwell on the things it interferes with. Be disabled physically, not in spirit." We need to be the spark that ignites the spirit.

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

LEADERSHIP AND MENTAL HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES

Supportive leadership can reduce stress and enhance job satisfaction



SAKSHI SETHI

In today's dynamic workplace, the mental health of employees has become a focal point for organisations aiming to foster a productive and harmonious environment. One of the most significant factors influencing employee's mental health is the role of leadership. Bosses and managers possess the power to shape workplace culture, influence employee satisfaction and directly impact mental well-being. Leaders hold a unique position of authority that can significantly affect an employee's perception of their work environment. The tone set by leaders creates the foundational culture of an organisation. It is undeniable to say that a positive, encouraging atmosphere promotes employee engagement and satisfaction, whereas a toxic environment leads to stress and anxiety. Several research indicates that employees who feel supported by their leaders are more likely to experience lower levels of stress and higher levels of job satisfaction. Studies also indicate that transformational and supportive leadership styles co-relate with better employee mental health outcomes. Leaders who provide emotional support and recognition can significantly reduce stress levels among employees. Conversely, authoritarian leadership styles often result in increased employee anxiety and decreased morale. Flexible work arrangements such as remote work, and flexible hours positively impact mental health by allowing employees to manage personal responsibilities alongside work demands. One of the most crucial aspects of effective leadership is the ability to provide support and recognition. There is no denying the fact that employees thrive when their contributions are acknowledged and valued. A boss who regularly provides constructive feedback and celebrates achievements fosters a sense



of belonging and motivation. This recognition can enhance employees' self-esteem and reinforce their commitment to the organisation. On the other hand, a lack of recognition can lead to feelings of inadequacy and disillusionment, ultimately affecting mental health negatively.

The interplay between workplace factors and employee mental health is complex but increasingly recognised as critical to organisational success. By fostering supportive leadership, promoting a positive work culture and prioritising employee well-being, organisations can enhance mental health outcomes and overall productivity. Continued research in this area is essential for developing effective strategies to support mental health in the workplace. The impact of leadership on employee mental health is profound and multifaceted. Bosses have the authority to shape the workplace culture, provide support and recognition, communicate effectively, manage workloads, resolve conflicts and model healthy behaviours. Understanding the importance of these factors can help organisations create healthier work environments where employees feel valued and supported.

As businesses continue to navigate the complexities of the modern workplace, prioritising mental health through effective leadership is not just beneficial for employees but is also essential for fostering a productive and engaged workforce. The interplay between workplace factors and employee mental health is not only complex but also increasingly recognised as critical to organisational success. By fostering supportive leadership, promoting a positive work culture and prioritising employee well-being, organisations can enhance mental health outcomes and overall productivity. Continued research in this area is essential for developing effective strategies to support mental health in the workplace.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Elevate wellness experts as industry leaders

Backed by government initiatives and vocational training programmes, this sector offers global placements, entrepreneurial opportunities and job openings in small towns



DINESH SOOD



Beauty, wellness and grooming are indispensable aspects of life, particularly for young professionals striving for financial success and a luxurious lifestyle. It's crucial to recognise that a professionally trained hairdresser can earn more than an engineer or a doctor, dispelling the outdated notion that community-based hairdressers only fulfil basic needs. Their workplaces also serve as vibrant community centres where people gather, exchange ideas and foster belonging and bonding while waiting for a haircut. Therefore, it's imperative to rebrand the skills and professionals in the beauty and wellness sector as 'Beauty Architects' or 'Glam Gurus', elevating their profession's status and attracting more talent to this lucrative industry.

Our country's beauty and wellness industry presents unparalleled employment opportunities and global placements. Recognising this, the government has initiated various measures to create pertinent content, curricula, information databases, and delivery systems, standardise accreditation and certification processes, and establish industry-aligned infrastructure. These efforts aim to equip young individuals to perceive beauty and wellness as a promising profession. The beauty and wellness sector should streamline its curricula to emphasise industry exposure. As the industry transitions towards more excellent organisations, professionals must be educated on adhering to professional service standards, obtaining industry-specific qualifications and certifications from reputable organisations, and enhancing their existing qualifications through access to higher education and research. Integrating extensive internship, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training opportunities will provide candidates with practical work experience and a comprehensive understanding of the industry. The absence of employer-led apprenticeship standards and career pathways leads to limited internship opportunities, depriving numerous students of valuable learning experiences. Early introduction of beauty and wellness



OUR COUNTRY'S BEAUTY AND WELLNESS INDUSTRY PRESENTS UNPARALLELED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND GLOBAL PLACEMENTS. RECOGNISING THIS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS INITIATED VARIOUS MEASURES TO CREATE PERTINENT CONTENT, CURRICULA AND INFORMATION DATABASES,

courses in schools is essential. Our current education systems prioritise knowledge-oriented training through rote learning, neglecting practical, experiential learning crucial for real-world application. Therefore, orienting students towards vocational education as an alternative career choice is imperative.

The absence of practical and experiential learning impedes innovation, creativity, and imagination among learners, leaving them ill-prepared for the evolving world of work. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates integrating vocational education with mainstream education to expose 50 per cent of K12 and PG learners to vocational skills by 2025 and 100 per cent by 2030. Schools play a crucial role in raising awareness about vocational career paths. Notably, beauty and wellness skill courses have been part of the curriculum in Delhi Government schools for over a decade. Early exposure to such vocational education can aid students, parents, and guardians in considering alternative career paths and foster a positive outlook on the workforce's dignity in the beauty and wellness industry. The vocational education sector has tried mainstream vocational courses such as BVoc, MVoc, BSc, and MSc in Beauty and Wellness. However, these programs have seen low enrollment due to a need for more awareness about career opportunities and limited seats.

There is a need to design more BVoc and MVoc courses with multiple entry and exit points, focusing on practical application in areas such as Beauty Culture, Cosmetology, Yoga, Ayurveda Dietetics, Sports Nutrition, Physiotherapy, Salon

Management, Beauty Therapy, Aesthetics, Aesthetic Dermatology, Hair Dressing, Makeup, and Spa Therapy, rather than just theoretical knowledge.

Additional focus is also required in the areas of human psychology, stress management, mental well-being, nutrition and diet, reflexology, alternate therapies etc. An alternative pathway to a bachelor's degree is completing a one-year ITI program and gaining a year of industry experience. Expanding training capacities in the Beauty and Wellness sector within ITIs is crucial, as the current short-term training programs are insufficient to meet industry standards and demand.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is essential for informal workers with significant industry experience. Despite possessing valuable skills, many informal workers in the Beauty and Wellness industry need more formal education and training.

RPL can help them gain formal certification based on their industry experience. Additionally, there is a need to support entrepreneurship in the Beauty and Wellness sector. More than 50 per cent of vocational graduates in this sector opt for self-employment, and there is a growing trend of industry workers starting their enterprises.

A robust support system is required to support these entrepreneurs and foster innovation and employment.

The Indian beauty and personal care market is experiencing rapid growth in tier-II and tier-III towns, with a substantial value of \$22 billion and projected to expand at a rate of 10-12 per cent to reach \$34 billion by 2028, as per the Nykaa Beauty Trends Report. This surge in

tier-II and tier-III cities is not surprising, given the global trend. In India, approximately 38 per cent of the demand for beauty and wellness products and services, particularly direct-to-customer (D2C) offerings, originates from these cities, making them highly lucrative markets.

Despite being underdeveloped, tier-II and tier-III cities hold significant potential in the beauty and wellness sector. Research indicates that professionals in these cities are well-versed in domestic and international trends, products, and hair services. Social media's influence has been pivotal in driving lifestyle changes, especially among the younger population. Young customers and professionals in tier-II and tier-III towns are eager to explore new trends and various beauty and wellness services.

In contrast to metropolitan cities, recruiting a skilled workforce in these smaller cities is more accessible, as a motivated and trainable young workforce is readily available. Beauty, wellness, and grooming have become integral to everyone's lifestyle, regardless of whether they reside in metropolitan cities or smaller towns across India.

People increasingly seek professionals to help them achieve their desired makeovers, so it's time to adopt an inclusive approach to rebrand the traditional workforce as professionals in the beauty and wellness sector.

(The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and a network Member of India International Skills Centres, an initiative of GoI; The views are personal)

Mobilising climate finance in India: Uncovering alternative routes

Blended finance models, carbon pricing and strategically aligned CSR funds could be the key to unlocking the private sector's investment potential

India's changing dynamics with the geopolitical powers of the world coupled with its accelerating economy have put us in a unique spot—one that allows it to be the voice of the Global South. India's position on climate change commitments attracted global attention during the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, during which Prime Minister Modi committed to India achieving net-zero emissions by 2070. This ambitious pledge, unprecedented for a developing nation, was a point that speaks of a profound shift in India's climate policy. The country's newfound authority was further solidified after last year's G20 Presidency.



KAVIM KUMAR KANDASAMY

Among the many deliberations that India helmed with the other delegations, there was also a renewed global focus on the urgency of climate action. The Urgency of Mobilising Capital in the Global South, while the impacts of climate change are global and far-reaching, the impacts of this Research shows that 55 vulnerable countries have suffered \$525 billion combined cli-

mate crisis-fueled losses in the last 20 years. The number is estimated to reach \$580 billion per year by 2030. This is because large-scale investments are required for mitigation or adapting to the consequences. The Loss & Damage Fund, proposed at COP27 and operationalised at COP28, was a move India with the rest of Global South welcomed.

Though it is receiving initial contributions from developed nations, these fall short of what many developing countries deem necessary. Further, a recent study by CEEW found that the developed world, which is responsible for three-fourths of existing carbon emissions in the world—will end up emitting 38 per cent more carbon in 2030 than they

have committed, if one were to look at the current trajectories. 83 per cent of this overshoot will be caused by the European Union, Russia and the United States. It is critical to ensure the rescue and rehabilitation of countries facing the cascading effects of this global issue disproportionately. India has held the Global North accountable—not just as the voice of the Global South but owing to its vulnerability.

Understanding India's Stance around 619 million persons in India bore the brunt of climate change-induced extreme heat between June 16 and June 24. This is more than any other country in the world. These incidents are not just environmental, but also economic and health-related. Cities grind to a halt under the force of



extreme weather, leaving economic scars and jeopardising the marginalised.

Creating a resilient and sustainable future for India necessitates a just transition, which in turn requires significant financial investment. India faces a substantial climate financing shortfall of USD 3.5 trillion. To address this, we need investment support amounting to USD 1.4 trillion

by 2070, translating to an average annual requirement of USD 28 billion over the next five decades. While international support is undoubtedly crucial, harnessing the potential of domestic mechanisms like carbon pricing and blended finance models is crucial for long-term sustainability.

Novel mechanisms of blended finance can not only help bridge the financing gap to fulfil India's needs but can also unlock significantly higher investment from the private sector. This will also help in reducing overdependence on external climate capital as the primary instrument for climate capital. Strategic Alignment of CSR Funds Corporate India makes substantial expenditures as part of their Corporate

Social Responsibility. We have an opportunity here to strategically align these CSR funds in a manner that accelerates our efforts of achieving SDGs. According to provisional data from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), spending on health reached Rs 9,987 crore in FY22, compared to Rs 8,382 crore on education. In contrast, spending on the environment was Rs 2,837 crore in FY22, which is double the Rs 1,337 crore spent in FY21. There is a major scope for increasing the quantum of CSR funds being streamlined towards carbon projects. This notion reverberates further in the Reserve Bank of India's report on currency and finance, wherein equitable CSR funding is listed as the crucial policy alternative to

mitigate climate risk. While energy and mitigation have received the most amount of climate financing for India, more investments should be directed towards nature-based solutions and environment ecosystems that crosscut both mitigation and adaptation in India. This will help create permanence in carbon removals that will help mitigate the effects of climate change. The flexible nature of CSR provides businesses in the country a significant chance to foster positive transformation and marry socio-economic advancement by finding environmental solutions. Yet, these dual benefits are attainable only with a committed long-term vision and detailed planning.

(The writer is CEO, ProClimate; views are personal)

Strike on mosque kills 19 as Israel bombards Gaza, Beirut

AP ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

An Israeli strike on a mosque in the Gaza Strip early Sunday killed at least 19 people, Palestinian officials said, as Israel intensified its bombardment of northern Gaza and southern Beirut in a widening war with Iran-allied militant groups across the region. Displaced people were sheltering at the mosque that was struck near the main hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah. A further four people were killed in a strike on a school sheltering displaced people near the town. The Israeli military said both strikes targeted militants, without providing evidence.

An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital morgue. Hospital records showed that the dead from the strike on the mosque were all men.

Israel is still battling Hamas in Gaza a year after the group's attack on Israel, and has opened a new front in Lebanon against Hezbollah, which has been trading fire with Israel along the border since the war in Gaza began. Israel has also vowed to strike Iran itself after Tehran launched a ballistic missile attack on Israel last week.



Palestinians search for survivors and bodies in the rubble of a mosque destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in Deir al-Balah, Sunday. AP/PTI

The widening conflict risks drawing in the United States, which has provided crucial military and diplomatic support to Israel, as well as US-allied Arab countries that host American forces. Iran-allied militant groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have already joined in with long-distance strikes on Israel.

The Israeli military, meanwhile, announced a new air and ground offensive in Jabaliya, in northern Gaza, home to a densely populated refugee camp dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. It circulated photos and video footage showing a column of tanks heading toward the area.

Israeli forces encircled Jabaliya as warplanes struck militant sites inside, the military said. Over the course of the war, Israel has carried out several large operations there, only to see militants regroup. Israel reiterated its call, from the opening weeks of the war, for the complete evacuation of northern Gaza. Up to 300,000

people are estimated to have remained in the heavily destroyed north after earlier Israeli warnings that sent around a million fleeing to the south. "We are in a new phase of the war," the military said in leaflets dropped over the area. "These areas are considered dangerous combat zones."

Palestinian residents reported heavy Israeli strikes across northern Gaza. The Civil Defence — first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government — said several homes and buildings had been hit and they were not able to reach them because of the bombardment. Residents posted about the airstrikes and mourned their relatives on social media. Imad Alarabid said in a Facebook post that an airstrike on his home in Jabaliya killed a dozen family members, including his parents. Saeed Abu Elaish, a Health Ministry medic, said he was wounded and bleeding. "Pray for us," he wrote on Facebook. Hassan Hamd, a freelance TV journalist whose footage had aired on Al Jazeera and other networks, was killed in artillery shelling on his home in Jabaliya. Anas al-Sharif, an Al Jazeera reporter in northern Gaza, confirmed his death. The military says it has

expanded the so-called humanitarian zone in southern Gaza, urging people to head there. Hundreds of thousands of people have already sought refuge in sprawling tent camps there with little in the way of food, water or toilets. Israel has carried out strikes in the humanitarian zone against what it says are militants hiding among civilians. Nearly 42,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the start of the war, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. It does not say how many were fighters, but says a little more than half were women and children. Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people in the October 7 attack and took another 250 hostage. They are still holding around 100 captives, a third of whom are believed to be dead. In Beirut, airstrikes lit up the skyline and loud explosions echoed across the southern suburbs, known as the Dahiyeh, throughout the night, as Israel struck what it said were Hezbollah militant sites.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the area was hit by more than 30 strikes overnight, the heaviest bombardment since September 23 when Israel escalated its air campaign.

Health workers in Lebanon describe deadly attacks on colleagues and fear more

Beirut (AP): Israel's military struck outside the gates of a hospital in southern Lebanon without warning on Friday, killing seven paramedics and forcing the facility to close, the hospital director told The Associated Press a day after one of the most deadly attacks on health workers in the weeks since fighting escalated between Israel and Hezbollah. The account of the Friday airstrikes that flung hospital doors off their hinges and shattered glass was the latest to detail attacks that Lebanon's health ministry says have killed dozens of health workers. Marjayoun hospital director Mounes Kalakesh said that even before Friday's attack, ambulance crews in the area were so reluctant to operate that the facility had not received anyone wounded for days. "We have not been able to work. There was fear and panic among the staff," he said. Kalakesh said the government hospital did not receive any

warning from Israeli forces before the attack, even though nearby villages have received such warnings to evacuate. Israel has not commented specifically on the incident. Friday's attack came hours before Israel's Arabic-language military spokesman accused the Hezbollah militant group, based in southern Lebanon, of using ambulances to transport weapons and fighters, and warned medical teams to stay clear of the group. The spokesman provided no evidence. It is a charge that Lebanese officials and hospital directors, including Kalakesh, deny. Lebanon's health minister has accused Israel of committing "a war crime" by targeting medical teams and paramedics. The health ministry on Thursday said 40 paramedics, firefighters and health care workers had been killed in Israeli attacks over three days, making it even more challenging to care for people wounded in the intense fighting.

Thousands join pro-Palestinian rallies

AP ■ ROME

Police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse violent demonstrators in Rome as tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters took to the streets in major European cities and around the globe Saturday to call for a cease-fire as the first anniversary of the Hamas attacks on Israel approached. Huge rallies were held in several European cities, with gatherings expected to continue over the weekend and peak on Monday, the date of the anniversary.

In Rome, several thousands demonstrated peacefully Saturday afternoon until a smaller group tried to push the rally toward the center of the city, in spite of a ban by local authorities who refused to authorize protests, citing security concerns.

Some protesters, dressed in black and with their faces covered threw stones, bottles and paper bombs at the police, who

responded with tear gas and water cannons, eventually dispersing the crowd. At least 30 law enforcement officers and three demonstrators were injured in the clashes, local media reported.

The rally in Rome had been calm earlier, with people chanting "Free Palestine, Free Lebanon," waving Palestinian flags and holding banners calling for an immediate stop to the conflict.

In London, thousands marched through the capital to Downing Street amid a heavy police presence. The atmosphere was tense as pro-Palestinian protesters and counterdemonstrators, some holding Israeli flags, passed one another. Scuffles broke out as police officers pushed back activists trying to get past a cordon. At least 17 people were arrested on suspicion of public order offenses, supporting a proscribed organization and assault, London's Metropolitan Police said. In the northern German city of

Hamburg, about 950 people staged a peaceful demonstration with many waving Palestinian and Lebanese flags or chanting "Stop the Genocide," the DPA news agency reported, citing a count by police. Two smaller pro-Israeli counterdemonstrations took place without incident, it said.

Several thousands of protesters gathered peacefully at Paris' Republique Plaza in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese people. Many were waving Palestinian flags while holding posters reading "stop the genocide," "free Palestine," and "hands off Lebanon." Pro-Palestinian demonstrators also gathered at New York's Times Square to call for a cease-fire, chanting "Gaza!" to a drumbeat. Some wore keffiyeh scarves, waved Palestinian and Lebanese flags and held a large cardboard image of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with red paint symbolizing blood across his face. Rallies were also planned in sev-

eral other cities in the United States as well as in other parts of the world, including Denmark, Switzerland, South Africa and India. In the Philippines, dozens of left-wing activists protested near the U.S. Embassy in Manila, where police prevented them from getting closer to the seaside compound. Pro-Israeli demonstrations are expected to be held Sunday because Jews across the world are still observing Rosh Hashana, or the Jewish new year. This year, emotions will be high for many given that the midpoint of the 10 days spanning Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is Oct. 7 — the one-year anniversary of the Hamas attack that killed 1,200 Israelis and triggered the ongoing war in Gaza. Security forces in several countries warned of heightened levels of alert in major cities, amid concerns that the escalating conflict in the Middle East could inspire new terror attacks in Europe or that the protests could turn violent.



A man bangs a drum during a march as pro-Palestinian supporters rally in Sydney, Sunday. AP/PTI

International rescue teams reach Bosnia after floods

Sarajevo (AP): Rescue teams from Bosnia's neighbours and European Union countries on Sunday were joining efforts to clear the rubble and find people still missing from floods and landslides that devastated parts of the Balkan country. Bosnia sought EU help after a heavy rainstorm overnight on Friday left entire areas under water and debris destroyed roads and bridges, killing at least 18 people and wounding dozens.

Officials said that at least 10 people are still unaccounted for, many of them in the village of Donja Jablanica, in southern Bosnia, which was almost completely buried in rocks and rubble from a quarry on a hill above. Residents there have said they heard a thundering rumble and saw houses disappear before their eyes.

Luigi Soreca, who heads the EU mission in Bosnia, said on X that the EU stands with Bosnia and that teams are arriving to help. Bosnia is a candidate country for membership in the 27-nation bloc.

Authorities said Croatian rescuers have already arrived while a team from Serbia is expected to be deployed in the afternoon, followed by a Slovenian team with dogs. Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Czechia and Turkey have also offered help, a government statement said. Sunday is the date of a local election in Bosnia. Election authorities have postponed voting in the flood-hit regions, but the flooding has overshadowed the vote across the country. Ismeta Bucalovic, a resident of Sarajevo, Bosnia's capital, said "we are all overwhelmed by these flooding events. We all think only about that." Impoverished and ethnically divided, Bosnia has struggled to recover after the brutal war in 1992-95. The country is plagued by political bickering and corruption, stalling its EU bid.

Nurse, his dog dies trying to save man from floods

Washington (AP): As the Hurricane Helene-driven waters rose around the Nolichucky River in Tennessee, Boone McCrary, his girlfriend and his chocolate lab headed out on his fishing boat to search for a man who was stranded by floodwaters that had levelled his home.

But the thick debris in the water jammed the boat's motor, and without power, it slammed into a bridge support and capsized. McCrary and his dog Moss never made it out of the water alive.

Search teams found McCrary's boat and his dog's body two days later, but it took four days to find McCrary, an emergency room nurse whose passion was being on his boat in that river. His girlfriend, Santana Ray, held onto a branch for hours before rescuers reached her.

David Boutin, the man McCrary had set out to rescue, was distraught when he later learned McCrary had died trying to save him.

"I've never had anyone risk their life for me," Boutin told The Associated Press. "From what I hear that was the way he always been. He's my guardian angel, that's for sure."

The 46-year-old recalled how the force of the water swept him out his front door and ripped his dog Buddy — "My best friend, all I have" — from his arms. Boutin was rescued by another team after clinging to tree branches in the raging river for six hours. Buddy is still missing, and Boutin knows he couldn't have survived. McCrary was one of 215 people killed by Hurricane Helene's raging waters and falling trees across six states — Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia — and was among a group of first responders who perished while trying to save others.

Trump, Musk address thousands

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Former US president Donald Trump on Saturday returned to Butler, a city in Pennsylvania where he narrowly escaped an assassination bid 12 weeks ago, and addressed thousands of his supporters in this key battleground state, urging them to elect him as the next president of the United States.

Joined by high-profile figures like Tesla owner Elon Musk and his running mate, Senator J D Vance, Trump (78) made a passionate plea to "defeat" Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic candidate in the November 5 presidential poll.

"We must stop her country-destroying regime, radical-left agenda once and for all. We cannot have it happen. So you must get out and you must vote," Trump said in Pennsylvania, which in this election cycle has emerged as a must-win situation for both candidates.

Trump launched a scathing attack on Harris and accused her of being a failure on multiple fronts, including border security and economy. "She imposed a natural gas export ban on Pennsylvania, which is killing your energy workers and your pricing," he said. "Kamala Harris is a radical-left Marxist. She is a woman that is not respected in Congress. She was laughed at Congress. Nobody thought she could win. They did a coup of Biden. Whether you like him or not, I am not a particularly big fan. We had a debate, and the debate ended. And all of a sudden, they come to him, and they say, we want you out. You are not going to win the election. And he said, 'I do not want to get out,'" Trump said.

"He (Biden) got 14 million (1.4 crore) votes. If you believe in democracy or a system, he got 14 million votes. And she (Harris) got none. She was the



Elon Musk jumps on the stage behind Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump during a campaign rally at the Butler Farm Show, Saturday in Butler, Pa. AP/PTI

first one out, 22 candidates, and she never made it to Iowa. She quit before Iowa, and now she is running. And that is okay. But, you know, we spent USD 150 million beating Biden, and as soon as he was down and out for the count, they said, let us take him out. We will give somebody else to run. Never happened before," he said. "She is a person that rated even worse in every statistic than any other senator. She was rated at the bottom of the US Senate. She has destroyed everything she touched," Trump said.

The former president said if elected, on the first day of his presidency, he would seal the border and stop the migrant invasion into the country. "We will begin the largest deportation operation in the history of the United States," he said, adding that 2024 is the most important election in the history of the country. "Here are the facts. My opponent, Kamala Harris, is the most incompetent and far-left nominee ever to run for pres-

ident. She is much further left than crazy Bernie Sanders. She wants to open the borders. She took the most secure border in US history and turned it into the worst border in the history of the world.... She let in 21 million (2.1 crore) illegal aliens from all over the world, from prisons and jails and mental institutions and insane asylums. And they are terrorists at record levels, at levels we have never seen before," he alleged. In his brief speech, Musk said this is a must-win situation for the country.

"President Trump must win to preserve the Constitution. He must win to preserve democracy in America. This is a must-win situation. So I have one ask for everyone in the audience, everyone who watches this video, everyone in the livestream. This one request is very important. Register to vote. And get everyone you know and everyone you do not know, drag them to register to vote.... Then make sure they actually do vote. If they do not, this

will be the last election. That is my prediction," he said.

Musk said the true test of someone's character is how they behave under fire. "We had one president who could not climb a flight of stairs. Another who was fist pumping after getting shot. Fight, fight, fight. Blood coming down the face. America is the home of the brave. There is no truer test than courage under fire. So who do you want representing America?" he asked the audience. "This election, I think it is the most important election of our lifetime. This is no ordinary election. The other side wants to take away your freedom of speech. They want to take away your right to bear arms. They want to take away your right to vote effectively. You have got 14 states now that do not require voter ID. California, where I used to live, just passed a law banning voter ID for voting. I still cannot believe that is real. How are you supposed to have a proper election if there is no ID?" he asked.

Tunisians vote in election with one of Prez Saied's challengers in prison

Tunis (AP): Tunisians cast ballots Sunday in the country's third presidential election since the pro-democracy revolt known as the Arab Spring, while one of the candidates remains in prison. Voters are deciding who among three candidates will lead the North African nation for the next five years — President Kais Saied, imprisoned businessman Ayachi Zammel or Zouhair Maghzaoui, a leftist who supported Saied before choosing to run against him. Saied, the 66-year-old first-term president, is considered the heavy favourite largely because of a crackdown on his opponents and the moves to remove checks and balances on his executive power. The majority of the opposition is boycotting the contest in protest of what they call an absence of

democratic conditions for free and fair elections. Dozens of candidates had expressed interest to challenge Saied and 17 submitted preliminary paperwork to run in Sunday's race. However, members of the election commission, all of whom are appointed by the president, approved only three. They ignored a court ruling ordering them to reinstate three other challengers. Zammel was later imprisoned and charged with forging voter signatures to qualify for the ballot, which his attorney denied. Tunisia's presidential election is its third since protests led to the 2011 ouster of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali — the first autocrat toppled in the Arab Spring uprisings that also overthrew leaders in Egypt, Libya and Yemen.

Wounded Calif officer shoots man during 'unprovoked' knife attack

AP ■ SANTA MONICA

A California officer fatally shot a man who wounded him with a knife outside a city police headquarters in what authorities called "an unprovoked attack." A man in his 30s approached the male officer outside the front doors of the Santa Monica Police Department around 5.20 pm Saturday. The man was told he would need to wait while the officer finished speaking to a resident, the department said. "Without warning, the individual attacked the officer while pulling a knife from his clothing. The suspect slashed and stabbed the officer," the department said in a statement posted on social media. The officer



armed himself and retreated around the corner of the building as the man continued the attack. The officer then shot the man, the department said. Police and the Santa Monica Fire Department provided emergency medical aid but the man was pronounced dead at the scene, the department said. The identity and medical condition of the police officer was not immediately

available. KNBC-TV reported the officer was transported to a hospital with serious wounds but police said he was expected to survive. The Los Angeles County Coroner's Office was called to the scene. The Santa Monica Police Department and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office will investigate, the department said.

Imran's party vows to continue protest

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The situation remained tense in Pakistan's capital on Sunday as jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party vowed to continue its protest against the government, a day after violent clashes between security forces and his supporters that left one policeman dead and several others injured.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party, in an overnight meeting, decided that the demonstration would go on until the release of Khan, who has been in jail since August last year.

The situation in Islamabad and neighbouring Rawalpindi, which witnessed the violent clashes on Saturday remained tense. However, there were no reports of violence in the twin cities on Sunday, indicating that the situation was improving gradually.

The mobile phone services have also been restored in the two cities which had been suspended on Friday.

Meanwhile, the whereabouts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, who is also the protest leader, remained unknown.

The party and family members were unable to make any contact with him from Saturday evening, said his government spokesman Muhammad Ali Saif.

Saif on Saturday first claimed that Gandapur was "arrested", but later in a post on X said that the "KP CM has not been formally arrested".

The political committee of PTI decided that if Gandapur was arrested, senior party leader Azam Swati would lead the protest. If Swati is arrested, a new leader will be chosen to take command, according to the Dawn newspaper.

The political committee also criticised the disappearance of Gandapur. The committee warned that there would be "serious repercussions" if he was arrested.

Former National Assembly speaker and senior PTI leader



Asad Qaiser told the Dawn newspaper that PTI's political committee decided to continue the protest as long as it gets a clear directive from Khan to end the protest.

"It was also decided that Azam Swati will lead the protest if Gandapur is arrested."

However, he warned, arresting a sitting chief minister would be disastrous for the country and there would be serious repercussions.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said Gandapur was not in police custody, deepening the mystery behind his disappearance.

"I confirm that he is not in the custody of the government or any other institution of the government," he said.

The minister said that the police were looking for Gandapur who had been hiding at some unknown place.

"Police have also raided a few places but could not find him," he said, adding that he received pictures of Gandapur escaping from the KP House before the arrival of police and other law enforcement agencies.

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provincial assembly announced that it will convene its session on Sunday to discuss the issue of his disappearance.

Naqvi also announced that

564 protestors, including 11 plainclothes personnel from the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa police, have been arrested during the protests.

He said it was the first instance when police have been used in such demonstrations. He also said that among those arrested were 120 Afghan nationals.

Naqvi said he had ordered a high-level inquiry into how a provincial police force was involved in the protests and "attacked [other] police officers".

He said 31 Islamabad police and 75 Punjab police personnel were injured in Saturday's clashes.

In Lahore, around 30 supporters of Khan's party, including lawyers, were arrested after they managed to reach historic Minar-e-Pakistan premises demanding the release of their leader, police said on Sunday.

More than 200 PTI workers, including Khan, have been booked under terrorism charges, they added.

Earlier, in an embarrassment to the government, a large number of PTI protesters managed to reach Islamabad by overcoming multiple barriers. Naqvi claimed that the PTI had a plan to stage a sit-in until the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit.

Pope Francis names 21 new cardinals

AP ■ ROME

Pope Francis named 21 new cardinals Sunday, significantly increasing the size of the College of Cardinals and further cementing his mark on the group of prelates who will one day elect his successor.

They include a man who will be the oldest cardinal — Monsignor Angelo Acerbi, a 99-year-old retired Vatican diplomat who was once held hostage for six weeks in Colombia by leftist guerrillas — and the youngest — the 44-year-old head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Melbourne, Australia, Bishop Mykola Bychok, named in a nod to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The new cardinals will get their red hats at a ceremony, known as a consistory, on Dec. 8, an important feast day on its own that officially kicks off the Christmas season in Rome. It will be Francis' 10th consistory to create new princes of the church and the biggest infusion of voting-age cardinals into the college in Francis' 11-year pontificate.



Acerbi is the only one of the new intake who is over 80 and hence too old to vote for new pope.

Usually the college has a limit of 120 on voting-age cardinals but popes often exceed the cap temporarily to keep the body robust as existing cardinals age out. As of Sept. 28, there were 122 cardinal-electors; that means the new infusion brings their numbers up to 142.

Among those named by history's first Latin American pope were the heads of several major dioceses and archdioceses in South America. They are the archbishop of Santiago del Estero, Argentina, Vicente Bokalic

Iglic; the archbishop of Porto Alegre, Brazil, Jaime Spengler; the archbishop of Santiago, Chile, Fernando Natalio Chomali Garib; the archbishop of Guayaquil, Ecuador, Luis Gerardo Cabrera Herrera; and the archbishop of Lima, Peru, Carlos Gustavo Castillo Mattasoglio.

That stands in sharp contrast to the lone new cardinal from North America: the archbishop of Toronto, Francis Leo. Showing the universality of the church around the world, Francis also tapped the archbishop of Tehran, Iran, Monsignor Dominique Joseph Mathieu, and the bishop of Bogor, Indonesia, Monsignor Paskalis Bruno Syukor. They both belong to the Franciscan religious order and are two of the four new Franciscan cardinals.

In addition to Syukor, Asia gets two more cardinals in Monsignor Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi, the archbishop of Tokyo; and Monsignor Pablo Virgilio Sinogco David, the bishop of Kalookan, Philippines.

Aside from Asia the other region where the church is

growing is Africa, which got two new cardinals: the archbishop of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Monsignor Ignace Bessi Dogbo, and the bishop of Algiers, Algeria, Monsignor Jean-Paul Vesco.

"Francis has again continued to extend the reach of the college of cardinals," said Christopher Bellitto, a church historian at Kean University in Union, New Jersey. "Like his predecessors, but even more so, he's making sure that Catholic leaders from the church's edges have a voice at the big table."

Even before Sunday's announcement, Francis had already named the vast majority of the voting-age cardinals who will one day vote in a conclave. According to Vatican statistics, before Sunday, 92 of the cardinals under 80 had been named by Francis, compared with 24 named by Pope Benedict XVI and six by St. John Paul II.

Added to their ranks on Sunday were two Vatican officials who hold positions that don't usually carry with them a cardinal's rank: the official in charge of the migrants

section of the Vatican development office, the Rev. Fabio Baggio, and the official who organizes the pope's foreign travels, the Rev. George Jacob Koovakad.

In a nod to the current synod underway at the Vatican this month debating the future of the church, Francis also tapped the Rev. Timothy Radcliffe, a British theologian who is one of the spiritual advisers for the meeting. Bellitto said it was "nonsense" to read the new cardinals as Francis doing something unique to try to stack the deck. "Every school superintendent, president, and prime minister picks people in their image to help their vision," he said in an email.

The nomination of Bychok gave Ukraine its only cardinal and sent a subtle political message as Russia's war grinds on. Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See, Andrii Yurash, praised the nomination, even though Francis chose the head of Ukraine's Greek Catholic Church in Australia over the Kyiv-based head, His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk.

'Jaishankar's visit to Pakistan 'positive development'

Lahore(PTI): Pakistan's former foreign minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri has termed External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's upcoming visit to Islamabad a "positive development", saying it may help ease tensions between the two neighbours.

India on Friday announced that Jaishankar would lead a delegation to Pakistan to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, scheduled to take place on Oct 15 and 16 in Islamabad.

However, Jaishankar ruled out chances of bilateral talks during his visit to Pakistan.

"Jaishankar's visit is of multilateral nature, nevertheless it may help ease tensions between the two neighbouring countries," Kasuri was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper on Sunday.

Kasuri, who served as Pakistan's foreign minister from 2002 until 2007 during Gen Pervez Musharraf's regime, said

that both countries must seize this opportunity.

"Resuming dialogue will help restore people-to-people contacts and may pave the way for restoration of road, rail and air links," he said.

Kasuri suggested that at the time of great tensions in West Asia, where Israel had been targeting the people of Gaza and Lebanon, Pakistan and India might have been encouraged to lower tensions, the paper said.

"At the time of the ceasefire between the two countries in the past, the UAE ambassador claimed to have played a role," he said and added both the countries were nuclear powers and had a strong army so it was in their mutual interest to lower tension in the region.

"In such a situation, both Pakistan and India need to act responsibly and reasonably. This is a crucial moment that requires thoughtful and measured actions to ensure region-

al stability," the newspaper quoted him as saying.

Kasuri said that given the tensions between the two countries, India could have sent a low-level delegation but it didn't. He said Pak-India relations were unpredictable and they could take unexpected turns as happened on many occasions in the past.

He said it should not be forgotten that the late external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj had also visited Islamabad in 2015 to attend the Heart of Asia Conference amidst tensions between the two countries.

"Despite that, the meeting was utilized by both sides for side-lines meetings between the two foreign ministers," Kasuri said.

The ties between India and Pakistan came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack.

Nepal President Paudel appoints Prakash Man Singh Raut as new CJ

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's President Ramchandra Paudel on Sunday appointed Prakash Man Singh Raut as the new Chief Justice of the country. Paudel administered the oath of office and secrecy to Chief Justice Raut at a special ceremony organised at Sheela Niwas, the President's Office, according to officials. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials, including Vice President Ramsahay Prasad Yadav, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Speaker Devraj Ghimire, and Chairman of the National Assembly Narayan Prasad Dahal.

Raut's name was recommended for the post by the



Constitutional Council on September 16. His appointment comes after the retirement of outgoing Chief Justice Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha, who reached the mandatory retirement age of 65 on Saturday.

1 dead as Russia strikes Ukraine with drones and missiles

AP ■ KYIV

One person has died after Russian forces attacked Ukraine overnight with 87 Shahed drones and four different types of missiles, officials said Sunday.

A 49-year-old man was killed in the Kharkiv region after his car was hit by a drone, said regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov. A gas pipeline was also damaged and a warehouse set alight in the city of Odesa, Ukrainian officials reported.

Ukraine's air force said in a statement that air defenses had destroyed 56 of the 87 drones and two missiles over 14 Ukrainian regions, including the capital, Kyiv.

Another 25 drones disappeared from radar "presumably as a result of anti-aircraft missile defense," it said. The barrage comes a day after



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday that he will present his "victory plan" at the October 12

meeting of the Ramstein group of nations that supplies arms to Ukraine.

Zelenskyy presented his plan to US President Joe Biden in Washington last week. Its contents have not been made public but it is known that the plan includes Ukrainian membership in NATO and the provision of long-range missiles to strike inside Russia. In a statement Sunday, the Ukrainian leader paid tribute to the country's troops, which he also described as "preparing (for) the next Ramstein."

"They demonstrate what Ukrainians are capable of when they have enough weapons and sufficient range," he said in a statement on social media. "We will keep convincing our partners that our drones alone are not enough. More decisive steps are needed — and the end of this war will be closer."

Brazilians vote in local elections

Rio De Janeiro (AP): Brazilians began voting in the first round of local elections on Sunday for mayors, deputy mayors and councilors in the country's 5,569 municipalities.

In Sao Paulo, three mayoral candidates are running neck-and-neck, including incumbent Ricardo Nunes, left-wing lawmaker Guilherme Boulos and self-help guru turned far-right politician Pablo Marçal. A runoff is scheduled for Oct. 27. Much of the attention leading up to Sunday's vote has been on Brazil's biggest city, where the race has been marred by episodes of violence involving Marçal.

Last month, José Luiz Datena, a former TV presenter turned candidate, slammed Marçal with a metal chair during a televised debate following references to allegations of sexual misconduct. In a later debate, an aide to Marçal thumped an adversary's counterpart, resulting in a bloody face. Marçal sparked more contro-

versy on Friday, when he published on social media a falsified medical report indicating cocaine use by Boulos. The document was widely debunked by local media that pointed to inconsistencies including the fact that it was signed by a doctor who had passed away.

Boulos, a longtime campaigner for housing rights who is backed by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, vehemently denied the veracity of the document. On Saturday, a judge sitting on Sao Paulo's electoral court ordered the suspension of Marçal's Instagram account for 48 hours and deemed that there are "indications of various offenses under the Electoral Code."

Some of former President Jair Bolsonaro's political base has been drawn to Marçal, enthralled by his fiery rhetoric, although the far-right leader is supporting Nunes. In Rio de Janeiro, incumbent Eduardo Paes is hoping to avoid a second-round runoff. Polls indicat-

ed until recently that was possible. But his principal challenger Alexandre Ramagem has steadily climbed in the polls in recent weeks, rendering the outcome of Sunday's vote uncertain.

Ramagem, the former chief of Brazil's intelligence agency under Bolsonaro, is being investigated as part of a wider probe into alleged spying on political opponents. He has denied the accusations.

Bolsonaro is backing Ramagem, and his ascent in the polls is widely attributed to the former president's campaigning on his behalf. More than 155 million Brazilians are eligible to vote. Forty-three percent of the electorate is in the southeastern region, where Rio and Sao Paulo are located. Women make up around 52% of voters. Nearly 1,000 transgender politicians are running Sunday in every one of Brazil's 26 states, according to the nation's electoral court, which is tracking them for the first time.

Lanka parties busy forming alliances to face Nov election

Colombo (PTI): All major political parties in Sri Lanka are short-listing candidates and attempting to forge new alliances as the country prepares for the November 14 parliamentary election.

No major party has yet submitted their nominations to contest any of the 22 electoral districts despite the opening of the nominations last Friday.

The nominations for the election will close on October 11. The ruling National People's Power (NPP) party, which won the September 21 presidential election, said it is in the process of finalising its candidates list.

"We have already changed the political culture with our governance so far during the last two weeks, we will continue the good work after the parliamentary election with new faces," Samantha Vidyaratne, an NPP leader said. Former president Ranil Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP), the grand old party in the country, had unsuccessfully tried to merge with its offshoot Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) party to face the election.

Wickremesinghe finished third behind the SJB leader Sajith Premadasa in the presidential election.

The split votes between Premadasa and Wickremesinghe, who together polled 50.03 per cent, helped incumbent Anura Dissanayake to win the presidential poll. The UNP is in the process of finalising an election pact with groups which had broken away from the Rajapaksa family-dominated Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party to contest under the cooking gas cylinder symbol which Wickremesinghe used during his presidential bid. "We will contest most districts under the gas cylinder symbol with one or two districts under UNP's elephant symbol," the party chair Vajira Abeywardena said. Meanwhile, Tamil political groups said they were too trying to forge alliances.

North Korea and China mark their 75th anniversary of ties

Seoul(AP): The leaders of North Korea and China marked the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations on Sunday by exchanging messages that expressed hopes for stronger ties, as outsiders raised questions about their relationship. The message exchange came as North Korea and Russia have been sharply expanding their cooperation while China apparently keeps its distance. Experts say that the level of exchanges and commemorative programs between North Korea and China in the coming months will provide a clue to the exact status of their ties.

In a message sent to Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his government will "steadily strive to consolidate and develop the friend-

ly and cooperative relations" between the two countries, according to North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency. Xi, in his message to Kim, said that China is ready to jointly promote "the stable and further advance of the socialist cause in the two countries," KCNA said. Since North Korea and China established diplomatic ties on Oct. 6, 1949, their relationship has often been described as being "as close as lips and teeth." China, North Korea's biggest trading partner and main aid provider, has been suspected of avoiding fully implementing U.N. sanctions on North Korea and sending clandestine aid shipments to help its impoverished neighbor stay afloat and continue to serve as a bulwark

against U.S. influence on the Korean Peninsula. But many observers say China is reluctant to form a three-way, anti-West alliance with North Korea and Russia as it prefers a stable regional security environment to tackle numerous economic challenges and maintain relationships with Europe and its Asian neighbours. North Korea and Russia have moved significantly closer to each other amid widespread outside suspicions that North Korea has supplied conventional weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance. During a meeting in Pyongyang in June, Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a pact stipulating mutual mil-

itary assistance if either country is attacked, in what was considered the two countries' biggest defense deal since the end of the Cold War.

North Korea is locked in confrontations with the U.S., South Korea and their partners over its advancing nuclear program. Kim has said he was forced to expand both nuclear and conventional capabilities to cope with US-led security threats. On Sunday, KCNA reported that Kim oversaw a live artillery firing drill by cadets of a military academy. After watching the drill, Kim said training programs at the military academy must focus on "the guerrilla war tactics to wipe out the enemies through rapid mobile and surprise operations," according to KCNA.



In this undated photo provided on Saturday by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, visits to watch an artillery exercise at an undisclosed place in North Korea. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image distributed by the North Korean government. The content of this image is as provided and cannot be independently verified. Korean language watermark on image as provided by source reads: "KCNA" which is the abbreviation for Korean Central News Agency.

Amul set to enter European market after US success

PTI ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Managing Director of AMUL and Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF) Jayen Mehta said AMUL's recently launched milk in US has been "highly successful" and they are now ready to enter the European market, which would mark a historic moment for the brand. Delivering the 11th Dr Verghese Kurien Memorial Oration on "AMUL Model: Transforming Lives of Million" organised by a private business management institute here on Saturday, Mehta said "India is now the largest milk producer in the world and is set to produce one-third of the world's total milk in the coming years", XLRI in a statement said. "Dairy isn't just a business-it's a lifeline for rural India," he said. Talking about Amul's recent launch of milk in the US, Mehta said it has been "highly successful", and they are now ready to enter the European market for the first time.



To stay relevant, Amul focuses on offering protein-rich, organic, and chemical-free products that customers trust, while continuously expanding their capacity and infrastructure, he said while praising the ecosystem developed by Dr Kurien, founder of AMUL. Mehta said "If India could offer a gift to the world, it would be the cooperative working system—a gift Dr Kurien gave us. His belief in

cooperation has sparked a new revolution in India." Amul collects over 310 lakh litres of milk daily, with 107 dairy plants across India and over 50 products, Mehta said, adding that 22 billion packs are sold annually. Amul has a turnover of Rs 80,000 crore and is now ranked as the strongest dairy and food brand globally, owned by 36 lakh farmers, he claimed. Addressing the gathering,

Nirmala Kurien - daughter of Dr Verghese Kurien, said more than half a century ago her father dared to dream that a milk-deficient country could one day become self-sufficient. Today, India stands as the world's largest producer of milk, she added. Director of XLRI Jamshedpur Fr S George said Dr Verghese Kurien's life was characterized by a commitment to making a difference.

Himachal processes record 1,545 mt apple juice: Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu

PTI ■ JAMSHEDPUR

The Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation has processed a record 1,545 metric tonnes of apple juice concentrate across its three plants this year so far, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Sunday. "It includes 814 metric tonnes (MT) from the Parala plant in Shimla district, 653 MT from the Parwanoo plant in Solan district, and 78 MT from the Jarol plant in Mandi district," he added. He said the Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (HPMC) is crushing nearly all apples procured, with minimal fruit being sold through auctions. "92 per cent of the apples procured this season are being processed, due to strict adherence to procurement standards," he noted. The chief minister said that under the MIS this year, a total of 29,200 MT of apples have been procured in the state. Of this, 19,437 MT were purchased through 206 procurement centres of HPMC, while 9,764 MT were procured through 109 centres of Himfed.



"The apple season in the state is ongoing, and procurement under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) continues, with processing expected to increase as procurement grows. In an effort to enhance the quality of apple procurement under the MIS, HPMC has piloted the purchase of 1,219 MT of apples from farmers using crates. For the first time, apple procurement has also begun in the remote area of Pangi in Chamba district," he said. HPMC has introduced an online portal to improve the MIS.

"Procurement is now managed through this online system, which provides real-time data on procurement, transportation, crushing at processing plants, auction of fruit, booking of CA stores and direct bank transfer linkage, which is ensuring transparency and efficiency in services provided to apple growers," the chief minister said. "HPMC has enhanced its processing capacity, with this year's crushing capacity increasing from 21,000 MT to 39,000 MT compared to the previous year. Additionally, the grading and packaging line capacity has been

enhanced from 15,900 MT to 33,900 MT. The wine units at Parala and Jarol have a combined annual capacity of 1.50 lakh litres." A new vinegar unit at Parala has an annual capacity of 50,000 litres, while a new pectin unit at Parala can produce 1.2 metric tons per day, and the ready-to-serve juice unit now has a daily capacity of 20,000 litres, he noted. HPMC has also expanded its market presence by engaging pan-India distributors and opening new retail outlets at Delhi Metro stations and other prominent locations across the country.

High GST rates hinder growth of India's carbonated soft drinks market

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Carbonated soft drinks segment in India is unable to reach its potential in terms of scale expansion due to barriers such as high taxation under the GST regime despite government's initiatives like 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', according to a report by economic think tank ICRIER. The cross-country comparative data on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) taxes collated by the World Bank shows that India has one of the highest tax rates for carbonated soft drinks (CSDs) at a total tax rate of 40 per cent as of 2023. Over 90 per cent of countries that tax SSBs have a lower tax rate than India, as per the report titled 'Carbonated Beverages Industry in India: Tax Policy to Promote Growth, Innovation and Investment'. Consumers, globally and in

India, are shifting towards low-sugar and no-added sugar varieties of beverages amid heightened health awareness. "The CSD market is also changing from its traditional high sugar carbonated beverages to low-sugar and fruit-based and/or flavoured carbonated drinks to zero-sugar aerated water, catering to changes in consumers' choice for healthier options and government policies like layered-sugar-based taxes," the report said. Producers, across the globe, are reformulating their products to meet consumer demand, and these are supported through government policies and both fiscal and non-fiscal incentives. In India too, producers are re-examining their product portfolios and coming up with products like zero-calorie, low/no sugar content. "However, despite



government initiatives like 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', the CSD segment is unable to reach its potential in terms of scale expansion due to barriers such as the high tax brackets and compensation cess under the GST regime, implemented since 2017," it said. Currently, carbonated or aerated beverages are placed

in the highest GST slab of 28 per cent with a compensation cess of 12 per cent, irrespective of their sugar or fruit content. "The high tax of 40 per cent, irrespective of sugar content, is making it difficult for innovative firms to come up with low-sugar varieties and scale up and existing firms to invest in product reformulation," the ICRIER report said. Citing cross-country comparative data on SSB taxes collated by the World Bank, the report said India has one of the highest tax rates for CSDs at a total tax rate of 40 per cent as of 2023. Over 90 per cent of countries that tax SSBs have a lower tax rate than India. The Indian CSDs market is relatively small. It generated revenue worth USD 18.25 billion in 2022, and grew at a CAGR of 19.8 per cent between 2017 and 2022. Pointing out that India is one

of the largest global producers of fruits such as mango, banana, guava, papaya, sapota, pomegranate, and lime, and sugar, which in some cases are used in the CSD category, the report said, "It has the potential to be used in greater capacity, if the right policies promote their uses in CSDs." "While the Indian consumer wants to experiment with different products such as low-sugar CSDs or fruit-based CSDs, and startups are trying to come up with new products, investment, product varieties and innovation is much lower in CSDs in India," it said. "This is primarily because of treatment of this sector as a high tax revenue earner previously by the states through their state excise and now by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, which has recommended a high tax and cess on CSDs," the report said.

Hindalco, JSW Steel bid for Jharkhand copper mines

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adivya Birla Group firm Hindalco Industries and Sajjan Jindal-led JSW Steel are in the race for two copper mines in Jharkhand which will be put on sale this month, sources said. Both mines have a combined capacity of three million tonne per annum. Hindalco Industries and JSW Steel will be vying for state-owned Hindustan Copper Ltd's two copper mines in Jharkhand, sources said. The auction of both the mines is likely to take place in the month of October. While one of these blocks is virgin, the other one is closed for the past 20 years. Hindustan Copper had earlier invited applications for appointment of mine developer-cum-operator (MDO) for re-opening and expansion of Rakha Copper Mine and development and operations of underground



Mine at Chapri. Hindustan Copper had said in its recent report that Rakha Mining Lease expired in 2021 and extension of mining lease period is under progress with the Jharkhand government. Further, the application for grant of stage one forest clearance over remaining forest area within mining lease has been accepted by Project Screening Committee. The site inspection by various authorities of State Forest department has been completed. Hindustan Copper is

implementing expansion projects to increase mine production capacity to 12.2 million tonne per annum, its CMD Ghanshyam Sharma had recently said. The move will boost domestic production of copper and reduce dependence on imports. The company achieved ore production of 3.78 million tonne in FY24 against 3.35 MT in FY23, registering a rise of 13 per cent. The ongoing capacity expansion project i.e. Development of underground mine below the existing open cast mine at Malanjkhanda Copper Project (MCP) will augment the ore production capacity from 2.5 MTPA to 5 MTPA. The ore production from the open cast mine has now been exhausted and the underground mine is operating below the existing open cast mine leaving some barrier pillars.

Auto industry expects robust sale during festive season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Auto industry players are eyeing a robust performance in the ongoing festive period to lift overall consumer sentiment and set the tone for the rest of the year amid slowing demand. The festive season usually commences with Onam and ends with Diwali every year. Kia India National Head of Sales and Marketing Hardeep Singh Brar told PTI that the last 3-4 months were not good for the industry as sales declined compared to the same period last year. "With pent-up demand of the last few months there and government investment starting to flow in, we feel things should start improving from here onwards," he noted. Brar said the booking momentum in September was good, which is a strong indication for October. "And this time, all festivals are in October..We expect about 5-10 per cent sales growth during the period as compared to last year," he added. Brar said that in the January-April period, the passenger vehicle industry witnessed a growth of 7 per cent, but in May-September, there was a dip of about 2-3 per cent, leading to the buildup of inventory. Nissan Motor India Managing Director Saurabh Vatsa said the entire industry is looking at the festive season to bring some cheer after witnessing tough three months. "I think it has been a challenging period. The festive period will define the



quarter, and the third quarter will define what happens in the remaining part of the year," he said. Everybody is looking forward to the festive seasons, especially from the industry, he added. Toyota Kirloskar Motor Vice President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business, Sabari Manohar said the company is witnessing enhanced footfalls and enquiries. "Key to meeting this rising demand has been our strategic operational improvements, such as the introduction of a third shift. This has significantly optimised our supply chain, particularly for high-demand models like the Urban Cruiser HyRyder, where waiting periods have been reduced," he said. Additionally, there is a clear shift in sentiment, with an increasing embrace of eco-friendly technologies, not only in urban areas but also

in Tier II and Tier III markets, Manohar said. Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer (Marketing and Sales) Partho Banerjee said the company is trying to increase its sales by bringing in some limited edition models. He noted that during Ganesh Chaturthi and Janmashtami, the company witnessed good traction in sales and has been able to generate volumes as per the business requirements. Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles MD Shailesh Chandra said in its monthly sales statement that registrations have picked up pace towards the end of the month (September), which augurs well for the festive period ahead. "We remain focused on driving up consumer preference for our exciting range of vehicles while maintaining the health of our dealer network," he added.

Livguard unveils high-frequency solar inverters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Livguard has launched their new line of High-Frequency Solar Inverters at the 17th Renewable Energy India Expo (REI) 2024. These products were unveiled at the India Expo Center, Greater Noida during the ceremony led by Mr. Alankar Mittal, President Business Unit Head, Solar & Exports. The REI Expo is Asia's leading B2B platform for renewable energy, attracting over 800 exhibitors and 40,000 visitors, including industry experts. These newly launched Hybrid Series and Off-Grid Series inverters are designed for higher efficiency with transformer-less technology, making them more reliable and compact. Compatible with both Lead Acid and



Lithium Batteries, they also feature built-in Wi-Fi for easy performance tracking via smartphones. Their UPS function ensures uninterrupted power for PCs and household appliances. The brand also launched other groundbreaking products like cutting-edge lithium-based ESS, high-efficiency Bi-facial panels, and high-efficiency DCR Panels.

These products add to Livguard's range of solar solutions catering to residential and small business needs. Livguard's wide range of solar solutions like Off Grid solutions, On Grid Solutions, Hybrid solutions and Lithium ESS offer multiple mode operation for battery and grid preference, higher ROI and un-interrupted use of solar energy for savings and backup respectively. With Livguard's Livmonitor 360 app, you can monitor solar generation through an easy one-click step! "Livguard Solar and Livfast Solar continue to lead the way with innovations that are transforming India's energy landscape," said Mr. Alankar Mittal, President Business Unit Head, Solar & International Business.

IDFC FIRST bank goes live on GST portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IDFC FIRST Bank on Saturday announced its integration with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) portal, enabling seamless GST payments. Customers will now benefit from an intuitive, hassle-free payment experience, with instant payment confirmations and easy access to downloadable challans. This new integration will allow IDFC FIRST Bank customers to pay GST through a variety of digital channels, including the Bank's user-friendly Retail and Corporate Internet Banking platforms and its nationwide branch network. Mr. Chinmay Dhoble, Head - Retail Liabilities and Branch

Banking, IDFC FIRST Bank, said, "As a customer-first bank, we are committed to providing seamless, easy-to-use solutions to our customers. This integration with the GST portal is another step in our mission to offer universal banking solutions. Our aim is to ensure a quick, simple, and efficient tax payment experience. We encourage our customers to use this facility to easily pay their GST through IDFC FIRST Bank's online and branch channels". IDFC FIRST Bank is one of the select Scheduled Private Sector Banks to be authorised for GST collections, further underscoring the Bank's commitment to providing comprehensive financial services to its clients.

Mcap of nine of top-10 most valued firms erodes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nine of the top-10 most valued firms together lost a whopping Rs 4,74,906.18 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank taking the steepest hit, in line with weak trends in equities. Markets faced heavy drubbing last week amid worsening tensions in the Middle East and foreign fund outflows. In a holiday-shortened week, the BSE benchmark plummeted 3,883.4 points, or 4.53 per cent. The valuation of Reliance Industries declined Rs 1,88,479.36 crore to Rs 18,76,718.24 crore.



HDFC Bank's market valuation slumped Rs 72,919.58 crore to Rs 12,64,267.35 crore. Bharti Airtel's valuation plunged Rs 53,800.31 crore to Rs 9,34,104.32 crore and that of ICICI Bank tumbled Rs 47,461.13 crore to Rs 8,73,059.59 crore. The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) plummeted Rs 33,490.86 crore to Rs 6,14,125.65 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever

tanked Rs 27,525.46 crore to Rs 6,69,363.31 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of ITC dropped Rs 24,139.66 crore to Rs 6,29,695.06 crore and that of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) eroded by Rs 21,690.43 crore to Rs 15,37,361.57 crore. State Bank of India's valuation went lower by Rs 5,399.39 crore to Rs 7,10,934.59 crore. However, the mcap of Infosys climbed Rs 4,629.64 crore to Rs 7,96,527.08 crore. Reliance Industries retained the title of the most-valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, and LIC.

INBRIEF

LECTURE SERIES HELD AT GNDU

AMRITSAR: Jallianwala Bagh Chair of the Guru Nanak Dev University has started the lecture series on the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. Recently, it organized its first lecture on the theme "Kuln Varg di Jallianwala Bagh de Kattleam bare drishtikon di charcha".



16 RAIL COACH RESTAURANTS OPERATIONAL ACROSS NFR



MALIGAON: N. F. Railway has opened Rail Coach Restaurants across its major stations. These restaurants have been opened strategically at vacant space in the circulating area providing dining opportunity to both the rail passengers as well as general public. N. F. Railway has modified some of its discontinued coaches, which are not fit for train operation, into coach restaurants.

CLIMATE CHANGE

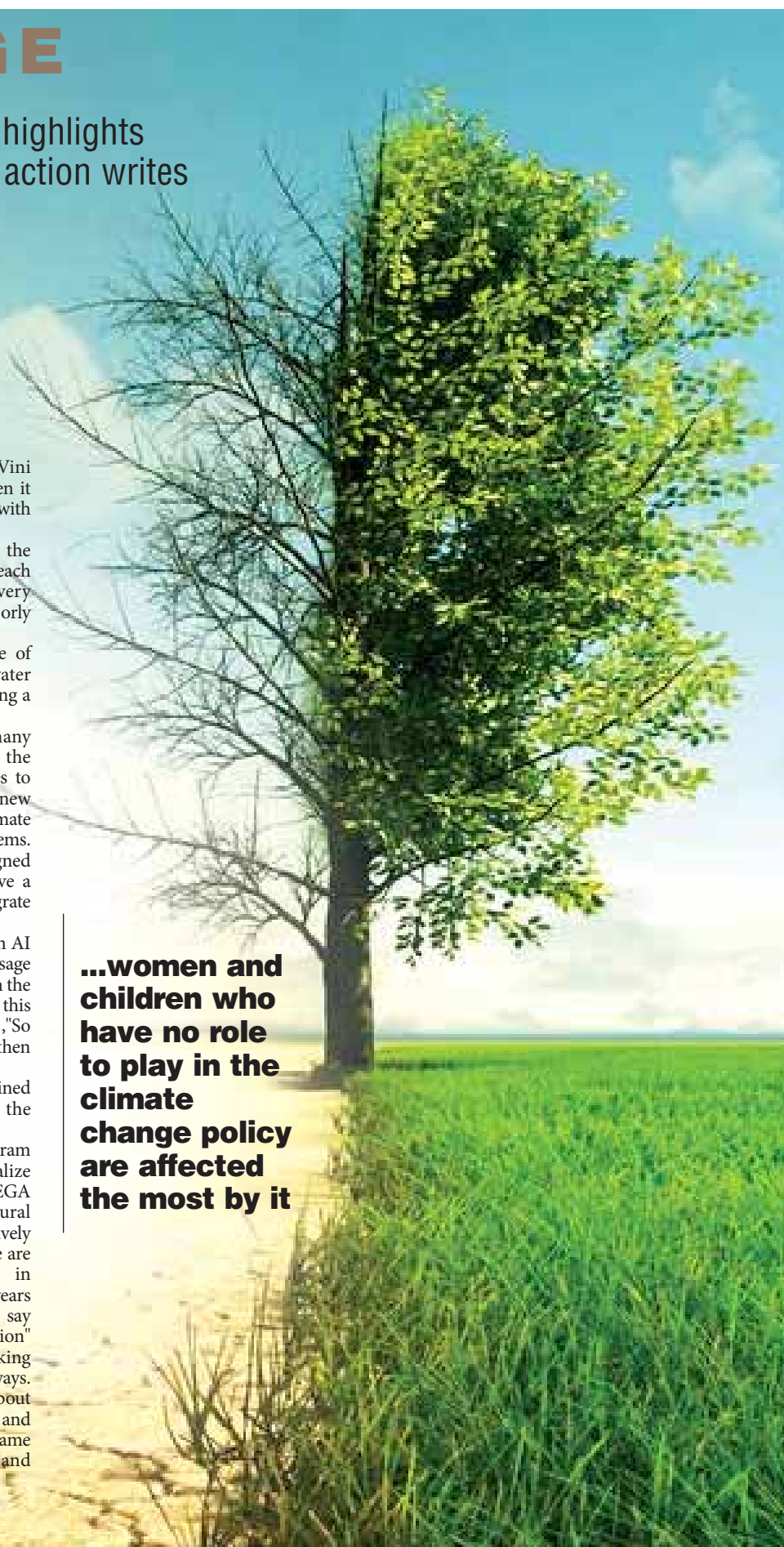
A SILENT HEALTH CRISIS

Climate change highlights urgent need for action writes
ABHI SINGHAL

When we talk about health and wellness of ones health, the obvious fact that is associated and should be adjoined with are the surroundings and the climate. The climate has been adversely been affected from the past many years, in turn affecting our health and increasing the threats. Climate needs to be addressed as a serious issue which needs to be looked into as soon as possible. To address all these issues Partnership for Impact have launched Voices for Impact. Their agenda for the discussion was Addressing Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier. This issue what discussed and had a panel discussion with Ms. Vini Mahajan, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India; Dr Aditya Bahadur, Director, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and Dr Shagun Sabarwal, Asian Regional Director, Co-Impact. The panel discussion was not just about explaining climate change but also finding a solution to the problem, understand it better, and looking at a partnership which can really have a solid impact. The discussion was more about the awareness that the climate change is a threat to health in ways people wouldn't know and it has a lot of barriers and layers which need to be solved for getting the solution to the same. The discussion also got a moment on gender inequalities and came forward was the fact that women and children who have no role to play in the climate change policy are affected the most by it. Natasha Godinho, Vice President of GHS, moderating the conversation said, "Climate change is not just a health crisis or water crisis or a whole food crisis, it's so much more, and women and children just happen to be the face of this crisis. Years of inequitable social structures and patriarchal systems have left women in a worse position than men, and the lack of access to financial resources, land ownership and property rights have meant that women are far older than men." The future of the country and if India is ready

to embrace the change in climate Vini Mahajan said, "I think we will do it when it becomes a crisis. India is great at dealing with crisis." It is important for everyone to have the knowledge of how the climate change each day with every passing heatwave, every passing disaster is affecting us and majorly our health and wellness. The panel also had a serious exchange of words to into the issue of water, water sanitation and air pollution in Delhi (being a major affect to health). Climate change was connected to many possible outcomes and solutions in the discussion. It meant that when it comes to climate, rather than thinking only about new things, we have to see that how can climate responses be integrated into current systems. So our social protection systems, are designed to target the most vulnerable. They have a huge reach in India. Can we start to integrate them is a question. Dr Shagun Sabarwal took an emphasis on AI and the big learning models, and their usage of a lot of water to keep them cool, or even the minerals that are needed. She addressed this as one of the major concerns saying that, "So to me, it's like we solve one problem and then have another problem." The significance of localisation was explained in the same regard which made the conversation even more insightful. "I feel like India's Social Protection Program also demonstrates how you can localize effectively, where funds from MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) are effectively controlled by local institutions, and there are moves to integrate climate risk in MGNREGA, which I'm confident in the years to come will be delivered. So I would say localization is a very important solution" explained Dr Aditya Bahadur on talking about policies and their effectiveness in ways. The overall conversation gave a jist about differently raised problems due to climate and the importance of speaking about the same publically to curate answers and implementing solutions.

...women and children who have no role to play in the climate change policy are affected the most by it



The Perfect Health Partner in Daily Wellness

BY **JYOTI SINGH**

In today's fast-paced world, finding balance between work, personal life, and self-care can be a daunting task. Yoga, an age-old discipline that brings harmony to the mind, body, and spirit, provides an effective way to find balance. But how do we incorporate this timeless discipline into our modern, busy lives? Here are some practical advice and guidance for integrating yoga into daily routines. How accessible and transformative yoga can be for anyone, whether you're a seasoned practitioner or a curious beginner. Yoga can fit seamlessly into your day, helping you achieve not only physical wellness but also mental clarity and peace. Yoga is not just a physical practice but a complete lifestyle. In today's world, where stress, anxiety, and physical discomfort from sedentary lifestyles are rampant, yoga offers a way to counteract these challenges. Yoga helps in developing mindfulness, building strength, and improving flexibility, but more importantly, it teaches us to breathe, be present, and balance our inner and outer worlds. Incorporating yoga into your daily life doesn't just keep you fit, it helps you handle daily stresses with more ease and grace. It all begins with intention and small steps. Start by dedicating just 10-15 minutes of your day to yoga. Even a brief yoga session can yield significant results. You don't need to carve out a large block of time; yoga can fit into your morning before work, during lunch breaks, or even in the evening to wind down. I often advise people to start with simple breathing exercises, stretches, or Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations), which engage the whole body. If time is tight, I suggest breaking it into chunks. Morning could be for deep breathing and basic stretches, while the evening could focus on a few asanas (poses) to release tension. Gradually, you can expand the time and variety of your practice. For beginners, starting with simple, yet effective poses is a key. A few asanas that I recommend include:

- **Tadasana (Mountain Pose):** A foundational standing pose that helps improve posture, balance, and concentration.
- **Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose):** This pose strengthens the back and opens up the chest, which can relieve tension from long hours at a desk.
- **Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog):** A great full-body stretch that works on the hamstrings, shoulders, and back, and also calms the mind.
- **Balāsana (Child's Pose):** A restorative pose that's excellent for relaxation and mindfulness.
- **Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing):** A breathing technique that soothes the mind and helps balance internal energy.

What makes yoga so accessible is that it requires no fancy equipment. Just a mat and a small, quiet space at home is enough to get started. Yoga is a holistic practice that impacts both the mind and body. Many people think of yoga only as a physical exercise, but its mental health benefits are equally, if not more, important. Regular practice of asanas combined with pranayama (breathing exercises) and meditation helps reduce stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression. Breathing exercises like **Anulom Vilom** and **Bhramari Pranayama** activate the parasympathetic nervous system, helping your body and mind relax. By focusing on breath and movement, yoga also fosters mindfulness, teaching us to stay present. This can prevent overthinking and help manage the pressures of daily life. Over time, yoga trains your mind to be more resilient and positive. Consistency is a key in yoga, but it's not about perfection. Life can be unpredictable, and it's natural to miss a day or two. The key is to stay motivated and not lose heart. I always advise my students to set achievable goals. Even practicing for 10 minutes a day is better than an intense 1-hour session once a week. Make it part of your routine - like brushing your teeth - so it becomes a habit, not a task. One tip that works for many people is to create a dedicated yoga space at home, however small. When you associate a certain area with yoga, it becomes easier to get into the mindset to practice. Also, try practicing at the same time every day, whether it's early morning or before bedtime. I deeply believe that every person is unique, and their yoga journey should reflect that. I don't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach. Different people come with different physical challenges, like back pain or arthritis, while others might be looking to enhance their mental health or manage stress. It takes the time to understand their goals, limitations, and lifestyle before they can design a program. For example, corporate professionals who sit at a desk all day need a practice that targets back and neck pain and helps them relax after a long day. On the other hand, an athlete might need a more rigorous, dynamic practice to build strength and flexibility. This customization ensures that yoga becomes an integral part of each individual's life, addressing their specific needs. Incorporating yoga into your daily routine is simpler than it may seem, with benefits that reach far beyond just physical well-being. By beginning with small steps, maintaining consistency, and embracing both the mental and physical advantages, you can seamlessly integrate yoga into your life and experience its transformative power. As I emphasize, "Yoga is a journey, not a destination. Begin where you are, and grow from there."

The author is a PG Diploma, MA in Yog Science and founder of Sparsh Yog.

AYURVEDA The Source of Holistic Wellness

BY **SHAHNAZ HUSAIN**

Achieving perfect health and skin cannot be done by quick fix solutions. I have observed that today's youth are obsessed with an easy to do skincare regime and quick resolution to their skin or hair related issues. However, often I like to emphasise on the importance of Ayurveda and its principles. For instance, when you have a skin concern, it is deep rooted in the imbalance and toxins within the body. Over the time when someone keeps using chemical-based products, they are prone to accumulate toxins due to the presence of harmful chemicals in the products and makeup they use. I always advocate against the use of chemical products. Redirecting the scenario to the current situation where the majority of people are using chemical laden products, I always bring their notice to our natural products based on ancient principles of Ayurveda. The nature of the internal-set up of an individual is all about the individual topology, it requires proper care. However, with prolonged use of chemical products, adverse effects are seen that damage hair and skin. It is all due to reaction to certain harmful substances. For instance, I was approached by a client for skin concern where she suffered pigmentation, I could see that it is the effect of prolonged use of chemical cosmetics that caused her skin tone to become uneven. Providing the right solution based on care and cure just like Shahnaz Husain Group products, I suggested her to use our pigmentation gel and cream. Our products are purely based on ancient principles of Ayurveda and are infused with herbs, plant extracts, essential oils and Vitamins that ensure product efficacy and safe use for any age and both the genders.

FOR EVERY SKIN AND HAIR ISSUE, THERE IS A PERFECT SOLUTION IN NATURE, IT IS AYURVEDA.

AYURVEDA FOR CARE AND CURE
After watching firsthand experience of chemical-based products, I began looking for solutions, thus began my journey with Ayurveda skincare. The ancient Indian practice of this incredible wellness Ayurveda is something that I introduced to the world,



being a pioneer in Ayurveda based skincare products, people began realising how miraculous it is. Another notable fact is that Ayurveda provides us with daily life care and cures that are relevant to all the individual's needs and their unique requirements as per their tendencies. Ayurveda can truly transform your life when you apply it.

AYURVEDA IS THE NATURAL SKINCARE
The ancient principles of Ayurveda believe that the bodily ailments are the result of accumulated toxins in our body that hinder the proper flow of Prana or the life source that is connected to our bodily movements. It highly impacts the individual on emotional, cellular, psychological and conscious levels.

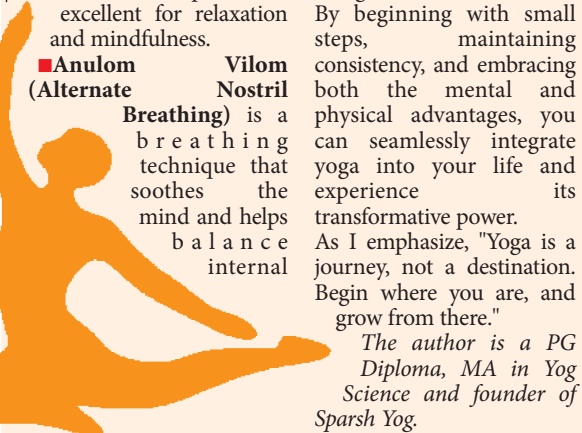
AYURVEDA FOR HEALTHY SKIN
I am a firm preacher and believer that healthy skin is beautiful skin, having said that I would like to add that Ayurveda is always at the helm of providing unique solutions to all the skin related ailments. The foundation of Shahnaz Husain Group is Ayurveda principles, the

products that we formulate at our state-of-the-art R&D units. Our products are based on the ancient Ayurveda principles and formulations that increase the potency and efficacy of skin care products, providing care and cure. We optimise the formulations with plant extracts, exotic herbs, essential oils and Vitamin extracts that are sourced ethically in the purest form capturing the essence. I like to mention that today when people are looking for quick invasive anti-ageing solutions, I have come up with a plant based natural anti-ageing solution, our entire range of Plant Stem Cell contains plant extracts, renewing the supportive tissues, restoring the youthful properties of the skin.

- KEY BENEFITS OF USING AYURVEDA SKINCARE**
- Ayurveda helps in eliminating accumulated toxins.
 - Naturally restores the skin beauty and radiance.
 - Addresses the root cause of any issue related to skin and body.
 - Improves the skin quality and texture.
 - Natural organic ingredients such as honey, aloe vera, and shea butter, etc. promote healthy skin and smooth texture.
 - Ayurveda products are cruelty-free and ethically sourced.
 - Natural skincare and cure products by Shahnaz Husain are on par with global sustainable beauty standards.

In conclusion I would like to add that Ayurveda skincare and haircare products are more like treatment products, as the principle itself is all about curative and preventive measures of healing. Investing in natural skincare is essential for your overall wellness and is the best holistic way of living in harmony with the environment and yourself.

This article is authored by **SHAHNAZ HUSAIN**, a pioneer and leader of Ayurvedic beauty care, who has achieved unprecedented international acclaim for her practical application of Ayurveda.



England aims to challenge struggling Pakistan in 1st test

AP ■ MULTAN

England is aiming to challenge struggling Pakistan with a new-look pace attack in the opening test of a three-match series, starting in the searing heat of Multan on Monday. Fast bowler Brydon Carse will make his test debut with Gus Atkinson set to play his first overseas test after his impressive home season against the West Indies and Sri Lanka. All-rounder Chris Woakes was penciled in to the starting XI after Ben Stokes was ruled out for the fourth successive test match due to ongoing rehabilitation on his injured hamstring. Woakes will be playing his first match in two-and-a-half years and it will be his first test in Asia since 2016. Carse's pace gave him the edge over Ollie Stone and Matthew Potts for the tour of Pakistan and England hopes the Durham pace bowler will challenge the batters by regularly clocking over

90mph. England will be led by Ollie Pope, who guided the team to a 2-1 home series against Sri Lanka in the absence of the injured Stokes. The England captain sustained his hamstring injury during the Hundred and might return to lead the side in the second test, also in Multan. "I was kind of just learning on the job," Pope said. "Obviously my first time captain abroad. Ben's going to be around as well... so I can listen to the voices around me but still keep doing things in my way." England flattened Pakistan 3-0 through its high-risk, high-reward "Bazball" approach during the 2022 tour when it played at Multan, Karachi and Rawalpindi. They were scheduled to play at the same venues this time around, but renovation work at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi for next year's Champions Trophy forced the Pakistan Cricket Board to organize back-to-back tests at Multan with Rawalpindi set to



host the third test from Oct. 24. England also named spinners Jack Leach and Shoaib Bashir in the playing XI in anticipation of the pitch flattening out in temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius that are expected over the next week in Multan. Leach was the second highest wicket-taker in the last series in Pakistan with 15 wickets. "Everyone's so happy to have Leach in and around the squad for this series," Pope said. "We obviously saw how well he bowled last time here on pitches that (are) always offering a great deal... And he's worked closely with Shoaib Bashir throughout his Somerset career and those guys go really well." Pakistan has strengthened its batting line-up by including all-rounder Aamer Jamal for the first test after being routed 2-0 by Bangladesh at home in the last series. Shan Masood has lost all five test matches since he was elevated to red-ball captain. Masood lost 3-0 to Australia in

his debut series as test skipper when Jamal took 18 wickets and came in handy as a batter down the order. Jamal missed the series against Bangladesh because he was undergoing rehabilitation on a back injury. "We have got an edge with the return of Aamer Jamal," Masood said. "He also bats down the order and picked up 18 wickets. We have (leg-spinner) Abrar and (off-spinner) Salman to give us spin options." Pakistan has a woeful record in home test matches and hasn't won at home since beating South Africa 2-0 in early 2021, while losing to England, Australia and Bangladesh. New Zealand also came close, but Pakistan managed to draw the series 0-0. Pakistan had its moments to beat England when both teams last met at Multan two years ago. Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed made an impressive debut by grabbing 11 wickets before Pakistan narrowly lost by 26 runs when Mark Wood, missing in this series due to

injury, claimed the key wicket of Saud Shakeel. "It was my dream debut and last time we lost quite close," Abrar said on the eve of the first test. "I hope to give a match-winning performance this time around and bring some happy moments." Pakistan's top-order batters have long been struggling and premier batter Babar Azam hasn't scored a half-century in his last 16 test innings. Opener Abdullah Shafique also struggled against Bangladesh while Masood couldn't convert starts into big scores with only one half-century in four innings. But Masood insisted Pakistan needed to give its struggling batters a longer run as he searched to win key moments and find momentum in the series against aggressive England. "We came close to winning last time, but we let the matches slip away," Masood said. "We know how they play, but at the end of the day we have to see how to tackle it."

Gauff rallies to reach China Open final

AP ■ BEIJING

Coco Gauff rallied from a set down for the third consecutive match as she beat Paula Badosa 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 to reach the China Open final on Saturday. The sixth-ranked Gauff will play Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic in Sunday's final. Muchova defeated Olympic gold medalist Zheng Qinwen 6-3, 6-4 in the other semifinal. Gauff, who has a 7-1 record in tour finals, has made a habit of slow starts in Beijing this week and the script played out again as the No. 19-ranked Badosa took a tight opening set, saving 10 of 11 break points. The Spaniard then built a 3-1 lead in the second set before 2023 U.S. Open champion Gauff shifted the momentum by saving four break points and then breaking back to level at 4-4. Gauff held for 5-4 and broke Badosa again to force a deciding set. "I felt like I was playing the right way the whole time, just a couple of unforced errors, she was playing well too," Gauff said on court. "I was trying to stay focused. Mentally, I just tried to reset. I got down a couple of times, and I tried to bounce back." With all the momentum, Gauff broke Badosa three more times - for the loss of one of her own - as she clinched the match in 2 hours, 20 minutes. Gauff also lost the first set to Naomi Osaka in the fourth round before winning by walkover and against No. 115-ranked Yuliia Starodubtseva in the quarterfinals. "I've had tough opponents the whole tournament," Gauff said. Shanghai Masters Carlos Alcaraz and top-ranked Jannik Sinner showed no



signs of fatigue from their second major of the year, fired 12 aces and 38 winners. "I felt quite comfortable today," said Sinner, who next plays Tomas Martin Etcheverry of Argentina. "I feel in good shape, which is very important for me. I was serving really, really well, especially in important moments, and was moving well." Third-ranked Alexander Zverev began with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Italian qualifier Mattia Bellucci, while fourth-ranked Novak Djokovic had a tougher task prevailing 7-6 (3), 7-6 (9) over Alex Michelsen of the United States. No. 65-ranked Jakub Mensik of the Czech Republic broke sixth-ranked Andrey Rublev seven times on his way to an upset 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-3 victory. Yosuke Watanuki also surprised by beating No. 35-ranked Brendan Nakashima 7-6 (4), 6-3. The Japanese qualifier next plays seventh-ranked Taylor Fritz of the U.S. Global Chess League: Alaskan Knights stay unbeaten; Ganges break losing streak

losing the second to Ganges Grandmasters. Triveni remained in second place with six match points and 43 game points, just six behind the leaders. Alpine Sg Pipers also impressed, defeating UpGrad Mumba Masters 12-4. They now sit in third place with six match points, though their 27 game points from three matches leave them behind Triveni. UpGrad Mumba Masters, in fourth place, have only one win from four matches and 29 game points after losing to the Pipers. Big upset The final match saw the surprise of the day with Ganges Grandmasters, led by former World Champion Vishwanathan Anand,

Global Chess League: Alaskan Knights stay unbeaten; Ganges break losing streak

PTI ■ LONDON

PBS Alaskan Knights continued their unbeaten run, while Ganges Grandmasters secured their first win in a dramatic day three of the Tech Mahindra Global Chess League here. The PBS Alaskan Knights extended their lead with a dominant 12-3 win over the Ganges Grandmasters, maintaining a perfect record with four consecutive victories, earning them 12 match points and 49 game points. Defending champions Triveni Continental Kings played two matches on Saturday -- winning the first 15-3 against American Gambits, where Alireza Firouzja defeated world number two Hikaru Nakamura, but narrowly

losing the second to Ganges Grandmasters. Triveni remained in second place with six match points and 43 game points, just six behind the leaders. Alpine Sg Pipers also impressed, defeating UpGrad Mumba Masters 12-4. They now sit in third place with six match points, though their 27 game points from three matches leave them behind Triveni. UpGrad Mumba Masters, in fourth place, have only one win from four matches and 29 game points after losing to the Pipers. Big upset The final match saw the surprise of the day with Ganges Grandmasters, led by former World Champion Vishwanathan Anand,

finally breaking their losing streak with a 10-8 win over Triveni. With one win and 24 game points from four matches, they now sit in fifth place. Hikaru Nakamura's American Gambits are in last place, with only one match victory and 16 game points from three matches, having been dismantled 15-3 by Triveni. Anand's team, desperate for their first victory after three crushing defeats, was under immense pressure. Already reeling from an earlier loss in the day, Anand had to rally his team, using his authority as a former world champion to lift their spirits. But no pep talk could help on the board, where players had to prove they could outmanoeuvre their

opponents. After the coin toss, Triveni played with the white pieces, putting Anand on the back foot as Black against Alireza Firouzja. The young French star steadily built-up pressure, and by move 22, had a winning position. Despite Anand's best efforts to resist, he eventually had to concede defeat, giving the lead to Triveni. Firouzja's stellar form continued, having defeated three giants -- Carlsen, Anand, and Nakamura -- over the past two days. Meanwhile, Ganges' Arjun Erigaisi settled for a fourth consecutive draw, splitting the point with Wei Yi, a further sign of his struggling form. Triveni extended their lead when Alexandra Kosteniuk

beat Vaishali Rameshbabu. However, Parham Maghsoodloo, who had blundered a winning position in the previous match, redeemed himself with a key victory over Teimour Radjabov, keeping Ganges in the fight. With the junior board ending in a draw, the fate of the match rested on Valentina Gunina and Nurgul Salimova. In a drawn position, Gunina pushed too hard despite her team being ahead. She eventually lost on time, handing Ganges the crucial four points they needed to pull off their first win of the tournament. The final score of the match was 10-8, for Ganges.

Amir Ali to lead Indian Jr hockey team in Sreejesh's coaching debut

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Amir Ali has been named captain, with Rohit as his deputy, in the 18-member junior hockey squad for the Sultan of Johor Cup that will mark the first assignment for head coach PR Sreejesh in Malaysia from October 19. India will begin their campaign against Japan on October 19, followed by matches against Great Britain (October 20), hosts Malaysia (Oct 22), Australia (Oct 23) and New Zealand (Oct 25). The top two teams will make the final slated for October 26. Defender Amir Ali and forward Gurjot Singh were part of the senior team that defended their title at the Asian Champions Trophy in Moqi, China. Amir seamlessly filled in for the injured defender Sanjay during the tournament, while Gurjot led the forward line, showcasing immense potential. "The Sultan of Johor Cup is



an important tournament in our calendar as always. The tournament will serve as a litmus test for the team

ahead of the Men's Junior Asia Cup Muscat 2024 in November this year," captain Ali stated in a Hockey India

release. "All the players are excited to play some intense hockey matches in Malaysia."

Vice-captain Rohit expressed enthusiasm at being coached by Sreejesh, saying, "We have an Indian hockey legend taking charge of the team, the whole team is raring to go. PR Sreejesh is one of the most experienced players to play for India, and we look forward to making him proud in our first tournament. "The mood in the camp has been excellent and we want to capitalise on this by showcasing our potential at the Sultan of Johor Cup." Squad: Goalkeepers: Bikramjit Singh, Ali Khan Defenders: Amir Ali (C), Talem Priyobarta, Shardanand Tiwari, Sukhvinder, Anmol Ekka, Rohit (VC) Midfielders: Ankit Pal, Manmeet Singh, Rosan Kujur, Mukesh Toppo, Chandan Yadav Forwards: Gurjot Singh, Sourabh Anand Kushwaha, Dilraj Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Mohd. Konain Dad.

Underdogs strike as Bayern rivals Leverkusen and Dortmund drop points in Bundesliga

AP ■ Berlin

Bayern Munich won without playing on Saturday as Bundesliga rivals Bayer Leverkusen and Borussia Dortmund dropped points to modest opponents. Dortmund slumped at Union Berlin to a 2-1 defeat without injured forward Karim Adeyemi, who starred in the team's 7-1 rout of Celtic in the Champions League on Tuesday. Defending champion Leverkusen squandered an early two-goal lead over promoted Holstein Kiel and drew 2-2. It was only Kiel's second point in its debut top-flight season. Leverkusen played in a special black jersey with red trim to commemorate the club's 120th anniversary, and for Xabi Alonso it was

also a special occasion - the Spanish coach took over exactly two years before. Leverkusen fans didn't have to wait long to celebrate after Victor Boniface opened the scoring in the fourth minute and Jonas Hofmann made it 2-0 four minutes after that. Leverkusen looked set for a rout. But the home team failed to make more of its dominance - Boniface had another goal ruled out for offside and Kiel secured a lifeline before the break when Max Geschwil scored after a corner. Fiete Arp scored an unlikely equalizer from the penalty spot in the 69th. "I wouldn't say arrogance, but I'd say there's a bit of complacency. We need to stay concentrated, because we want to be a better team," Alonso said.



"We could win a few games, and not win a few games, up and down, but that's not our goal. Today we didn't have the best competitive mindset." Dortmund disappoints Union illustrated early on against Dortmund why it's the club with one of the most ineffective forward lines in the league. The Kopenick-based team had only four goals from its opening five games. Former Union player Nico Schlotterbeck offered assistance by conceding a penalty with a foul on the lively Benedict Hollerbach, and Kevin Vogt duly scored the opener from the spot in the 25th. The home team kept pushing and got its due reward before the break when Yorbe Vertessen let fly

through a host of players for 2-0. Early in the second half, masked Union ultras displayed an array of Dortmund scarves and banners presumably confiscated from their rivals before the game. They hung the tattered flags on the railings behind one of the goals and raised their fists, goading the Dortmund fans far away on the other side. Former Union player Julien Ryerson responded on the field in the 62nd by firing inside the far post for 2-1, set up by Julian Brandt after a period of pressure from the visitors but it wasn't enough. Also, Freiburg won at Werder Bremen 1-0, and Wolfsburg enjoyed a 3-1 win in Wolfsburg.