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CHANGES STANCE TO NEUTRAL

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Congress practises politics of hate: PM

T N RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI:

Fresh from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) record third consecutive win in the Assembly polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday went hammers and tongs at the Opposition Congress, accusing it of practising "politics of hatred" in its desperate bid to return to power. Dubbing the Congress as the "most irresponsible" party, Modi charged that the grand old party devised its winning formula by dividing the Hindu community and spreading seeds of poison in the society to consolidate its voter banks. Inaugurating 10 government medical colleges across the state and laying foundation stone for Rs 7600- crore projects through video-conferencing from New Delhi, Modi said that the Congress practised divisive politics to win elections and it had become a most "irresponsible party" which was coming up with 'new narratives to divide the country'.



Congress 'analysing' Haryana disaster

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said the party was analysing the "unexpected" results in Haryana and will apprise the Election Commission about complaints received from various constituencies of the state. In his first reaction after the defeat in Haryana, the former Congress president also thanked the people of Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir for their support. "My heartfelt thanks to the people of Jammu and Kashmir - INDIA's victory in the state is a victory of the Constitution, a victory of democratic self-respect," he said. The BJP on Tuesday clinched a stunning hat-trick win in Haryana overcoming anti-incumbency and dashing Congress' hopes of a comeback while the National Conference-Congress combine pulled off a spectacular victory in maiden elections in Jammu and Kashmir after abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.



Who will be Haryana CM?

Nayab Singh Saini meets party bosses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) retained power for the third time in Haryana Assembly elections, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his 7, Lok Kalyan Marg residence in Delhi and top leadership of the party on Wednesday. Saini also met Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and BJP president JP Nadda. After meeting with Saini, Modi said on X that he congratulated Saini on the party's historic win and expressed confidence that the role of Haryana will become more important in the resolve of building 'viksit Bharat'. People aware of the developments said that while it was a courtesy call made to the Prime Minister by Saini, the formation of the next government in the state would have also been discussed. The meeting came amid the possibility of Nayab Singh Saini being asked to continue in his post after the BJP's success in Haryana, where it won a majority with 48 of 90 Assembly seats.

The BJP had indicated during the elections that Saini, who replaced Manohar Lal Khattar in March and hails from the Other Backward Classes, will be its choice for the top post if it wins. Senior BJP leader Anil Vij is also eying for the chief ministerial post. Sources in the Haryana BJP said that important issues, including the date and venue for the swearing-in ceremony of the new government, had to be discussed. The BJP leaders had earlier indicated that it would take place on Dussehra on Saturday. Later they indicated that the grand victory ceremony would take place after Dussehra. The venue is yet to be decided. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Saini credited Modi's policies for the party's success. Terming his meeting with the PM as a courtesy call, Saini said, "I have told Pradhan Mantri ji about the landslide victory of BJP in Haryana. I told him that the people of Haryana have a lot of affection for you which resulted in the formation of the double-engine government in Haryana for the third time."

Will demand restoration of statehood: Omar Abdullah

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After winning a historic mandate in the first Assembly polls, held after the Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A, National Conference Vice-President Omar Abdullah Wednesday set the agenda of the incoming government by announcing that the alliance government will pass a resolution demanding the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood in its first Cabinet meeting. Omar also claimed his party would keep the issue of restoration of Article 370 alive and continue to raise it. He shared his thoughts with the media, assembled at his residence, where a large number of party workers and elected public representatives converged on Wednesday to celebrate their party's big victory in the assembly elections. A delegation of the Congress party led by Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Chief Tariq Hamid Karra and All India Congress Committee (AICC) incharge Bhartsinh Solanki also visited the residence of Dr Farooq Abdullah and greeted him. Listing out the priorities of the incoming government in office, Omar told reporters, "My suggestion to the incoming government will be that the first business of the cabinet should be to pass a resolution asking for statehood to be restored to J&K and the CM should travel to New Delhi with that resolution. Call on the senior leadership of the country and ask them to fulfil their promise. It is the Prime Minister, Home Minister and others who have promised the people of J&K statehood. Nowhere did they say that statehood would be restored



Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) President Farooq Abdullah with his son and party Vice President Omar Abdullah during celebrations after the victory of JKNC-Congress alliance in the J&K Assembly elections at their residence, in Srinagar, Wednesday

only to a BJP government or a government that has BJP members. They said the statehood would be restored to J&K and that is what we hope will be done." Responding to a question related to his party's stand on the issue of Article 370 Omar said, "Our political stand will not change. We have never said that we will remain silent on Article 370 or that Article 370 is not an issue for us now. I have said this many times before the elections that hoping for the restoration of Article 370 from the people who snatched it will be foolish." "But we will keep this issue alive. We will continue to talk on this and hope that tomorrow there will be a change of government in the country, there will be a new setup with whom we can discuss this and get something for J&K," he added.

RBI maintains repo rate at 6.5 per cent

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its key interest rate unchanged on Wednesday but took the first step towards a rate cut as it eased its relatively hawkish policy stance to 'neutral'. The monetary policy committee, which included three RBI officials and an equal number of new external members, voted five-to-one to keep the benchmark repo rate at 6.5 per cent, which governs the interest rate of home, auto, corporate and other loans - at 6.5 per cent for a 10th straight policy meeting. The panel, however, unanimously decided to change the policy stance to 'neutral' - the first since June 2019 - from 'withdrawal' of accommodation amid signs of a slowing economy. Interest rates were last changed in February 2023 when they were hiked to 6.5 per cent from 6.25 per cent. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the committee changed the stance but will remain unambiguously focused on the durable alignment of inflation to target while supporting growth. Food inflation, he said, may ease in coming months, while the core inflation, which excludes the volatile food and energy costs, appears to have bottomed out. India's economic growth outlook remained intact, with private consumption and



investment growing in tandem. The change of stance signals a possible move to cut interest rates in forthcoming MPC meetings, the next being due in early December. The RBI will join other central banks in a policy pivot that was led by the US Federal Reserve easing rates last month. Annual retail inflation eased below the central bank's target of four per cent for a second consecutive month in September and will, as per RBI expectation, rebound again this month, largely due to base effects. The RBI kept its inflation forecast unchanged at 4.5 per cent for the 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) fiscal year. It also kept its GDP forecast unchanged at 7.2 per cent. Das said the prevailing and expected inflation-growth balance has created conditions for a shift in the monetary policy stance as there now is greater confidence on the last mile of disinflation.

Detailed story on page 10

Missing soldier's body recovered

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

While several parts of Kashmir were witnessing celebrations to mark the victory of the National Conference (NC) candidates in the recently held Assembly polls, a pall of gloom descended upon the residence of a missing soldier hailing from the Nowgam area of Anantnag. His bullet-ridden body was recovered from the forest area of Pathribal on Wednesday. The soldier went missing during a counter-terrorist operation launched in the forest area of Kokernag in Anantnag on October 8.



In a post on social media platform X, Army's Srinagar-based Chinari Corps said, "Based on intelligence input, a joint counter-terrorist operation was launched by the Indian Army along with Jammu and Kashmir Police and other agencies in Kazwan Forest in Kokernag on October 8."

Delhi Chief Minister's bungalow awaits new occupant

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Chief Minister's official bungalow, rather the lack of one at the moment, has sparked yet another verbal clash between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Delhi Chief Minister's official residence at 6 Flag Staff Road, Civil Lines is now an issue over which both parties are launching allegations and documents to support their case. In yet another round of Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vs CM,

the Chief Minister's Office on Wednesday alleged that "Delhi Chief Minister's residence was forcibly vacated at the behest of the BJP as Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, who wants to allot to BJP leader. The bungalow was sealed by the Public Works Department on Wednesday," the CMO stated. The Public Works Department (PWD) said that after Arvind Kejriwal vacated the residence, the keys were supposed to be given to it, instead they were directly given to Atishi. Earlier, the CMO alleged that



India's Nitish Kumar Reddy plays a shot during the second T20 International cricket match between India and Bangladesh at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, in New Delhi, Wednesday



Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena got all the belongings of CM Atishi removed from the official residence at Flag Staff Road bungalow at the behest of the BJP as he wants to allot it to a saffron party leader. Reacting to the CMO's allegations, sources at Raj Niwas said that the bungalow was never earmarked for the official residence of the Chief Minister of Delhi. "The 'owner' of this house is the PWD. The PWD only takes possession of the house when it becomes vacant, makes its inventory and then

duly allocates it" sources said. "Former CM Arvind Kejriwal pretended to vacate the house but did not give possession of the house to the PWD. What were you hiding? This house has not been allotted to CM Atishi yet and her allotted residence is still 17 AB Mathura Road. How did the two houses get allotted? CM Atishi herself kept her belongings in that house without allotment and then removed it herself. This bungalow will be allotted to the CM immediately after duly preparing the inventory," the sources added.



In Central Delhi, traffic jams have a ripple effect

When the main roads become clogged, traffic trickles into the service lanes

A surge in heavy public movement due to the ongoing Navratri festival was supplemented by the T 20 match between India and Bangladesh at Arun Jaitley cricket stadium on Wednesday. Adding to the vehicular traffic were sport fans who trekked on foot to reach the stadium on time, as well as early bird vendors who set up small stalls before the match began. When the main roads became clogged, traffic trickled into the service lanes. The massive traffic clogged Delhi for the seventh day on Wednesday with thousands of motorists having to negotiate heavy congestion on the city's

arterial roads, in most parts of the capital mostly in South, Central and East Delhi during the day. Traffic was affected during the peak hours on Rajghat, Delhi Gate, ITO, Tilak Bridge, Mandi House, IP flyover crossing, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, Tilak Marg, Mathura Road, Darya Ganj, Netaji Subhash Marg, Kashmir Gate, Asad Ali Road, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg and Shanti Van marg due to India - Bangladesh T 20 cricket match at Arun Jaitley stadium, till late on Wednesday night. In its advisory, the traffic police had asked commuters to avoid the



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg from Delhi Gate to ITO Chowk and JLN Marg from Rajghat to Delhi Gate from 5 PM to 11:30 PM IST. Besides, breakdown of buses during the peak hours and constructions on roads have added to the congestion on several stretches. Repair work carried out by the Indraprastha Gas Limited on Ring Road in the carriageway from ISBT towards Hanuman Setu near Nigam Bodh Ghat also added to the commuters' woes. Meanwhile, traffic continued to be affected on Rohtak Road in the carriageway from Nangloi towards Tikri Border and vice versa due to potholes and water

logging. "Moreover, a loaded trolley has also overturned under Mundka Metro Station in the carriageway from Tikri Border to Peeragarhi. Kindly avoid Mundka and take alternate routes accordingly", traffic police posted an advisory on X. A cluster bus broke down on MB Road in the carriageway from Pul Prahladpur towards Badarpur near Railway Bridge which caused traffic snarl during the peak hours. Slow-moving traffic is also seen at other key locations, such as Mahipalpur, Vasant Kunj, Kapashera and Dhawla Kuan, due to ongoing construction.



38th National Games to commence from Jan 28 in Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The 38th National Games to be hosted by Uttarakhand will be held from January 28, 2025 to February 14, 2025 in the State.

The final decision on the dates of the much awaited sports event in the State was reached in a meeting of chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and the president of Indian Olympic Association (IOA), P T Usha in New Delhi on Wednesday.

It was also decided that Uttarakhand will also host winter national games.

Expressing gratitude to IOA president, P T Usha, the CM said that it is a matter of great pride that Uttarakhand has been bestowed with an opportunity to host 38th National Games. The CM also invited Usha to visit Badrinath and Kedarnath shrines. He said that the State is ready to host the National Games and the necessary infrastructure for the event has been developed. The CM



averted that the National Games will be organized in a grand manner. He assured that best facilities will be provided to the sportspersons visiting the State from all parts of the country for the games. The CM added that the organization of the games will enhance the morale of the sportspersons of the State

and provide them a very good platform.

Special principal secretary Amit Sinha and resident commissioner of the State Ajay Mishra accompanied the CM.

Expressing happiness on the announcement of the dates of the National Games,

the sports minister Rekha Arya said that all the State is ready for successful holding of the games. She said that the organization of the National Games is a golden opportunity for the players of the State and the games will give a new dimension to the sports infrastructure in the State.

U'khand Police seeks cyber crime solutions from 5 States after recent cyber attack

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Following a recent cyber-attack on several Uttarakhand government websites, the officiating director general of police, Abhinav Kumar, has reached out to his counterparts in five states in an effort to strengthen Uttarakhand's cybercrime response system. In a significant move to combat the rising threat of cybercrimes, Kumar wrote to the DGPs of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, seeking detailed information on the steps being taken to control cybercrimes in their respective states.

In the letter, Kumar specifically asked for a comprehensive overview of the cybercrimes that have been registered in these states over the last three years. He sought details of offenses filed under



the Information Technology Act, 2000, as well as other relevant sections. By analysing this data, the Uttarakhand Police hopes to conduct a comparative study that could shed light on trends and tactics used by cybercriminals across regions, which could, in turn, help to improve its own strategies. Besides this, Kumar also requested detailed information about the infrastructure

that has been set up in these states to combat cybercrimes. This includes the establishment of dedicated cybercrime units at the police station, district and state levels, the number of personnel trained specifically to deal with such offenses and the availability of technical resources. Kumar sought to understand the protocols these states have in place for dealing with significant cyber inci-

dents, such as attacks on critical infrastructure, data breaches, and ransomware attacks. Information on crisis management teams and collaborations with private sector experts or national agencies were also part of the request.

The insights from these states will guide Uttarakhand in building a more robust infrastructure that can better handle the complexities of modern cybercrimes, the DGP said. Kumar stated that this initiative is a part of the Police department's broader strategy to ensure the safety and security of the State's digital infrastructure. He expressed confidence that the cooperation between these states would lead to a stronger collective response to the ever-evolving cyber threats facing India.

Two arrested for spitting into tea in Mussoorie

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Police arrested two men for reportedly spitting into a tea utensil while preparing tea near Library Chowk in Mussoorie. The accused, identified as Naushad and Hasan Ali, attempted to not only endanger public health but also provoke religious sentiments through their actions, the Dehradun senior superintendent of police Ajai Singh said. The incident came to light when Himanshu Bishnoi, a resident of Nehrugram in Raipur block, Dehradun, filed a complaint at the Mussoorie police station. The SSP said that Bishnoi had recorded a video near the Library Chowk in Mussoorie last week, where he noticed two men running a roadside stall selling tea, Maggi and other items. In the video, one of the men can be seen repeatedly spitting into the tea utensils before preparing the beverages. Singh said that based on Bishnoi's complaint, a case was registered under relevant sections. The SSP formed a special team to



locate and apprehend the culprits. The police investigation revealed that the two men, Naushad and Hasan Ali, are originally from Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, and had fled Mussoorie following the incident. He said, "Utilising surveillance techniques and informant networks, the police traced the accused to Asharodi and arrested them there on Wednesday. The police are now interrogating them to gather further details about the

incident and determine any potential motives. Both accused were currently residing in Gaddi Khana, near Library Chowk in Mussoorie." The SSP said that such actions which harm public health and disturb social harmony will not be tolerated. He also said that the police are also investigating the matter in which a man was accused of spitting on food in an eatery located near Inamullah building in Dehradun.

FDA to waive off registration fee of food vendors in U'khand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) department has decided to implement the order of the Union government in which fee waiver will be given to the street food vendors seeking food licenses.

The Commissioner FDA, R Rajesh Kumar said that the department charges annual fees from the food vendors and recently the union government has decided to give an exemption to the vendors from the registration fees. He said that the date of registration fee exemption has become effective in the State from September 28. Kumar added that the department has also decided to give food licenses for a period of five years.

The Commissioner informed that in view of the ongoing festival season the



department has decided to undertake an extensive campaign in the State. Kumar said that on the orders of chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and health minister Dhan Singh Rawat the department has undertaken a drive against

food adulteration.

He said that the samples of food items are being collected by the department in all parts of the State. Kumar averted that strict action will be taken against the guilty. He said that during the festival season the cases of food adulteration increase.

The additional commissioner FDA, Tajber Jaggi said that during the drive the food items at all the establishments including malls will be checked. He said that the designated officers have been asked to curtail adulterations. He said that the objective of the department is to provide pure and adulteration free food products to the consumers.

Congress confused on Uniform Civil Code in U'khand: BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State media in-charge of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Manvir Singh Chauhan has said that there is huge enthusiasm in the people of the State on Uniform Civil Code (UCC) but the opposition Congress and its allies are confused on the subject.

He said that the Congress party has always adopted a negative attitude towards any process of reform and development and has always remained negative on UCC. Chauhan asked- when efforts are being made to give equal rights to all the residents of the State then why Congress is having problems.

He said that the Congress has always unleashed propaganda against the UCC based on the reservations the Muslim community have towards it.

He said that the Congress always boycotted the meetings convened by the UCC

expert committee which proves that it did not want to antagonise those opposing this law.

The BJP leader said that all the provisions in the UCC bill drafted by the Uttarakhand government are in accordance with the constitution and were finalized after thorough study. The expert committee convened more than 30 meetings, held 43 Jan Samvad programmes and took suggestions from 2.33 lakh people. The law gives equal rights to all the citizens and removes disparity based on religion and caste. Chauhan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced from the ramparts of the Red Fort that a secular civil code will be implemented in the country which is a stamp of approval on the UCC of Uttarakhand.

In many of its decisions the Supreme Court (SC) has advocated similar law for all the citizens of the country.

CS stresses on quality in reconstruction works under SDRF

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The chief secretary Radha Raturi has instructed the officers concerned to prioritise quality and timeliness in

meeting held here on Wednesday.

In the meeting the CS



various protective and reconstruction works being done under the State Disaster Mitigation Fund during a

emphasised the need for regular channelisation of rivers and flood protection works. She also instructed officials to

prioritise the safety of the population in vulnerable areas, ensuring the safety of embankments and taking immediate action at erosion sites. Further, she urged officers to conduct regular ground-level inspections.

Raturi approved protective works for the damaged Kedarnath Yatra route under the SDRF, erosion protection schemes in various villages, flood protection works at a powerhouse and protective works for saving populations in some villages. Moreover, approval was given to various proposals, including a flood protection plan involving Bagul river in the meeting.

STF arrests wildlife trafficker in Uttarkashi, seizes two leopard pelts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand Special Task Force (STF) arrested a notorious wildlife trafficker from Uttarkashi and seized two leopard pelts in a significant operation to curb illegal wildlife trade. Acting on a tip-off from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Delhi, the STF apprehended the suspect in the Purola area of Uttarkashi district on Tuesday, the STF superintendent of police Chandra Mohan Singh said. The suspect, identified as Brijmohan (30) hails from Gangar village, Mori tehsil, Uttarkashi. The seized leopard pelts measured approximately six feet and eight feet in length respectively. Singh stated that this arrest was part of a larger operation against illegal wildlife trafficking in the country.



The operation was executed after WCCB from Delhi provided critical intelligence regarding the illegal trade of wildlife organs and pelts in the Purola region. The STF, using its local sources, developed this information, which led to the arrest near Lisa Bhandar junction. According to Singh, leopard hunting is a serious crime as the species is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act. A case has been registered under the Wildlife Act

to report any suspicious activities related to wildlife trafficking to the nearest police station or directly to the STF Uttarakhand at 01352656202.

The STF is also coordinating with the Forest department to determine if others are involved in this wildlife trafficking network.

The STF is also coordinating with the Forest department to determine if others are involved in this wildlife trafficking network.



The members of Bengali community celebrating Durga Puja in Dehradun in Wednesday. **Pioneer Photo**

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|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
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Date: 09.10.2024 Place: Srinagar Authorised Officer, Bank of India

Congress demands EVM probe in Haryana polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday demanded a thorough probe into "discrepancies" found in some Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) during the counting of votes of the Haryana assembly polls and demanded that such EVMs should be sealed and secured pending the inquiry. Earlier, Election Commission, in a letter addressed to the Congress Chief Mallikarjun Kharge, noted the statements of Congress leaders and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, who called the results of the Haryana polls "unexpected" and proposed to analyse the polls. "Proceeding on a fair assumption that the statement of the Party President is the formal party position on the electoral outcome, the ECI has agreed to meet the delegation today at 6 PM," the letter reads. A delegation of top Congress leaders comprising former chief ministers Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Ashok Gehlot and AICC leaders K C Venugopal, Jairam



Ramesh, Ajay Maken and Pawan Khara, besides Haryana Congress chief Uday Bhan, met with top Election Commission officials in the evening. The delegation handed over a memorandum to the officials along with specific complaints from various constituencies in Haryana. Senior party leader Abhishek Singhvi joined the meeting online. The Congress leaders alleged that there are at least 20 such complaints, including seven in writing, from as many assembly constituencies, with many referring to EVMs functioning at 99 per cent battery capacity whereas the average EVMs were found to be operating at 60 to 70 per cent

battery capacity during counting. The party has alleged "glaring discrepancies" related to some EVMs in the Haryana polls and urged the EC to conduct a probe. "There are doubts about vote counting as Haryana results are surprising. Everyone believed that the Congress would be forming the next government in Haryana. When the counting of postal ballots took place, the Congress was winning, but when the counting of EVMs started, the opposite happened," former chief minister Hooda told reporters after the meeting. He said the Congress will submit more complaints to the EC in the next few days. "The EC has assured

us of looking into the matter," Hooda said after meeting the CEC and other election commissioners. Bhan also said that doubts have been created about the veracity of the counting exercise in Haryana and they should be cleared by the EC. Khara said party leaders Maken and Singhvi have urged the EC to conduct a thorough probe, pending which it should ensure that the EVMs with discrepancies are sealed and secured till then. "We apprised the Election Commission about 20 complaints that have come to us, including seven written complaints from seven constituencies with some EVM machines functioning at 99 per cent battery capacity, while some EVM Machines were functioning below 60-70 per cent battery capacity," he said. aken and Singhvi have demanded that the EVMs for which complaints have been made be sealed and secured till the inquiry into the whole matter is completed. We also told the EC that in the next 48 hours, we will make available to them other complaints that

are being compiled. "All the machines for which complaints have been made should be sealed and secured till the inquiry is completed. The EC has told us that they will give a written reply to us on all constituencies after consulting the respective returning officers," Khara added. "Counting of votes in a fair, transparent and accountable manner is the hallmark of any electoral process that claims to be in consonance with the principles of free and fair elections and the doctrine of the level-playing field as envisaged by the Constitution," the party memorandum to the EC said. "Considering that the said issue could potentially alter the results for some Assembly constituencies, we request that this Hon'ble Commission take urgent measures and order for an enquiry on this issue. In fact, subject to the enquiry report, the Hon'ble Commission should issue requisite directions regarding the counting of polls and final results," it also said.

Mayawati criticises Jat votes shift in Haryana polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Mayawati on Wednesday rued that the Jat community in Haryana did not vote for her party in the assembly polls and felt there was a need to change their mindset about Dalits. In the national capital to observe the death anniversary of party founder Kanshi Ram, she lamented that the BSP's alliance with the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) did not bear fruits for her party. Mayawati said in a bid to defeat the BJP and to keep it out of power, the Jat community in Haryana voted for the Congress but in the process ditched the BSP. While the Dalit votes shifted to the INLD, the Jat votes did not come to her party. "BSP candidates got only Dalit votes. Had we got even two to three per cent Jat votes, we would have



managed a few seats," she told reporters. She said while the mindset of the Jat community about Dalits has undergone a change in Uttar Pradesh, it is yet to happen in Haryana. While the INLD won two seats in the state, the BSP drew a blank. Bucking anti-incumbency, the ruling BJP pulled off a hat-trick of wins in Haryana to retain power and halt Congress' comeback attempt in the assembly elections. While the BJP ended up with its best-ever haul of 48 seats, 11 more than the Congress, parties like the JJP and the AAP were decimated

and the INLD managed to win just two seats. The AAP had contested on its own. Referring to the assembly polls in Delhi expected in February next year, Mayawati hoped that her party would do well. She said a triangular contest among the ruling AAP, and BJP and Congress will help the BSP do better. She admitted that the BSP suffers losses in direct fights, apparently in states beyond Uttar Pradesh. The former UP chief minister also said the BSP would also contest polls in Maharashtra and Jharkhand likely next month.

Army Commanders' Conference to address key security issues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army top brass will review issues including the prevailing situation at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China, security scenario in Jammu and Kashmir and ongoing conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Hezbollah during two-day conference starting Thursday. Giving details, army officials said here on Wednesday the second Army Commanders' Conference for this year will be organised in a hybrid mode, with the first Phase planned on October 10-11 in a forward location at Gangtok, Sikkim. In the second phase, the senior hierarchy of Indian Army will congregate at Delhi on October 28-29. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will deliver a keynote address to



the senior leadership at Gangtok and will be briefed on the emerging security challenges and the response of the Army in the security domain. As the nation faces numerous regional security challenges, the upcoming Army Commanders' Conference scheduled to commence in Sikkim on Thursday, assumes significance. Conducting the conference of Senior Commanders at a forward location underlines Indian Army's focus on

ground realities. The conference will serve as a forum for Senior Commanders to review current operational preparedness, deliberate on critical strategies and outline future directives. During the first phase of the conference, discussions will focus on critical national security issues and strategic aspects aimed at sharpening Indian Army's war fighting capabilities. Major issues to be deliberated during the two-day session

will include the growing importance of a multi-pronged national security strategy that incorporates integration of Civil Military Fusion and the Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME) pillars to counter contemporary threats besides the need for developing low-cost technologies and alternate strategies to counter the rapidly evolving character of warfare. Aligned to Indian Army's goal of Technological Absorption, the senior hierarchy will deliberate on various issues including infusion of technology in Professional Military Education and explore the possibilities of recruiting domain specialists in niche domains. He will also celebrate Dusshera with troops there.

Other issues under deliberation will focus on enhancing the overall organisational health and easing the processes of the Field Army to make them more resilient and responsive. The second phase of the conference will feature a discussion on evolving geopolitical landscape followed by brainstorming on operational matters and meetings of various Boards of Governors. They will deliberate upon welfare measures and schemes for financial security of serving soldiers, veterans and their families. The senior hierarchy of the Army will also be addressed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh.

Congress hits back at Modi over political speech

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his attack on the party while virtually inaugurating development projects for Maharashtra, saying taxpayers' money cannot and should not be used to indulge in a "political speech". A day after the Congress' defeat in the Haryana polls, Modi called the opposition party irresponsible and a factory to "spread hatred". He said the Congress wanted to divide Hindus and pit one community against another. The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) wants to weaken Maharashtra to gain power, but the ruling Mahayuti will strengthen the state, he said after virtually inaugurating various projects



worth more than Rs 7,600 crore for the state. In a social media post, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said, "Why should the @PMOIndia use a government platform and a government programme to make a political speech and attack the opposition?" "Taxpayers' money cannot and should not be used to indulge in a political speech? For that, he can use the BJP's platform," Khara said. Modi said the BJP winning the Haryana Assembly

elections shows the mood of the country. He added, "In Maharashtra, we have to get a bigger victory." Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly are likely to be held next month. Modi said never before has Maharashtra seen the expeditious development of projects. Under the Congress regime, the same speed and scale was witnessed in terms of corruption, he said. "The Congress is an irresponsible party and a factory to spread hatred. The Congress is not concerned about development and legacy, we have paid attention to both," he said. "Our goal is Viksit Bharat with the development of poor, farmers, youth and women," the prime minister said.

PM Modi to attend ASEAN summits, bilateral meetings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold bilateral meetings with the prime minister of Lao PDR and other leaders on the margins of two key summits he is slated to attend in Vientiane on October 10-11, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here on Wednesday. Modi will attend the 21st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit in Lao PDR, the current Chair of the 10-nation grouping. "We attach great significance to all ASEAN-related mechanisms. This will be PM's tenth attendance at an ASEAN-India Summit," Secretary (East) in the MEA, Jaidev Mazumdar said at a briefing here. In 2023, Modi had made efforts to be there for the ASEAN-India Summit in Jakarta before the G20 Summit in New Delhi, he added. The Summit in Vientiane will review the progress in India-ASEAN ties and "chart the future direction of our relationship," Mazumdar said.



At the invitation of Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Modi will visit Vientiane on October 10-11, he said. He will have a bilateral meeting with Siphandone, the Secretary (East) said. India has "close, friendly, historical and civilisational relationship" with Lao PDR, which includes a whole host of different areas, such as restoration of cultural sites, capacity building, and power projects, he added. When asked if Modi will also have bilateral meeting with

leaders of other countries, Mazumdar said, "As is normal and usual, on the margins of international conferences and meetings, the prime minister will have bilateral meetings with a number of leaders. These are all in the works, and you will get to hear of them as they happen." Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was founded in 1967. The member States are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, India, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Brunei Darussalam.

President Murmu to visit African nations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu will undertake a state visit to three African nations Algeria, Mauritania and Malawi, starting October 13, which is a reflection of India-Africa "growing partnership," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday. Secretary (Economic Relations) in the MEA, Dammu Ravi, at a briefing here said the visit comes after the African Union became a member of the G20 at its summit last year under the Indian presidency of the grouping. "This visit should be seen in the context of Africa as a continent and how India wishes to engage, and is looking at having a stronger partnership with Africa. It's a reflection of India-Africa growing partnership," he said. Africa includes 54 countries and forms the "core of the Global South," Ravi said. The first leg of President Murmu's three-nation visit will begin from Algeria, then onward to Mauritania, and it will end with Malawi.



Secretary (CPV & OIA) in the MEA, Arun Kumar Chatterjee, said President Murmu will visit Algeria at the invitation of Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, from October 13-15. "This will be the first-ever visit by the President of India to Algeria and a visit at the level of a head of state or a head of government after 39 years. Also, this visit will take place within a month after President Tebboune's swearing-in for his second term in office," he said.

INS Talwar joins IBSAMAR VIII exercise in South Africa

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Navy's frontline stealth frigate, INS Talwar, arrived at Simon's Town, South Africa, on October six to participate in the eighth edition of IBSAMAR, a joint multinational maritime exercise among Indian, Brazilian, and South African Navy scheduled from October six-18, navy said here on Wednesday. Giving details, officials said the exercise aims to enhance interoperability and strengthen cohesion between the three navies. The broad concept is based on Blue Water Naval Warfare, encompassing the dimensions of Surface and Anti-Air Warfare. The harbour phase of IBSAMAR VIII will include professional exchanges, Damage Control and Firefighting drills, Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure drills, cross-boarding, aviation safety lectures, joint diving operations, an Ocean Governance seminar, sports interactions, cross-decks visits, and interaction among Special Forces and Junior Officers.



Multi-lateral interactions are crucial bridges of friendship that increase mutual trust and enhance interoperability among navies of like-minded littoral nations towards the common goal of a peaceful maritime domain and positive maritime environment. Defence cooperation between India and South Africa is on an upward trajectory. Operational Sea Training and Submarine Rescue Support have been commenced between both navies since the 12th edition of Navy-to-Navy talks held on August 26-28 here. The visit of INS Talwar aims to further strengthen the ties and reaffirm India's commitment to constructive collaboration and mutual growth.

CJI DY Chandrachud reflects on legacy before retirement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, who is set to demit office next month, turned philosophical, saying he had served the country with "utmost dedication" amid "fears and anxieties" as to how history will judge his tenure. The 50th Chief Justice of India (CJI), his two-year tenure will end on November 10. "I find myself pondering over questions -- did I achieve everything I set out to do? How will history judge my tenure? Could I have done things differently? What legacy will I leave for future generations of judges and legal professionals?" he said. The CJI shared his thoughts while addressing the third

convocation ceremony of Jigme Singye Wangchuk School of Law in Bhutan. "The answers to most of these questions lie beyond my control, and perhaps, I will never find answers to some of these questions. However, I do know that, over the last two years, I have woken up every morning with a commitment to give the job my fullest and gone to bed with the satisfaction that I served my country with utmost dedication," added CJI Chandrachud. During the event, the CJI sought "pardon" for being "vulnerable" at a time when he was about to demit office and said he was "heavily preoccupied" with fears and anxieties for the future and



past. "As you navigate the complexities of your own journeys, do not be afraid to take a step back, reassess, and ask yourself: 'Am I running towards a destination, or am I running towards myself?' The difference is subtle, yet profound. After all, the world needs leaders who are driven

by purpose and not just ambition," he said. According to the CJI, once someone has a sense of faith in his/her intentions and abilities, it is easier not to obsess over outcomes but to value the process and the journey towards those outcomes. The CJI further reflected on an unrelenting passion to make a difference in the world, saying he often pushed himself to the extremes and worked long hours carrying a heavy load, as if the world's problems rested solely on his shoulders. "However, over the years, I have come to realise that our ability to contribute to our community is deeply rooted in our self-perception and capacity for self-care," he said.

The journey towards the goal should be enjoyed rather than getting caught up in the fear of reaching the destination, the CJI said. "As someone who is a few decades older than you, I can tell you that these fears are not easy to wish away. However, the personal growth lies in being able to address them and tackling them head-on," he told a crowd also comprising law graduates in the neighbouring country. CJI Chandrachud, known for speaking his mind, has pronounced verdicts on crucial issues affecting public life besides kicking off technological, administrative and infrastructural reforms to enhance the efficiency of the justice delivery system.

Malabar 2024 kicks off in Visakhapatnam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Opening Ceremony of Malabar 2024 under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command was held onboard Indian Naval Ship Satpura at Visakhapatnam on October nine. The 28th edition of the multi-national maritime exercise that commenced on October eight and would extend till October 18, navy said here on Wednesday. The Malabar exercise, which was initiated in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the US, gained further traction as a significant maritime engagement, with Japan and Australia joining in subsequently. The ceremony, hosted by Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar,



Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, was attended by senior naval and military dignitaries from participating nations. The heads of delegations and other dignitaries participating included General Yoshihide Yoshida, Chief of Staff, Joint Staff, Japan, Admiral Stephen Koehler, Commander US Pacific Fleet, Vice Admiral Katsushi Omachi, C-in-C, Japan Self Defence Fleet and

Rear Admiral Chris Smith, Commander Australian Fleet. The crew and planning staff of participating ships, aircraft and Special Forces from Australia, India, Japan and the USA were also present. The Commanders of all participating navies acknowledged the importance of the exercise in enhancing understanding, collaboration and engagement to address common maritime challenges and to create cooperative framework. The exercise will be conducted in two distinct phases both at Harbour and at Sea. It will witness live weapon firings, complex surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare drills and joint manoeuvres.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Mixed bag

The BJP retains Haryana while the regional parties gain in J and K signalling paradigm shift in the valley

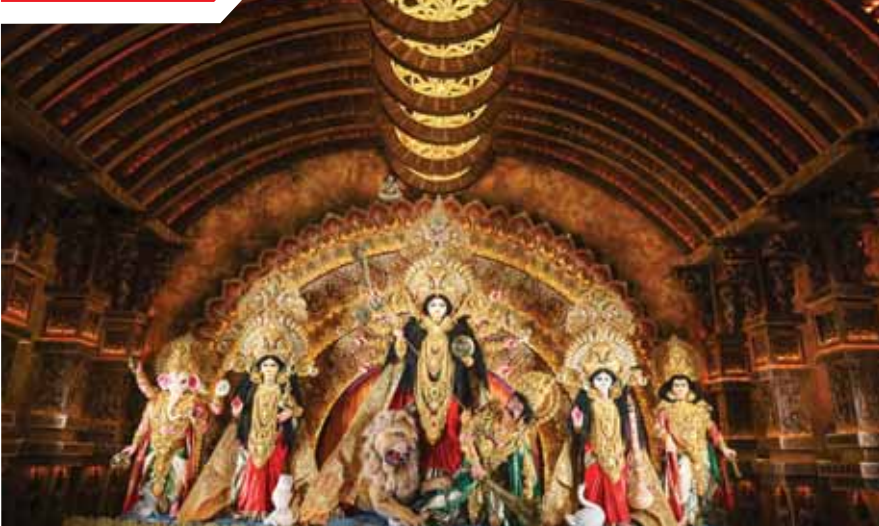
The verdict is out and it is not what was predicted by the exit polls. The BJP retains Haryana and National conference resurges in Jammu and Kashmir. The results once again prove that the people of Jammu and Kashmir want development and peace while the people of Haryana, though have resentment with the farm laws still have faith in the BJP. The election results in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir have significant implications for national politics. For the BJP, these results serve as a reminder that national leadership may get it votes but its local leaders must also perform. For Congress and other opposition parties, these results offer a glimmer of hope for future contests. At the same time, the resurgence of regional parties, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, signals the enduring importance of local issues and identity politics in India's diverse political landscape. The outcomes not only redefined local political dynamics but also carried significant implications for national politics, especially for major players like the BJP, Congress, and regional parties. Moreover, the election results starkly contrasted with exit polls, which had predicted very different scenarios in both states.



The first post-Article 370 election in Jammu and Kashmir was keenly watched, given its symbolic importance in the region. While the BJP aimed to make significant inroads, particularly in the Jammu region, it faced stiff competition from regional parties like the National Conference (NC). The results saw a resurgence of regional parties, with the National Conference, led by Farooq Abdullah,

securing a majority of seats in the Kashmir Valley. The BJP made gains in Jammu but fell short of its ambitious targets of expanding into the Kashmir Valley. The electorate, it seemed, was more aligned with regional issues such as autonomy, identity, and economic distress rather than the BJP's nationalistic agenda. The outcome underscores the challenges the BJP faces in making a deep impact in the region, especially in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370. It also highlights the resilience of local political players who continue to dominate the political narrative in the Valley. While Congress failed to reach the majority mark in Haryana, the Haryana elections put it back in the game. Its vote share was almost at par with the BJP at 39.04 per cent. The BJP vote share was 39.94 per cent. Despite the overall success of the BJP, eight out of ten ministers from the Haryana Assembly lost their seats. Of late the BJP though victorious is losing its sheen and needs to put it act together to regain the voters who are drifting away from its fold. It is a good start for the BJP for the upcoming state elections. The party must maintain the momentum into upcoming critical polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi to remain ahead of its opponents.

PICTALK



A pandal themed on 'Three dimension of the Universe' during Durga Puja festival, in Kolkata

Revival of democracy amidst calls for statehood



KALYANI SHANKAR

Following the 2019 revocation of Article 370, these elections were a landmark moment, reflecting the people's desire for normalcy and statehood

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir conducted its first Assembly elections in a decade. It showcased the peaceful embrace of democracy by its people last week after decades of militancy. These polls were held after the bifurcation of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh on August 5, 2019, following the revocation of Article 370. The BJP claimed that the move was necessary to tackle separatism, enhance economic development and fully integrate the region into the country. Since 1989, the state has faced militancy, violence and a boycott of polls by separatist elements allegedly sponsored by Pakistan. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said, "The peaceful and participative elections are historic, wherein democracy is taking root more profoundly than ever before, driven by the will of the people of J and K." Intense campaigning, peaceful polling and high voter turnout marked the polls. Those afraid to go to the polling booth were allowed to vote peacefully. These were significant not only for political reasons but also because of developments such as the first Legislative Assembly elections in ten years, the abrogation of Article 370, and the restoration of democracy. This time, the Hindu-dominated Jammu and Muslim-dominated Kashmir were united in the demand to restore statehood, which the Centre had promised earlier. The higher voter turnout showed people's desire for democracy.



They were tired of gun fights and wanted to live a normal life. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar praised the people of the Union Territory, which recorded 58.46 per cent voter turnout, the highest in 35 years. The security forces ensured a violence-free election. They also stifled the free movement of separatists. These elections differed from the previous polls as the politics of this region is no longer limited to the four traditional political parties NC, PDP, and the national political parties INC and the BJP. The new addition was the participation of separatist elements in these polls, which must be addressed, as they had

chosen the ballot route rather than the bullet route. Despite many poll issues like lack of development and unemployment, the people wanted a revival of statehood and a united Jammu and Kashmir. The other key issues were Article 370, law and order, terrorism, and socio-economic stability. The delimitation panel gave Jammu six additional seats and Kashmir one. The Opposition held that the balance was tilting in favour of Hindu-majority Jammu. Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes got nine seats reserved. Kashmir has been under the international scanner. Diplomats from many countries were taken to the state to observe the polls. They got first-hand information from visiting the state. There are several reasons for the peaceful polls this time. The first was the minimal involvement of Pakistan, as it had its internal problems to sort out. India blames Pakistan for training, funding and pushing Islamist militants, targeting the Hindu-dominated Jammu area more than the Muslim-dominated Kashmir Valley. Pakistan denies the



THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER RAJIV KUMAR PRAISED THE PEOPLE OF THE UNION TERRITORY, WHICH RECORDED 58.46 PER CENT VOTER TURNOUT, THE HIGHEST IN 35 YEARS

charges. Secondly, Kashmiris were tired of living in violent and disturbed situations. Two generations of Children had lost their normal childhood. Thirdly, militants did not call for the boycott of elections this time. On the contrary, separatists themselves entered the poll fray. Many areas once known as terror hotbeds saw brisk polling. The militants probably realised they needed funds and patrons, which they lacked. So, they decided to go through the election route. BJP chief JP Nadda said people had rejected the ballots and chose the ballot route. The election in Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a multi-cornered contest for the 90 seats. The National Conference and Congress went for a coalition. At the same time, the BJP and PDP were the other two significant players. The BJP had high stakes but a weak political base in the Valley, while it's strong in Jammu. The party contested only 19 of the 47 seats in the Valley. BJP knew the realistic position in the Valley where it could not hope to get votes. So, the BJP is fighting through proxies. A BJP candidate admitted that the

party would get support from Engineer Rashid, Sajad Lone, Altaf Bukhari, and Ghulam Nabi Azad - all minor players. Kashmiri pundits are still afraid of returning home. The people in both Jammu and the Valley lament the downgrading of the state to two union territories. There is still unemployment and the drug and narcotic trade menace in the state. The election results are out and the National Conference-Congress coalition has got a clear edge. The BJP, which has no presence in the Valley, propped up some independents and hopes to do well in Jammu. The Centre should take credit for completing the election process, and so should the Election Commission. But the people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve kudos for fearlessly going to the polling booth to vote. They showed the trend in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections too. There is no doubt Jammu and Kashmir want a popular government. But the only worry is that they must vote for a stable government rather than a split verdict. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS

Madam — Aprosop to the 'Strategic Balancing Act', October 8. With Maldivian President Muizzu making his first state visit to India, New Delhi-Male ties are clearly on the mend. Contrast this with the situation in the beginning of the year when Muizzu declined to make India his first port of call after assuming the presidency, undertook a state visit to China, inked a defence cooperation pact with Beijing, and demanded that New Delhi pull out its small contingent of troops in the archipelago nation.

The reality is that both countries need each other irrespective of differences of opinion on certain issues. No country can escape geography and this certainly holds true for both India and the Maldives. India will always remain the Maldives's closest, largest Indian Ocean neighbour and first responder in all crises. China simply can't be a replacement here given its physical distance from the region. Therefore, New Delhi, which also needs Male for better strategic depth in the Indian Ocean Region, and Male have no option but to enhance their cooperative relationship. Muizzu had campaigned on an 'India Out' plank during his election. But fighting elections outside the government and running a country are two different things. Plus, India has always stood by the Maldives. Also, Muizzu has asked Indian tourists to return to the Maldives, something that is vital for that country's economy. Thus, New Delhi-Male relations have once again found equilibrium. That will be a relief for India after the Bangladesh shock.

N Sadasiva Reddy | Washington

ONE YEAR OF WEST ASIA CRISIS

Madam— It has been a year since Hamas attacked Israel. The way Hamas fighters were successful in attacking Israel by breaking through its entire security system on October 7 last year, it seems that if we leave aside the attacks by rockets, drones and missiles, Israel can be defeated in a ground war. Because Iran, Hamas and

Vegetable prices rise in festival season



The prices of vegetables are going through the roof in the market. During Dussehra and Diwali festivals, the prices of essentials and vegetables are skyrocketing. Almost all the vegetables are approaching the century mark. The common man is getting upset with the increased prices. Recently, the increased prices of essential goods have come into force in the context of the central government increasing the import duty

on foreign goods imports. Due to this effect, cooking oil prices have gone up. The prices of palm oil and sunflower oil have gone up.

Till yesterday, the price of tomato was less than 50 rupees, now it has doubled. Recently, due to weather conditions, crops have been badly damaged in the states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The situation has changed as the tomato coming from these regions has suddenly decreased. In the absence of tomatoes, hotels and fast food centres are reducing the use of tomatoes. Due to this, the people and the hotel managers are facing severe difficulties. Onion prices also seem to be at that level. Onion price is increasing due to insufficient supply from Maharashtra. In addition to this, some groups are hoarding essential commodities informally and creating artificial scarcity and selling the commodities at high prices, doubling the hardships of the common man.

Appanna Gonapa | Visakhapatnam

UPHOLDING TRUE SECULARISM

Madam — This is in response to the news report titled "India is essentially a Hindu nation: RSS chief" (October 7). Far from being a "Hindu nation," India is historically a nation of all ("None can tell, at whose beckoning, vast waves of humanity/In currents unstoppable, from the unknown here arrived/To merge into the Great Sea" - Rabindranath Tagore), and this is the very reason why "Secularism" is embedded right within the Constitution itself. If Hindus indeed "care for everyone" as their own and "embrace all" so as to live in "harmony," then what compels the RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat to advise his own religious group to unite by transcending all narrow barriers of race, language, state and caste? This directly proves that Hindus are a highly divided lot in demographic terms and this gets proved through caste-based atrocities upon Dalits and torture upon linguistic/racial minorities in different states!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The strategic role of generative AI in transforming Industries



KASHYAP DALAL

Generative AI is transforming industries by enhancing customer experiences, boosting productivity and automating processes across sectors

Generative AI has evolved from a novelty in boardroom discussions to a transformative tool across industries. Extending the capabilities of traditional AI in automation and predictive modeling, it's reshaping business processes, customer experiences, and employee productivity. Sectors such as pharmaceuticals, airlines, healthcare, manufacturing, and banking are seeing tangible benefits, as generative AI unlocks new avenues for value creation. **Enhancing Customer Experience:** Improving customer experience is a key priority for businesses today. Companies with both physical and online touchpoints are turning to generative AI, leveraging large language models (LLMs) to provide personalised recommendations that enhance buyer satisfaction and drive revenue growth. In the airline industry, Alaska Airlines has harnessed AI to offer customised flight and travel suggestions based on customer preferences such as budget and timing, significantly elevating the booking experience. By personalising



interactions, AI is allowing businesses to delight customers in ways that were previously time-intensive and difficult to scale.

Revolutionising Creativity: Generative AI is also making waves in content creation, democratising creativity, and improving productivity. It allows companies to generate high-quality content quickly, reducing manual input and turnaround times. For example, Belk Ecommerce utilises generative AI to craft engaging product descriptions, ensuring consistency across marketing channels. This automation not only boosts operational efficiency but also delivers a cohesive shopping experience. Customer service is another area seeing improvements through generative AI. Firms like Klarna, a fintech company, use AI-powered virtual assistants to

handle millions of customer service requests, providing quick resolutions and reducing repetitive inquiries. This AI application results in faster, more accurate service and improved customer satisfaction.

Boosting Productivity: Generative AI's ability to enhance employee productivity is becoming increasingly evident, especially in automating routine tasks. By freeing employees from monotonous work, AI enables them to focus on higher-value tasks that require strategic input. This shift is particularly significant for industries where frontline workers are pressed for time. Home Depot's US stores provide a prime example of AI-driven employee enablement. They employ AI-powered apps to assist in decision-making, inventory management, and task prioritisation, resulting in improved store operations and employee satisfaction. Generative AI also enhances documentation processes in sectors requiring high volumes of detailed reports. For instance, Bristol-Myers Squibb has integrated AI into their documentation workflows,

enabling rapid processing of clinical trial data and transforming complex, time-consuming tasks into streamlined operations. Such innovations are revolutionising sectors where speed and accuracy are paramount.

Leveraging Data: With the increasing digitalisation of the world, businesses are relying more on data-driven insights. Generative AI can sift through vast datasets, extracting valuable insights to support better decision-making in areas such as research and data analysis. This capability is exemplified by Spotify, which uses AI to create personalised podcast previews, improving content discovery and user engagement. As generative AI transforms industries, businesses are preparing for widespread changes in operations, AI can augment every function. However, with these advancements comes the challenge of upskilling the workforce. Organizations need to ensure their employees are adaptable and equipped to leverage AI (The writer is co-founder & chief operating officer, Simplilearn; views are personal)

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FIRST COLUMN

ACHIEVING WORK LIFE BALANCE

A healthy work-life dynamic not only benefits individuals but also strengthens communities



SAKSHI SETHI

In recent years, the world has faced unprecedented challenges, from the COVID-19 pandemic to ongoing socio-economic disruptions. These crises have not only claimed lives but have also altered the very fabric of our daily routines and working environments. Amidst these tumultuous times, the concept of work-life balance has emerged as a crucial necessity, emphasising the importance of maintaining mental and physical well-being while fulfilling professional responsibilities. The rising death tolls and widespread fear associated with global crises have taken a toll on mental health. Today, grief, anxiety and uncertainty have become commonplace as people grapple with loss and disruption.

There is no denying the fact that fast-paced technological advancements require constant adaptation and learning, which can be overwhelming and contribute to stress. In many Indian companies, there is a culture of overwork, where taking time off is frowned upon. Many executives even end up working extended hours, sacrificing their time and health, which contributes to physical as well as mental exhaustion.

Moreover, this can even lead to a toxic environment where employees not only feel they have to prove their worth constantly, but the stigma associated with failure may even drive them to push themselves to unhealthy limits to succeed. Poor diet, lack of exercise and high-stress levels have led to lifestyle-related health issues such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension, which are prevalent among high-level executives.



Economic downturns and market volatility add pressure on executives to perform, leading to increased stress and associated health risks. In such a climate, achieving a balance between work and personal life has become essential for fostering resilience and promoting overall well-being. A healthy work-life balance allows an individual to dedicate time towards self-care, family and community, which are vital for emotional recovery and stability. The shift to remote work and flexible schedules, prompted by the pandemic, has underscored the need for a re-evaluation of traditional work structures. If remote work offers flexibility, at the same time it has also blurred the lines between personal as well as professional life, leading to longer hours and increased stress.

It's the need of the hour for organisations to recognise this and promote policies that encourage employees to set boundaries, take breaks and prioritise personal time. Addressing the high death toll among executives in Indian companies for instance the Pune CA death followed by a reputed Indian working for NBFC and committing suicide on a similar ground- i.e. work pressure and mental distress from the seniors necessitates a multi-faceted approach. Organisations must prioritise mental health support, promote a healthier work-life balance, and create a culture that values employee well-being. By taking these steps, companies can not only help mitigate the risks associated with high-stress environments but also foster a healthier and more sustainable workplace.

By fostering an environment that values work-life balance, employers can enhance productivity and employee satisfaction, thereby leading to lower turnover rates and a more engaged workforce.

Achieving work-life balance is not solely a personal endeavour but it also has broader implications for society. When individuals can manage their work and personal lives effectively, they are more likely to engage in their communities, volunteer and support local initiatives. This communal engagement will foster social connections and strengthen the fabric of society, thereby making it more resilient in the face of adversity. By prioritising work-life balance, we as citizens of the nation will contribute not only to our well-being but also to the health of our communities.

(The writer is a motivator; views are personal)

The key to a sustainable and low-carbon future



ASHOK KUMAR

By adopting energy-efficient practices, the country not only cuts emissions but also saves millions of tonnes of oil equivalent, leading to a more sustainable future

Energy efficiency refers to the practice of using less energy to achieve the same level of output or perform the same task. It is one of the most impactful strategies for reducing energy consumption, cutting costs, and mitigating environmental harm. As global energy demand continues to rise, enhancing energy efficiency has become critical in the fight against climate change, resource conservation, and ensuring a sustainable future. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the global rate of energy efficiency improvement has averaged around 2 per cent per year, with some variations during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, global energy consumption reached approximately 15,000 million tons of oil equivalent (MTOE), as reported in the Enerdata Yearbook 2024. A 2 per cent improvement in efficiency would save about 300 MTOE—an amount greater than India's entire industrial energy consumption, which stands at around 270 MTOE in 2022-23. In 2022-23, sectors such as industry, buildings, and transport consumed 552 MTOE out of India's total primary energy consumption of 850 MTOE. The industrial sector accounted for 49 per cent of this total, while transport and buildings (residential and commercial) contributed 12 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. India is one of the few nations with a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for energy conservation.

The Energy Conservation Act of 2001 and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the Ministry of Power are pivotal in driving energy efficiency programmes across various sectors. India's flagship programmes include the Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) Scheme for energy-intensive industries, initiatives for energy-efficient buildings, vehicle fuel efficiency standards, and the star rating and labelling scheme for household appliances and industrial equipment. In 2022-23, these programmes collectively saved around 51 MTOE, equivalent to reducing carbon emissions by approximately 306 million tons of CO₂. This energy efficiency contribution accounts for about 10 per cent of India's annual emissions, which stands at around 3 billion tons of CO₂. Energy efficiency is projected to play a crucial role in global climate action.

It is estimated that nearly 40 per cent of the emissions reductions needed to reach net zero by 2050 must come from energy efficiency measures, many of which offer short payback periods ranging from 3-5 years. Often dubbed the "first fuel," energy efficiency is seen as a vital tool in maintaining a sustainable, low-carbon future. Given the constrained carbon budget outlined in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment, energy efficiency is more important than ever in controlling global temperature rise.

The Importance of Energy Efficiency: It is a cornerstone of sustainable development, offering multiple advantages such as cost savings, environmental protection, energy security and resource conservation. Energy-efficient technologies reduce consumption, which, in turn, cuts utility bills for individuals, businesses, and governments. Reduced energy use decreases greenhouse gas emissions and helps combat global warming. It also diminishes pollutants that harm air and water quality. Additionally, energy efficiency decreases overall demand, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and



IT IS ESTIMATED THAT NEARLY 40 PER CENT OF THE EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS NEEDED TO REACH NET ZERO BY 2050 MUST COME FROM ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES, MANY OF WHICH OFFER SHORT PAYBACK PERIODS RANGING FROM 3-5 YEARS

strengthening energy security, especially for countries heavily reliant on imports. It also reduces the need for new power plants and industrial facilities, conserving natural resources and limiting environmental impact.

Key Sectors and Strategies industry: The industrial sector is the largest global energy consumer, driven by processes such as manufacturing, mining and machinery use. Enhancing energy efficiency in this sector involves optimising processes, recovering waste energy, and implementing energy management systems. Upgrading equipment, improving production methods, and utilising efficient motors and pumps can significantly reduce energy consumption. The National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE), launched in 2011, targets energy-intensive industries.

Under its PAT Scheme, industries are assigned specific energy-saving targets (energy use per unit of product), and the market-based approach allows trading of excess energy savings. This initiative has resulted in substantial energy savings, leading to a reduction of approximately 110 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions. As of August 2024, the PAT scheme covers 1,333 energy-intensive industries and establishments across 13 sectors, including steel, cement, aluminium, fertilizer, petroleum refineries, thermal power plants, and others. As India develops its carbon market mechanism, many of these sectors will participate as "obligated entities" with specific greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets.

The carbon market will facilitate this transition by implementing a market-based approach to pricing GHG emissions. This mechanism encourages both public and private entities to engage in decarbonisation efforts across various sectors. Entities that reduce emissions below their targets can earn Carbon Credit Certificates, while those that do not must purchase credits to comply.

Additionally, the mechanism will have a voluntary component, allowing non-obligated entities to register projects focused on reducing, removing, or avoiding GHG emissions to obtain carbon credits.

The Standards & Labeling (S&L) Programme: launched in 2006, rates appliances based on their energy efficiency, from 1 to 5 stars. This program covers 38 appliances, with 16 falling under mandatory regulations. As of August 2024, the programme has saved 82 billion units of energy, equivalent to cutting 58 million tons of CO₂ emissions.

The UJALA Scheme and the Street Light National Program (SLNP) have also been successful in replacing inefficient lighting with LED solutions, leading to significant energy savings and emission reductions. As of September 2024, approximately 370 million LED bulbs and 7.2 million LED tube lights have been distributed through the UJALA scheme. This has resulted in an annual reduction of 39 million tons of CO₂ emissions.

Buildings: Buildings are another major energy consumer, particularly through heating, cooling, and lighting. Energy-efficient building design, proper insulation, and smart energy management systems can dramatically reduce energy use. The Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), introduced in 2007, mandates minimum energy performance standards for commercial and residential buildings. Recent updates, such as the Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code (ECSBC) and the Eco Niwas Samhita (ENS) for residential buildings, aim to further reduce energy consumption in large buildings by up to 18 per cent.

Transportation: It is a major contributor to global energy use, primarily from fossil fuels. Improving fuel efficiency in vehicles and promoting electric and hybrid vehicles are key strategies.

The Indian government has implemented fuel efficiency standards for

passenger cars and heavy-duty vehicles and aims to expand the electric vehicle ecosystem including charging infrastructure. As of 2024, India's charging stations are expected to increase to 100,000 by 2030, supporting the growing number of electric vehicles. To create awareness of the benefits of Electric Vehicles (EVs), the "Go electric" Campaign was launched in Feb 2021. This involves radio jingles, poster/leaflets distribution, awareness through social media platforms, street plays, etc.

Electricity Generation and Transmission: Upgrading power plants and incorporating renewable energy sources such as solar and wind are vital for reducing emissions in electricity generation. Under the PAT Scheme, India's thermal power plants have improved their efficiency, contributing to a reduction of 30 million tons of CO₂. As of August 2024, 46 per cent of India's installed power capacity comes from non-fossil fuel sources, surpassing the commitment made at the Paris COP 21 summit.

Challenges: Despite its benefits, the adoption of energy efficiency measures faces challenges like high upfront costs, limited awareness, and policy gaps. These barriers can be addressed through financial support mechanisms, capacity-building initiatives, and the development of comprehensive, flexible policies. Conclusion Energy efficiency is an essential driver of sustainable development, offering significant economic, environmental, and social benefits.

As technology improves and policies strengthen, energy efficiency will remain crucial in reducing energy demand and mitigating climate change. By adopting energy-efficient practices in our homes, industries, and transportation systems, we can contribute to a cleaner, more sustainable future.

(The writer is DDG, Bureau of Energy Efficiency; views are personal)

Surya Ghar Yojana: A sustainable alternative to free electricity politics

Unlike conventional freebies, this scheme boosts long-term savings, infrastructure investment and promotes sustainable energy production

In response to the growing trend of political parties offering free electricity to secure votes, the Narendra Modi government has introduced the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana. This initiative aims to promote solar energy adoption by providing homeowners with a subsidy ranging from Rs 30,000 to Rs 78,000 for installing one to three kW solar panels. The scheme is designed to reduce dependence on government subsidies while offering households the benefit of free electricity for up to 25 years.

Solar Power for Households Under this scheme, a consumer will spend around Rs 40,000 to Rs 70,000 to install a two to three kW solar panel. This investment allows households to generate up to 300



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

units of electricity per month, covering a significant portion of their energy needs. At the current rate of Rs 8 per unit, this translates to a monthly saving of Rs 2,400. Over 25 years, the total savings per household would amount to approximately Rs 7.20 lakh, ensuring that the initial cost of installation is recovered within one to two years. The government has also made provisions for consumers to finance

the remaining amount at a concessional interest rate of 7 per cent.

Addressing the Politics of Free Electricity

In recent years, several political parties have leveraged the promise of free electricity as a means to gain political support. States like Delhi, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have implemented such schemes, offering free or subsidised electricity to a significant portion of their populations. In Delhi, for instance, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government provides up to 200 units of electricity for free and a 50 per cent subsidy for those consuming between 201 and 400 units. However, the cost of these schemes has placed a significant burden on state budgets. In Delhi, Rs

3,250 crore was allocated for electricity subsidies in the 2023-24 budget, out of a total budget of Rs 78,800 crore. Under AAP's rule, the capital expenditure growth rate has declined from 19.6 per cent during the previous Congress government's tenure to 9.2 per cent. Consequently, infrastructure development in Delhi has slowed, with fewer new projects being launched. The situation is similar in other states where free electricity has been promised. Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh are all grappling with mounting debts, making it increasingly difficult to sustain free electricity schemes. In some cases, states have had to scale back or abandon these initiatives due to financial constraints.

**A Viable Alternative**

The Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana offers a more sustainable solution. By encouraging households to generate their own electricity through rooftop solar panels, the scheme reduces the long-term burden on government finances. The total investment required by households under the scheme is Rs 1.5 lakh,

including the government subsidy. With one crore households expected to participate, this would result in an additional capacity of 30 GW of solar power, significantly boosting India's renewable energy output.

Unlike traditional free electricity schemes, which are funded by annual government subsidies, the Surya Ghar Yojana provides long-term benefits without placing a strain on the budget. By generating their own electricity, households will no longer be dependent on yearly subsidies and will contribute to reducing the country's carbon footprint. This aligns with India's broader goals of increasing renewable energy production and achieving net-zero emissions.

Economic and**Environmental Impact**

The Surya Ghar Yojana has far-reaching economic and environmental benefits. First, it provides households with a reliable source of free electricity for 25 years, ensuring significant savings on energy bills. This also reduces the government's reliance on costly subsidies, freeing up funds for essential infrastructure development.

Second, the scheme is expected to generate large-scale employment, with over one lakh people required to be trained to install and maintain solar panels. This will not only create new jobs but also develop a skilled workforce in the renewable energy sector. Third, by increasing solar energy production, the scheme will help India reduce its

dependence on fossil fuels, contributing to the country's efforts to combat climate change. Rooftop solar panels are an environmentally friendly alternative to coal-based power plants, and their widespread adoption will significantly reduce carbon emissions. By encouraging households to invest in solar energy, the scheme not only reduces the burden on state budgets but also contributes to India's renewable energy goals. The widespread adoption of rooftop solar panels has the potential to transform the energy landscape, providing households while helping India move closer to achieving its environmental objectives.

(The writer is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi; views are personal)

North Korea vows to block border with South, build defence structures

North Korea said Wednesday it will permanently block its border with South Korea and build frontline defence structures to cope with "confrontational hysteria" by South Korean and US forces...

Korea. It said that "the hostile forces are getting ever more reckless in their confrontational hysteria." It cited what it called various war exercises in South Korea, the deployment of US strategic assets and its rivals' harsh rhetoric.

ing ties on the northern side of cross-border railways and near-by lamps and planting mines along the border. KCNA earlier Wednesday said the Supreme People's Assembly met for two days this week to amend the legal ages of North Koreans for working and participating in elections.

might have delayed the constitutional revision but others speculated it amended the constitution without announcing it because of its sensitivity. Kim's order stunned many North Korea watchers because it was seen as breaking away with his predecessors' long-cherished dreams of achieving a unified Korea on the North's terms.

Ishiba dissolves Japan's lower house

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba dissolved Japan's lower house of parliament Wednesday to set up an October 27 early election and seek the voters' mandate for his 9-day-old government. Ishiba took office last week as Fumio Kishida resigned after three years leading the governing Liberal Democratic Party as it was dogged by corruption scandals.

push the governing party out of power. Ishiba announced his plans for an election even before he won the party leadership vote and became prime minister. His Cabinet planned later Wednesday to formally announce the election date and the start of campaigning next Tuesday.

squally in order to win the people's endorsement for the current administration," Ishiba told reporters. "Even while the lower house is dissolved the Japanese government must fully function" in tackling national security, disaster response and deflation, he said. "We will devote all our body and soul for the people."

parties are too fractured to topple the governing party's almost uninterrupted postwar rule, the first public support ratings for Ishiba as prime minister were around 50% or even lower, the lowest levels for a new leader, according to Japanese media. Ishiba is increasingly seen as backpedaling on a number of proposals he previously advocated so he won't create controversy ahead of the election.

US plans to end Google monopoly

The US Department of Justice is considering asking a federal judge to force Google to sell parts of its business in order to eliminate its online search monopoly. In a late court filing on Tuesday, federal prosecutors also said the judge could ask the court to open the underlying data Google uses

to power its ubiquitous search engine and artificial intelligence products to competitors. "For more than a decade, Google has controlled the most popular distribution channels, leaving rivals with little-to-no incentive to

compete for users," the antitrust enforcers wrote in the filing. "Fully remedying these harms requires not only ending Google's control of distribution today, but also ensuring Google cannot control the distribution of tomorrow."

To that end, the department said it is considering asking for structural changes to stop Google from leveraging products such as its Chrome browser, Android operating system, AI products or app store to benefit its search business.

STORES E-PROCUREMENT

Tender Notice No.: S/22/2024-25; Dated: 08-10-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:- SN. 1; Tender No. 60/23/5049A/OT/178/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 14-10-2024

Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: (1) Combined Airless Centrifugal Shot Blasting and Shot Peening Plant for coil spring and laminated spring coil. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 1 Set for SSE/MWS/DBWS, NFR (Assam), P.L. No.-654401390010.

SN. 2; Tender No. 30/24/1329/OT/179/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 15-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Set for control arm for LHB goods consisting of (1) Control Arm Lower Left, Drg. no. FIAT 1267716 ver 00R2 or latest.

SN. 3; Tender No. 60/24/5059/OT/180/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 16-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: (1) Electric Driven Screw Air Compressor (500cfm) 10 Kg/cm2. [Warranty Period: 24 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 1 set for SSE/D/New Guwahati, NFR (Assam), P.L. No.-650500072377.

SN. 4; Tender No. 61/24/5326/OT/181/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 17-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: 1-in-12 BG 60 KG Weldable CMS Crossing (WCMS) on PSC sleepers in accordance with RDSOs standard drawing No. T-64132 including supply of 6mm thick grooved rubber sole plates (drawing no. RDSO/T-6204 to RDSO/T-6211, RDSO/T-6843 to RDSO/T-6846), excluding standard fish plates, fish bolts and nuts, E.R Clips, insulating liner etc. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: Yes, Stages: 1]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 190 Set for SSE/P. Way/TD/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam), P.L. No. - 60060270.

SN. 5; Tender No. 61/23/5285A/OT/182/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 17-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Wide Base curve sleepers RT- 8979 to RT - 8982 (T-8621 to T-8624). [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, I Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 1328 Nos for SSE/P. Way/SOUTH/Katihar, NFR (Bihar), P.L. No. - 60060517.

SN. 6; Tender No. 61/24/5310/OT/183/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 17-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: "Manufacture & Supply of PSC Mono-Block Concrete Sleeper for 1 in 12 Turn Out (Pre-Tension Type) for BG (1673 mm) FOR Works Station Works Siding as per RDSO Drawing No. T/4218 Alt.8 (for General Layout) and part drawing there of to suit 60 Kg UIC Rail (Fan Shaped) & IRS Specification No. T-45.96 (4th revision March '21) duly amended in accordance with the recommendations made by Track Standard Committee as amended from time to time." [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 4 Set for SSE/P.Way/Buniapur, NFR (West Bengal), P.L. No.- 600501100101.

SN. 7; Tender No. 61/24/5287A/OT/184/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 18-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: (1 in 8.5 WCMS) 1-in-8 1/2 BG 60 Kg Weldable CMS Crossing on PSC sleepers in accordance with RDSOs standard drawing No.T-6441 including supply of 6mm thick grooved rubber sole plates (drawing no. RDSO/T-6203, RDSO/T-6800, 6800/1, 6801, 6801/1), excluding standard fish plates, fish bolts and nuts, E.R. Clips, insulating liner etc. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: Yes, Stages: 1]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 145 Set for SSE/P.Way/TD/Bongaigaon, NFR (Assam), P.L. No. - 60060281.

SN. 8; Tender No. 61/24/5225/OT/185/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 18-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: T/O 1 IN 1660 KG, RDSO DRG. NO. T-5691.(Fabricated switches [Description -11200mm O/R(Curved) Fan shaped Switch for 1 in 16 T/O for BG 60 KG (UIC) on PSC Sleepers to RDSO DRG. No. T/5692 Alt.03 as per IRS Specification IRS-T-10-2023 complete with stock rails, tongue rails and all parts with fittings including check rails as listed in the RSDO drawing but excluding Liner, Elastic rail Clip, Fish Plate & Fish Bolts, & PSC Sleeper.] and CMS Xing body [Description - CMS Crossing 1 in 16 BG for 60 Kg Rails on PSC Sleepers as per RDSO DRG. No. T/5693 (Alt.02) complete with fittings as per specification No. IRS T-29 (Revised 2022). List of fittings to be supplied with is enclosed as Annexure-A.] [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. 1) Qty-6 Set for Sr. Section Engineer/P.Way/New Halflong, NFR (Assam), 2) Qty- 7 Set for SSE/P.Way/Hill/Lumding, NFR (Assam), P.L. No. - 60220077.

SN. 9; Tender No. 61/24/5343/OT/186/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 21-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: 60 KG 1 IN 12 SLEEPERS T-4218 [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 1) 35 Set for Sr. DEN/C/Katihar, NFR (Bihar), 2) Qty- 78 Set for DRM/W/Alipurduar Jr., NFR (West Bengal), 3) Qty- 19 Set for DRM/W/Tinsukia, NFR (Assam), P.L. No. - 600301340013.

SN. 10; Tender No. 30/24/1281/OT/187/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 21-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Safety Wire Rope Assembly, LHB to Drg. No. LW05105 Alt-Nil Mat. Spec.-As per Drawing. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. 1) Qty- 4483 Nos for Dibruagarh town/ Workshop/Depot, NFR (Assam), 2) Qty- 226 Nos for Pandu/GSD, NFR (Assam), 3) Qty- 6845 Nos for New Bongaigaon/Workshop/Depot, NFR (Assam), 4) Qty- 44 Nos for New Jalpaiguri/GSD, NFR (West Bengal), 5) Qty- 88 Nos for Katihar/GSD, NFR (Bihar), P.L. No. - 33500277.

SN. 11; Tender No. 61/24/5381/OT/188/2024-25; Closing/ Opening Date: 23-10-2024 Brief Description, P.L. No. & Qty: Manufacture & Supply of Pre-stressed Mono-Block Concrete Sleeper for 1 in 12 Turn Out (Pre-Tension Type) for BG (1673 mm) FOR Works Station/Works Siding as per RDSO Drawing No. T/4218 Alt.8 (for General Layout) and part drawing thereof to suit 60 Kg UIC Rail (Fan Shaped) & IRS Specification No. T-45 (4th Revision March '21) duly amended in accordance with the recommendations made by Track Standard Committee as amended from time to time [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. [Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: NA, Stages: 0]. [Item Type: Goods]. Qty- 24 Set for SSE/P.Way/East/Katihar, NFR (Bihar), P.L. No. - 600400410017.

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

PCMM/ Maligaon

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY e-TENDER CALL NOTICE No. EM/PEP-29/2024 Name of the Work: Replacement of piping, structure of Tower Monitors and replacement of silencer pipe of Diesel Pumps & DG set at North Oil Jetty.

CONSTRUCTION OF PCEE CONFERENCE HALL Tender No. DYCEE-PS-MLG-HQ-32-24-25 Dated: 08-10-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Name of work: At Maligaon (HQ) Construction of PCEE Conference Hall at Ground floor of West Block.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS CHANGE OF NAME I, Rakhi, w/o Dinesh Kumar, R/o B-102, Street No. 10, Shashi Garden, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi-110091, solemnly affirm and declare that 'Rakhi Arora' and 'Rakhi' is one and the same person.

SIGNAL & TELECOM WORKS IN LUMDING DIVISION E-Tender No.: SNT-03-LMG-2024-25-RT; Dated: 07-10-2024; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Name of work : Reliability improvement by means of Repair, Replacement and Restoration of Electronic Interlocking system of 04 stations (Sighat Town, Dhanisri Jn.-Shokhubi & Chongajan) under the jurisdiction of Sr. DSTE/Lumding. Tender Value: ₹1,08,88,332/- Bid Security: ₹2,04,500/- Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 30-10-2024. For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mrs. Rajneshi claiming to be owner of Property bearing No. 215-A, area measuring 270 sq.yds. out of Khasra No. 128/152, situated in the area of Village: Nangloi, in the abadi of Near Post office, Nangloi, Ilaqa Shahdara, District State Dehra, vide G.P.A. ATIS & Will dated 18.07.1988 executed by Mr. Lal Singh. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner wants to sell the said property to a person who wants to obtain a loan from our client against the said property.

VACANCY Various Posts of Teaching, KVK Scientists & Supporting staff through direct recruitment are advertised. For details please visit University Website i.e. www.uuhf.ac.in Registrar

E-AUCTION FOR SARUPATHAR PF-2 SIDE PARKING CONTRACT OVER LUMDING DIVISION E-Auction for Sarupathar PF-2 side parking contract over Lumding Division. Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee. Trips/Days. 1095. Auction Catalogue No. PARK-LMG-SZR-03

PPGGL Regd Office: Shatabdi Bhawan, B1/2 & 13, Sector 4, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301 Plant Address: PO-Lohgara, Tehsil-Bara, Prayagraj (Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh-212107 Phone : +91-120-6102000/6102009 CN: U40101UP2007PLC032835

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible bidders for Project of Supply, Installation and Commissioning of continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System (CAQMS) of 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Short Notice Inviting re-tender No. SS/CW/RR/78/2023/276 Dated 8th October, 2024 The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam re-invites bids for "Supply & installation of chairs for conference hall & VidyaSamiksha Kendra at State Mission Office, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19", from authorized dealers of reputed furniture brand.

NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM Stores Tender Notice No. 52/2024-2025 dt. 17.09.2024 at S.No. 01. Sub:- Supply of Metal Cutting Gas. Ref:- Tender No. 14240839 Due on 09.10.2024 published vide tender Notice No. 52/2024-2025 at S.No. 01. The following Amendment is issued against the subject tender Due date to be read as 18.10.2024 instead of 09.10.2024

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Freight, Delhi Division, Northern Railway, in terms of Railway Board letter no. 2022/TC(FM) 10/04 dated 13.06.2022, invites bids through e-Auction (www.ireps.gov.in) for leasing of parcel space of SLR compartments and Parcel Vans (on round trip basis), for a period of two years as per detail and schedule given below:-

Sd/-Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Sh. Jatin Chauhan S/o Sh. Manish Chauhan owner of a Residential Two Storey House, area measuring 200sq. yds. i.e. 167.22 sq. mtr., out of plot no. 235, situated in Village Chhagraali Banger Bangra Dabri, Tehsil & District Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, U.P. through Registered Gift Deed Dated 25.10.2023 executed by Smt. Geeta Chauhan W/o Sh. Manish Chauhan in favour of Sh. Jatin Chauhan S/o Sh. Manish Chauhan vide Reg. No. 27937 at Sr. GREATER Noida U.P. The above-mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Fed Bank Financial Services Limited. If any person / bank / financial institution having any claim / right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehra, E-713, Karandooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Adv. Vishal Mehra, E-713, Karandooma Court, Delhi-110092, Mobile No. 9811212181

Table with columns: S. No., Date & time of e-Auction, Assets to be auctioned. Rows 1-9 listing various assets like 12005 (F1), 12038 (F1), 12055 (F1), etc.

REPAIR OF CLS PANEL OF DIFFERENT MAKE & CAPACITIES E-Tender Notice No.: EL/29/14_2024/K/808; dated: 07-10-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No: 14_2024; Name of work: Repair of CLS Panel of different make & capacities at different locations over Katihar Division. Tender Value: ₹8,40,788.00; Earnest Money: ₹16,900.00. E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 30-10-2024 and Opened at 15:30 hrs. on 30-10-2024. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 30-10-2024 in website www.ireps.gov.in

REPAIR OF CLS PANEL OF DIFFERENT MAKE & CAPACITIES E-Tender Notice No.: EL/29/14_2024/K/808; dated: 07-10-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No: 14_2024; Name of work: Repair of CLS Panel of different make & capacities at different locations over Katihar Division. Tender Value: ₹8,40,788.00; Earnest Money: ₹16,900.00. E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 30-10-2024 and Opened at 15:30 hrs. on 30-10-2024. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 30-10-2024 in website www.ireps.gov.in

Important notes: 1. For more information, requirement and various aspects regarding these e-Auctions, interested bidders are advised to visit https://www.ireps.gov.in/html/helpdesk/learning_centre.html. (e-Auction learning section). 2. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD): 5% of the total contractual bid value to be deposited online during the auction. EMD of the successful bidder will be retained as Security Deposit. 3. Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute rights to short terminate these contracts at any point of time and for taking any decision regarding the discontinuation/continuation of these contracts with modified/additional terms and conditions depending upon the continuation/discontinuation of these trains or commencement of new train services.

NORTHERN RAILWAY SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 3116/24

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY "Serving Customers with a smile"

Not appropriate to speak on rate cut now: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

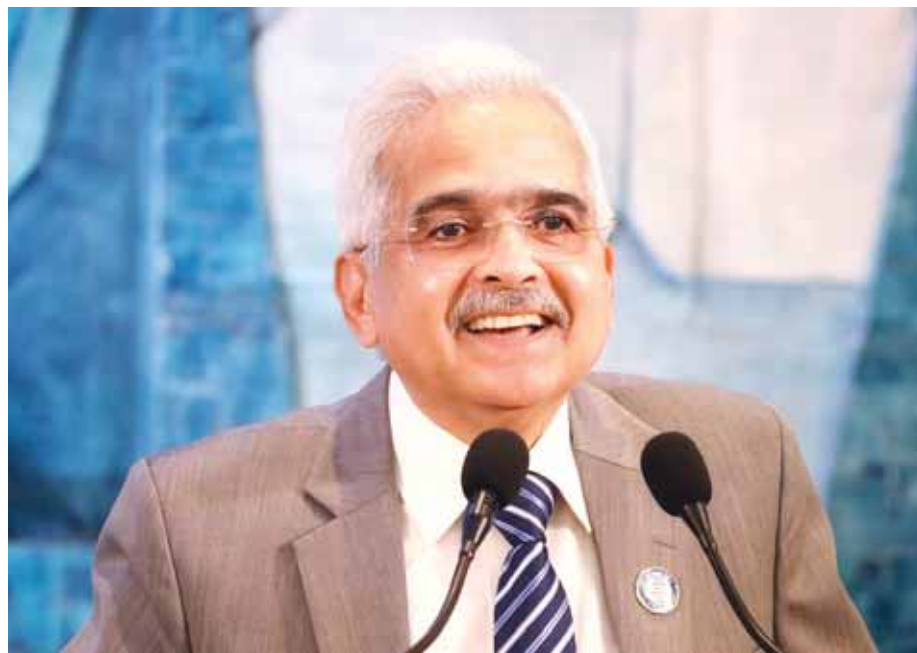
RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said the confidence in inflation cooling down in the near future, resulting in a better balance between growth and price rise, led the central bank to change the policy stance to neutral.

He, however, made it clear that there are "significant risks" to inflation like the ones arising out of geopolitical tensions, and it is "not appropriate" to talk about a rate cut for now.

On whether the change in stance to 'neutral' from earlier 'withdrawal of accommodation' should be seen as the RBI's pivoting, he said that it is for others to assess.

"We have changed the stance at the moment because we see that growth and inflation, they are well poised, the balance is well poised. So, the MPC (monetary policy committee) considered it appropriate, the timing is appropriate to shift the stance to neutral," he told reporters at the customary post-policy review.

"We have now greater



confidence that inflation is moderating, but we are acutely aware that there are significant risks," he said, adding that the change in stance gives greater flexibility and optionality to the rate-setting panel to manoeuvre in the future on rates. Earlier in the day, the RBI

held its interest rates for the tenth consecutive time but changed the stance, igniting hopes of a decrease in rates. There was "no point" and "justification" in continuing with the earlier, as the RBI has achieved what it wanted to, Das said, adding that the future is full of

"uncertainties". "These uncertainties and the risks cannot be underestimated. It will be inappropriate, it will not be appropriate to specifically sort of talk in terms of timing of a rate cut," he said. Using the horse bolting out

from the stable analogy deployed earlier to illustrate the inflation fight, Das said the RBI needs to be "very careful" about opening the gate of the stable.

When asked if we should look forward to a rate cut at the next policy review in December or even earlier, Deputy Governor Michael Patra said the whole attention is focused on the near-term hump in inflation, wherein the RBI expects the October number to come at over 5 per cent.

The RBI will focus on the near-term hump on the inflation before even thinking of the "next move", Patra said. The central bank has decreased its estimate on crude oil prices to USD 80 per barrel from USD 85 per barrel earlier because of the softer medium-term outlook on the commodity.

The DG said the oil-producing countries have committed to continue with supply at higher levels into 2025, expectations of lower demand made by the International Energy Agency and growing reliance on renewable energy sources.

Sensex, Nifty declines as RBI changes stance to neutral

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty pared early gains to settle lower on Wednesday due to late selling in index major Reliance Industries, ITC and HDFC Bank even as the RBI took the first step towards a rate cut in its monetary policy review.

Erasing its early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 167.71 points or 0.21 per cent to close at 81,467.1. During the day, it surged 684.4 points or 0.83 per cent to hit an intraday high of 82,319.21.

The NSE Nifty dropped 31.20 points or 0.12 per cent to end at 24,981.95. In the intraday trade, it jumped 220.9 points or 0.88 per cent to hit a hit of 25,234.05.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its key interest rate unchanged on Wednesday but took the first step towards a rate cut as it eased its relatively hawkish policy stance to 'neutral'.

The monetary policy committee, which included three RBI officials and an equal number of new external members, voted five-to-one to keep the benchmark repurchase or repo rate - which governs the interest rate of home, auto, corporate and other loans - at 6.5 per cent for a 10th straight policy meeting.



Among the 30 Sensex companies, ITC, Nestle India, Hindustan Unilever, Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards.

On the contrary, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India, Maruti Suzuki India, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv and Bharti Airtel were among the gainers.

European markets were trading higher in mid-session deals. "An upward revision in Q3FY25 inflation reiterates that the sticky inflation continues to remain a concern for the RBI and led investors to book profit towards the close. The volatility in input prices and the impact on margin dragged the FMCG stocks," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

The change in RBI's stance to neutral was favourable and

expected, but the commentary is not pointing for a rate cut in the near term, Nair added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,729.60 crore on Tuesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 7,000.68 crore, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Seoul settled in negative territory while Tokyo quoted in the positive territory. Global oil benchmark Brent Crude climbed 0.87 per cent to USD 77.85 a barrel in futures trade.

US markets ended with gains in overnight deals on Tuesday. On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 584.81 points or 0.72 per cent to close at 81,634.81. The NSE Nifty jumped 217.40 points or 0.88 per cent to finish at 25,013.15.

New PLI scheme for drones to boost industry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government plans to come out with a new Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the drones sector that will be more effective in terms of implementation, documentation and other aspects.

Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlung Vualnam on Wednesday said the government is looking at moving to the next PLI scheme for the drones sector. The first PLI scheme for drones, introduced in 2021 with an outlay of Rs 120 crore for three financial years starting from 2021-22, has ended.

While acknowledging that some procedures under the first scheme were onerous on startups and Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the drone sector, the civil aviation secretary said the government will look at a more efficient PLI scheme in terms of implementation, documentation and the processes that are adopted. According to Vualnam, the drone sector has to be segregated into three segments those for civilian use, security/defence forces use, and the



rogue or unregulated use of drones. "We have to be very clear about how we approach the three areas," he said and highlighted that certain incidents of rogue use of drones could become impediments when youngsters, startups and women self-help groups are to use more drones. "We have to be cognisant of that Counter drone technologies are being developed," he said, while speaking at a conference organised by industry body Ficci. In a discussion paper, Ficci

suggested that the government should bring counter drone systems and components under the next phase of the PLI scheme. The outlay under the new scheme should be increased to Rs 1,000 crore to support startups and new entrants to develop drones with more indigenous components and sub-systems. The civil aviation secretary also said tenders are ready for procuring 3,000 more drones under the Namu Drone Didi Scheme. The scheme seeks to provide agricultural drones to rural women and 15,000 drones will

be given to women-led self-help groups. The first set of 1,000 drones have been acquired and distributed. The tenders for 3,000 drones under the scheme are ready and will be issued by the agencies concerned soon, Vualnam said. Additional Director General at the Army Design Bureau Major General C S Mann stressed on the importance of indigenousisation. "We need to have truthfulness in the claims of indigenous capabilities. Only then will we be able to address the challenges.



Mercedes-Benz India sees record sales growth

PTI ■ MUMBAI

German luxury car manufacturer Mercedes-Benz on Wednesday said its car sales in India grew over 13 per cent year-on-year to 14,379 units in the first nine months of 2024, registering the best-ever performance in January-September period. The company further said the September quarter delivered over 21 per cent more cars at 5,117 units, in comparison to the corresponding quarter of the last year.

"With 14,379 new Mercedes-Benz delivered year-to-date in

January-September (+13 per cent) including 5,117 units (+21 per cent) in Q3 '24 alone; Mercedes-Benz continues to buck the industry trend," the company said in a statement. Mercedes-Benz India said the battery electric vehicle (BEV) sales logged 84 per cent growth at 800 cars in the January-April period of the year, over the same period of 2023, which was the highest than any other luxury brand in the domestic market.

At the same time, the top-end vehicles grew by 18 per cent, it stated.

Karnataka CM offers IT growth support to Maldives



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday offered to facilitate the growth of the information technology industry in Maldives, and expressed keenness to promote the state's handicraft and handloom products to tourists visiting the island nation.

Addressing a delegation led by Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, who was accompanied by his wife Sajidha Mohamed, at Raj Bhavan here, he said Karnataka, known as the Silicon Valley of India, has developed an ecosystem for start-ups.

Artificial Intelligence, global capacity building centres and innovation. "I am given to understand that the government of Maldives is interested in having partnerships with the leading IT industry of

Bengaluru," he said. "We will be very happy to facilitate the growth of the IT industry in Maldives," he said.

Siddaramaiah said he was pleased to note that Sajidha Mohamed was a student in Bengaluru.

He said the State would be happy to have trade ties with Maldives to promote the marketing of its handicrafts and handlooms to reach out to a large number of tourists visiting the island nation. Karnataka, the Chief Minister said, is known for its diversity of nature, culture and rich heritage.

Siddaramaiah noted that the state's tourism tagline is: "One State, Many Worlds". "Apart from almost 300 km of coastline, we have the world's second largest 'Shola Forest' hosting Tiger and Bird Sanctuaries. We look forward to a partnership with Maldives to promote educational and cultural exchange," he added.

RBI enhances UPI Lite wallet limit to ₹ 5,000

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday announced the increase of the UPI Lite wallet limit to Rs 5,000 and per-transaction limit to Rs 1,000, in order to encourage wider adoption of the popular instant payment system through mobile phones.

A limit of Rs 500 per transaction and an overall limit of Rs 2,000 per UPI Lite wallet, is presently applicable, with the facility of auto-replenishment. Unveiling the October bi-

monthly monetary policy, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das also said the per-transaction limit in UPI123Pay will be enhanced to Rs 10,000 from the current Rs 5,000.

UPI123 was launched in March 2022, with a view to enable feature-phone users to use UPI. This facility is now available in 12 languages.

In another customer-friendly initiative, Das announced a beneficiary account name look-up facility for Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) and National

Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) systems will be introduced.

Payment Systems like UPI and IMPS provide a facility to the remitter to verify the name of the receiver (beneficiary) before initiating a payment transaction.

There have been requests to introduce such a facility for RTGS and NEFT systems, the Governor said.

"Accordingly, to enable remitters in RTGS and NEFT to verify the name of the beneficiary account holder before initiating funds

transfer, it is now proposed to introduce a beneficiary account name look-up facility," he said.

Remitters can input the account number and the branch IFSC code of the beneficiary, following which the name of the beneficiary will be displayed.

This facility will increase customer confidence as it would reduce the possibility of wrong credits and frauds, Das said.

The Central bank will also create Reserve Bank Climate Risk Information System (RB-

CRIS) amid climate change emerging as one of the significant risks to the financial system.

Das said it is crucial for regulated entities to undertake climate risk assessments for ensuring stability of their balance sheets and that of the financial system.

Such an assessment requires, among other things, high quality data relating to local climate scenarios, climate forecasts, and emissions, he said.

The available climate-related data is characterised by

various gaps such as fragmented and varied sources, differing formats, frequencies and units.

To bridge these gaps, Das said the Reserve Bank proposes to create a data repository RB-CRIS comprising two parts.

The first part will be a web-based directory, listing various data sources, (meteorological, geospatial, etc.) which will be publicly accessible in the RBI website.

The second part will be a data portal consisting of datasets (processed data in standardised formats).

Tata Power-DDL urges citizens for safe festivities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL) has urged citizens of Delhi to refrain from burning effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Meghanada near electrical installations and overhead power lines during Dussehra celebrations. The company highlights that such activities pose serious safety risks, including potential fire hazards, power outages, and disruptions to essential services, which could cause widespread inconvenience.

The discom is conducting a comprehensive safety drive for its consumers and field staff to minimize the risk of electricity-related mishaps during the festive season. Tata Power-DDL is continuously working towards ensuring a safer festive season. In this quest, the discom has checked more than 2.28 Lakh installations including plain cement and concrete (PCC) poles, street light, stray wires, towers, rail poles, fencing of sub stations, feeder & service pillars, PWD Poles, MCD Poles, ATMs and lights installed in parks for any unsafe situation/hazard & rectifications thereof.

Deepaknath appointed DDG of BAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Deepaknath PJ on Wednesday has been appointed as the Deputy Director General of the Brewers Association of India (BAI), the apex body of the beer industry representing India's largest beer makers such as the AB InBev, Carlsberg, and the United Breweries (a Heineken company).

Deepaknath would be based out of Bengaluru and would drive public policy advocacy for the beer industry in the South and West regions of India, besides co-ordinating some pre-designated pan-India initiatives. He has a strong background in beer and public policy advocacy. "With his vast experience in beer, public policy advocacy, and a deep understanding of the regulatory policy on both beer and spirits, I am sure he would add great value to the BAI and play a key role in shaping up public discourse and regulatory policy towards beer, a more responsible and sustainable alcoholic beverage choice," said Mr Vinod Giri, DG, BAI.

INBRIEF

NASA SPACE APPS CHALLENGE 2024 CONCLUDES

GURGAON: The NASA Space Apps Challenge 2024, a 48-hour hackathon, was successfully conducted on the 5th and 6th of October at the Innovation Incubation Entrepreneurship Cell (IIEC), 2nd floor of CB, VIT AP University, Amaravati.



VIT CHANCELLOR CALLS ON SHRI NARA LOKESH

Dr. G. Viswanathan - Hon'ble Chancellor along with Shri Sankar Viswanathan - Vice President, VIT University called on Shri Nara Lokesh - Hon'ble Minister of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications and HRD of AP to greet him. Dr.S.V.Kota Reddy - Vice Chancellor, VIT-AP University was also present on the occasion.



Flyzy to invest ₹ 10 crore in new product

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Flyzy on Wednesday announced an investment of INR 10 crore in tryvisa, their new product. This platform streamlines online visa applications. Flyzy has already disrupted the traditional B2B travel industry.

With this investment, the brand is expanding in the B2C space and aims to make this product into India's largest 'Made in India' visa solutions provider, at par with global standards. At present, the visa



international players or small scale companies. Tryvisa is a unique, Made in India product which will be a game changer in Indian travel-tech.

With this investment, Flyzy will provide a dedicated visa support team for documentation ensuring that the tryvisa users have a hassle free experience. It will offer the best in class customer support, a service, Flyzy is renowned for. With the launch of this new product, Flyzy is forecasted to disrupt the travel-tech sector.

US Ryder Cup captain Bradley says security will be watching

AP ■ NEW YORK

US Ryder Cup captain Keegan Bradley has offered a warning about Bethpage Black that does not need a special sign by the first tee: Organisers will have security inside the ropes to make sure the New York crowd doesn't get out of control.

Bradley and European captain Luke Donald met in Manhattan for a news conference on Tuesday signally (roughly) a year out from the September 26-28 matches at Bethpage Black, the public course on Long Island with a reputation for rough crowds.

"I have total faith in the fans of New York to cheer on their team, proudly and loudly," Bradley said. "I don't want them to cross the line, to do anything that would affect the course of play. But it's going to be a tough atmosphere. It's going to be tough for both teams."

Bradley said there would be security "monitoring the situation."

"It's really important to us - the US side - that it's a fair place to play for both teams," he said.

"Nobody on either team wants this to get uncomfortable or weird out there. But listen, you come into Yankee Stadium, you come into Madison Square Garden, you come into these places, it's a tough place to play, and Luke and the boys know that."

"The PGA of America is going to do a great job making sure everything's right."

Bethpage State Park has a sign on the first tee that says, "Warning: The Black course is an extremely difficult course which we recommend only for highly skilled golfers."

The skill level won't be an issue. Bradley said he is keeping the same criteria for the American team - six qualifiers through the points list, six captain's picks - and he and Donald said they wouldn't hesitate to take players from Saudi-backed LIV Golf if they are eligible.

The crowd is as notorious as the difficulty of Bethpage Black, the first truly public golf course (excluding high-end resorts) to host the Ryder Cup. It previously held the US Open in 2002 and 2009, and the PGA Championship in 2019, when Brooks Koepka heard it from the crowd as he was letting a big lead slip away before holding on to win.

Sergio Garcia was heckled so badly in the 2002 US Open, when he was constantly regripping the club, that the Spaniard answered with the middle finger.

And now there are American and European flags involved at the most patriotic event in golf. It's tough on the opposing team regardless of which side of the Atlantic Ocean the matches are played, but American crowds



stand out. Europe at least will have fans, unlike the last time on US soil at Whistling Straits when the COVID-19 pandemic made it almost an entirely US fan base.

"The Ryder Cup is special because it is spirited. Passions are high. Energy is high," Donald said. "You want to see that amongst the players. You certainly don't want to see the spirit of the Ryder Cup endangered in any way."

"But again, the PGA of America have things in place. If there's outbursts or if there's anything deemed inappropriate, they will deal with that."

Bradley, who won the BMW Championship in August and delivered the winning point for the Americans in the Presidents Cup last month, has said he would give up his captaincy to play the Ryder Cup team only if he made the team on points.

That's so far out that he said it's not on his mind, though he would have assistant captains in place to take over if that's how it plays out.

Koepka was the only LIV player on the American team that last lost

year at Marco Simone outside Rome. Rahm and Tyrrell Hatton had not yet defected to LIV.

Donald said those two, or any other European-born player with LIV, could be considered as long as they met rules for being a European tour member.

As for the US points system, it rewards 1 point for every dollar earned at majors and The Players Championship in 2024, and 1 point on the dollar for every tournament in 2025 (except opposite-field events), and 1.5 points on the dollar at the 2025 majors.

Xander Schauffele, a double major winner this year, has a narrow lead over Scottie Scheffler, who won the Masters and The Players Championship.

Schauffele performed better in the other two majors he didn't win.

Europe has won 10 of the last 14 times dating to 1995, though winning on the road is becoming more difficult ever since Paul Azinger persuaded the PGA of America to change its qualifying system to be based off money when he was the winning captain in 2008.

Europe's last road win was in 2012 at Medinah, when it staged a stunning rally.

"The last few times we've played away, the results have been one-sided towards the US," Donald said.



PBG Alaskan Knights one win away from GCL final

PTI ■ LONDON

PBG Alaskan Knights were placed at the top spot with 18 match points and a win away from securing their place in the final of the Global Chess League (GCL) here.

The Knights have so far registered six victories in seven matches and are six points ahead of Triveni and Alpine SG Pipers.

With three matches left before the knockout stage, the Knights are in the pole position to seal a spot in the final.

Despite their comfortable standing, the Knights' Anish Giri, on top board, was cautious about his team's position. "It's not done yet, we still need to get to the final and win. But so far it's going well and I'm happy with everything, that's for sure," he said.

In a stunning upset earlier on Tuesday, the Mumba Masters defeated the favourites Alpine SG Pipers.

On board one, Magnus Carlsen was left reeling after a blunder in a combination allowed Maxime Vachier-Lagrave to claim victory.

Visibly upset, Carlsen stormed out of the venue.

The Mumba Masters capitalised on this momentum to secure a dominant 14-5 win and deliver a major blow to the Pipers' chances of closing in on the league's leaders.

In the second match of the day, the winners of season one, Triveni Continental Kings were defeated by American Gambits 14-5.

The match saw Alireza Firouzja lose the first game in the tournament - blundering in an even rook endgame against the world No 2 Hikaru Nakamura.

The day closed with the Knights confidently defeating Ganges Grandmasters 15-4.

Playing as Black, the Knights started with a defeat but quickly took control of the match, winning on three boards.

Nepal's Nima Rinji Sherpa becomes youngest to scale 14 tallest peaks

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's 18-year-old Nima Rinji Sherpa has become the youngest climber ever to scale each of the 14 tallest mountains (over 8,000 meters) in the world with his successful summit of Mt Shishapangma in China.

Nima and his partner Pasang Nurbu Sherpa reached the summit of the Shishapangma, which stands at 8,027 meters above sea level, shortly after 6:00am (China Standard Time), which is 3:30am in IST, on Wednesday, the youngest announced on his Instagram page.

"Today, as I stand atop my 14th 8000-meter peak, I dedicate this world record to my project, #SherpaPower," he posted.

"This summit is not just the culmination of my personal journey, but a tribute to every Sherpa who has ever dared to dream beyond the traditional boundaries set for us. Mountaineering is more than labor; it is a testament to our strength, resilience, and passion."

Nima said he wants to show the younger generation of Sherpas that they can rise above the "stereotype of being only support climbers."

"We are not just guides; we are trailblazers. Let this be a call to every Sherpa to see the dignity in our work, the power in our heritage, and the limitless possibilities in our future," he said.

Hailing from a family of mountaineers, Nima began his quest to scale each of the 14 tallest peaks in the world at the age of 16 and 162 days when he reached the top of Mt Manaslu (8163m) in September 2022.

It was his passion for photography of the mountains that brought Nima into climbing but it soon turned out to be a passion for him to tell the



story of the Sherpa community.

"Slowly, I realised, the Sherpas, my community, we have always been in the shadows and all the international athletes that you see, no one is from Sherpa community (in the front), but we are always the ones backing them up," he told PTI in an interview in May this year.

"We're always carrying their equipment, carrying their food, the load, fixing the ropes, looking after the weather condition, looking after their safety, looking for the rescue things."

"All those things are being looked after by us, but our names are always somewhere down the line. That's when I decided (that) I want to climb more for this, for my community more, rather than for myself," said Nima, who prefers to go without oxygen support for the first 7,000 metres.

Perhaps the biggest achievement for the young mountaineer came when he scaled Mt Everest (8848.86m) and Mt Lhotse (8516) in a span of a mere 10 hours when he was a little over 17 years, in May 2023.

Like he did when he scaled Mt Manaslu, Nima became the youngest to climb the Nanga Parbat (8125m) in June 2023.

In his bid to become the youngest ever, Nima went on to climb Mt Gasherbrum I (8068m), Mt Gasherbrum II (8035m), Mt Broad Peak (8047m) and Mt K2 (8,611m) in July 2023 while he reached the peak of Mt Cho-Oyu (8188m) in October 2023.

Nima had a successful year 2023 scaling the Mt Dhaulagiri (8167m) in September but took a break after four climbers died an avalanche at Shishapangma.

"One of them was very close to me, we had climbed five mountains together in Pakistan. He was like a hero to me and a very strong Sherpa. But to know that he got caught in the avalanche and passed away, that was very tough for me," he said.

Nima returned to scaling the peaks earlier this year reaching the top of Mt Annapurna I (8091m) in April and the top of Mt Makalu (8485m) in May 4.

Lakshya Sen enters second round of Arctic Open after opponent concedes match

PTI ■ VANTAA (FINLAND)

India's star shuttler Lakshya Sen progressed to the men's singles round of 16 at the Arctic Open Super 500 tournament after his opponent Rasmus Gemke withdrew from the opening round match here on Wednesday.

Sen, who lost out on a maiden Olympic medal in Paris after defeat in the bronze medal play-off contest, will be up against the winner between seventh seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei and qualifier Arnaud Merkle of France in the next round.

Qualifier Kiran George is the only other Indian in action on Wednesday. He will take on Tzu Wei Wang of Chinese Taipei later in the day.

Earlier on Tuesday, rising Indian shuttler



Malvika Bansod continued her impressive form this year, pulling off a stunning upset against world No 23 Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei to advance to the women's singles pre-quarterfinals.

The 23-year-old southpaw, who clinched

her first title in over two years at the Azerbaijan International in February, showed her resilience in a hard-fought match, winning 21-19, 24-22 in 57 minutes.

However, the challenge will intensify in the next round as the Nagpur shuttler prepares to face a former world champion in Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand in the second round.

Another promising Indian shuttler Unnati Hooda defeated Brazil's Juliana Viana Viera 21-16, 23-25, 21-17 to set up an encounter against Michelle Li of Canada.

Rising Aakarshi Kashyap had also progressed to the round of 16 on Tuesday night, beating Germany's Yvonne Li 21-19, 21-14. She will be next to be up against second seed Yue Han of China.



Kush Maini eyes for F1

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

Indian racer Kush Maini, a rising talent in the motorsport world, continues to make headlines with his impressive performances in the 2024 FIA Formula 2 Championship. Driving for Campos Racing, Maini has shown remarkable consistency throughout the season, cementing his place as a strong contender in the highly competitive racing series.

In an event IAMGAME CONCLAVE 2024, Maini shared the future of Motorsports in India what challenges one can face if anyone wants to pursue a career in Motorsports talking about himself he shared "he was 12 when he left the country to pursue his career in Motorsports World and his family was supportive enough to make his dreams come true."

Currently He is contesting the competition in F2 and a member of the Alpine Academy and also prominent as a reserve driver for Mahindra Racing in Formula E. He started his season off by

Surprised at your decision to retire: Sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya writes to Karmakar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday wrote to Dipa Karmakar conveying his surprise at her decision to retire, a couple of days after the trailblazing Indian gymnast called time on her career.

The 31-year-old Karmakar, who became the first Indian woman gymnast to represent the country at the Games in the 2016 Rio Olympics and finished fourth, announced her retirement on Monday.

"I got to know about your retirement from gymnastics. While your decision surprised me, I have full faith that you have taken this decision keeping in mind your priorities in life and the experiences that you have had. I completely respect your decision," Mandaviya wrote in a letter to Karmakar.

"Your journey in gymnastics, which began at the age of six, has been inspirational. You have scaled the highs in the sport and made the country proud despite facing so many difficulties."

"Being awarded with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel



Ratna Award and the Padma Shri is the indication of your unique contribution," he added.

Mandaviya said the whole country is proud of Karmakar, who routinely performed the highly-difficult Prodnova vault.

"You added a new chapter in Indian gymnastics by participating in the Olympics, which was not only the outcome of our hard work but it is a great matter of pride for the entire country," he added.

Mandaviya said Karmakar's journey, who missed a medal at the Rio Games by 0.15 points, has inspired many young girls in the country.

"Your achievements have not only inspired those who love sports, but especially our daughters, who have got the strength to fulfill their dreams," said the union minister, hoping that Karmakar would be available to share her knowledge with the young athletes sometime in the future.

HI ropes in PFC as title sponsor for India versus Germany bilateral series

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hockey India on Wednesday roped in Power Finance Corporation (PFC), a state-owned company that provides financial assistance to India's power sector, as the title sponsor for the upcoming two-match bilateral series against Germany on October 23 and 24 in New Delhi.

This series marks the return of men's international hockey to the national capital after a decade. The last international match played at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium was the Hero Hockey World League Final - men's round 4, back in January 2014. Under the administrative control of the Ministry of Power, PFC, a public sector undertaking, plays a crucial role in driving growth in the energy sector.

The two matches will be free for spectators and a free digital ticketing system will be introduced. Fans will need to visit the official ticketing link and register their details to receive a virtual ticket for

accessing the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium.

HI president Dilip Tirkey said, "We are delighted to welcome Power Finance Corporation (PFC) as the title sponsor for the highly-anticipated PFC India vs Germany bilateral hockey series 2024."

"This series, being played in New Delhi after a decade, is a significant milestone, not just for the city but for Hockey India as we promote the sport across the country. With the support of PFC, we look forward to creating a thrilling atmosphere at the iconic Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium." HI secretary general Bholu Nath Singh added, "We are thrilled to have one of the leading state-owned companies, Power Finance Corporation (PFC), as the title sponsor for the PFC India vs Germany bilateral hockey series 2024."

"Their support will strengthen Hockey India's vision to grow hockey's presence in India. With PFC, we look forward to providing a top-notch experience for all hockey fans."

getting a pole position and qualifying in third place in Bahrain.

In a conversation with Maini on asking about preparation before the racing event maini shared about tackling the climate when it comes it hot race it requires cardio, lot of cycling, sauna, and do neck flexion and extension to counter the G-Force, Personal trainers are there to update the daily training patterns and look after the racers physical condition events after events.

Talking about F2 to F1 future Maini stated He'll be in England next week to practicing in F1 simulator hopefully in some way we'll be able to see him in F1 grand prix not on grid but in some way, talks are going well let's see what's going to happen.

Kush Maini's journey continues to inspire aspiring racers in India, and his ongoing success in Formula 2 marks him as a driver to watch in the coming years. With dedication and consistent performances, he is well on his way to carving out a place for himself in the upper echelons of motorsport.

ROOT SURPASSES COOK AS LEADING ENGLAND RUN-SCORER IN TEST CRICKET

AP ■ MULTAN (PAKISTAN)
With an exquisite straight drive for four, Joe Root took another of Alastair Cook's records by becoming England's highest run-scorer in test cricket. Root surpassed the retired Cook's total of 12,472 runs by reaching 71 during England's first innings on Day 3 of the first test against Pakistan on Wednesday. The 33-year-old Root moved to fifth place on the all-time list of test run-scorers, behind India's Sachin Tendulkar (15,921), Australia's Ricky Ponting (13,378), South Africa's Jacques Kallis (13,289) and India's Rahul Dravid (13,288). All four above Root are retired and within reach of a batter who said ahead of the tour to Pakistan that he had plenty left in the tank. "The only reason it (Cook's record) is on my mind is because people keep asking me about it, to be honest," Root said. "I see myself playing test cricket for a lot longer. It's not

like I'm going to get to a certain mark or a number and say, 'Right, I'm done now.' I just want to keep enjoying the game, keep playing." Root, who is technically excellent and owns pretty much all the shots, overtook Cook's record of 33 test centuries by an England batter last month when he made hundreds in both innings against Sri Lanka at Lord's. Ben Stokes, the England test captain who is sitting out the first match of the series because of injury, praised Root's character and achievement in a video released by the England and Wales Cricket Board. "The selflessness that he has is an incredible attribute for him," Stokes said. "He always puts the team first, and the fact that he's got so many runs is just a bonus for us. He's an incredible player. It's going to take a long, long time for someone to come in and break that record. Just a great bloke. And an unbelievable feat to score that many runs. "But the non-selfishness that

HIS NEXT BIG TARGET IS TENDULKAR



he possesses is one thing I think sets him above or sets him apart from anybody else who is going to play for England for a long time." Root waved to his teammates soon after reaching the milestone before he raised his bat in acknowledgement. He shook hands with Stokes and bowling mentor James Anderson as he walked off the field at the lunch break, with a 35th test century - and a first in Pakistan - in his sights. Root is playing in his 147th test and came into the Pakistan series averaging more than 50, whereas Cook made 161 test appearances and batted in 291 innings, averaging 45.35. They are England's third and fourth most-capped players, behind now-retired fast bowlers Anderson and Stuart Broad. Root has more runs against India than any other opposition - 2,846 in 30 tests. Next is Australia, against whom he has 2,428 in 34 tests, while his best average is against Sri Lanka at 62.54. Root was England captain from 2017-22. He averaged 52.80 before the captaincy, 46.45 during it, and he is back to his prior level since standing down. The most prolific year of his test career was in 2021, when he scored 1,708 runs. He has passed 1,000 runs in a year five times. He has settled at No. 4 in England's batting order and demonstrated during the recent summer tests against the West Indies and Sri Lanka that he has slightly reined in the bold and occasionally reckless approach he and his England teammates adopted early in the so-called "Bazball" era under coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes. Those risky ramp shots are mostly gone — though he still got himself out attempting one against the Sri Lankans at Lord's — and he is harder to dismiss for it. Root's next big target is displacing Tendulkar — the "Little Master" — atop the all-time list and, injury permitting, he has a good chance of doing so.



PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Two-time Olympic gold-winning American discus thrower Valerie Allman was on Wednesday named the international event ambassador of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon to be held here on October 20. Allman threw 69.50 meters in the Paris Games this year to set a new American record and win the gold medal. In the previous Tokyo Games, she had finished at the top of the podium with a throw of 68.98 meters. Her feat ended USA's wait for a gold in discus throw which they had last won in 2008. Allman, whose personal best is of 71.46 meters, is also a two-

Valerie Allman named Delhi Half Marathon's international event ambassador

time World Championship medallist, clinching the silver in 2023 and a bronze in 2022. "The start line is not just a race; it's a celebration of camaraderie, determination, and resilience, and a showcase of our ability to push limits and achieve new personal milestones," she said in a release issued by the organisers. Paris Olympic 10,000m champion Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei and Kenya's former world record holder Peres Jepchirchir will headline



a strong elite field in the men's and women's events of the Delhi Half Marathon, which is into its 19th year. Cheptegei is the reigning world record holder in 5000m and 10,000m events. He also holds the world's best time over the 15km distance. A three-time world champion in 10,000m, he made his international debut in India at the TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2014, finishing second. The event carries a prize purse of USD 260,000.

NZ batter Williamson to miss initial part of Test series against India

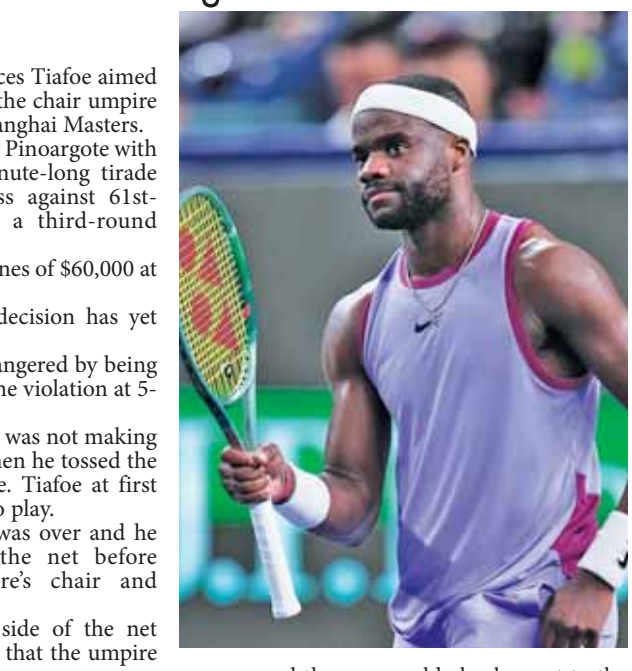
PTI ■ AUCKLAND
Senior batter Kane Williamson is set to miss the initial part of the upcoming three-Test series in India starting on October 16 due to groin strain, with New Zealand naming Mark Chapman as his cover in the 17-man squad here on Wednesday. Williamson, who is dealing with a groin strain, will delay his departure to India where New Zealand will play three Tests at Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai. While senior batting all-rounder Michael Bracewell has been roped in only for the first Test in Bengaluru, spinner Ish Sodhi will be available only for the second and third Tests. Tom Latham will be leading the Kiwis after Tim Southee stepped aside from the leadership role a few days ago. "Williamson experienced groin discomfort during the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle and will require a period of rehabilitation before joining the Blackcaps Test squad in India," New Zealand

Cricket said on their website. New Zealand selector Sam Wells said the decision to delay Williamson's departure to India was to give the former skipper more time to rest. "The advice we've received is that the best course of action is for Kane to rest and rehabilitate now rather than risk aggravating the injury," said Wells. "We're hopeful that if the rehabilitation goes to plan Kane will be available for the latter part of the tour. While it's obviously disappointing to not have Kane available from the start of the tour, it provides an opportunity for someone else to play a role in an important series," he added. Chapman averages above 42 in first-class cricket in 44 matches but is yet to make his Test debut. "We believe Mark (Chapman) is one of our best players of spin and has a proven track-record in the sub-continent," said Wells. "Mark has displayed an ability to play spin proactively in the international arena, and

combined with his excellent first-class record, we see him as someone who can succeed in the type of conditions we expect to encounter in India," he added. Bracewell will return home after the first Test for the birth of his second child and will be replaced by Sodhi. While the opening Test will be played at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium from October 16-20, the second will be held at the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) Stadium in Gahunje, Pune from October 24-28. The third and final Test will be held at the iconic Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai from November 1-5. **New Zealand squad for Test series in India:** Tom Latham (c), Tom Blundell (wk), Michael Bracewell (1st Test only), Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Ish Sodhi (2nd & 3rd Test only), Tim Southee, Kane Williamson, Will Young.

Tennis star France's Tiafoe aims tirade of expletives at umpire after loss at Shanghai Masters

AP ■ SHANGHAI
US Open semifinalist Frances Tiafoe aimed a torrent of expletives at the chair umpire after losing a match at the Shanghai Masters. Tiafoe targeted umpire Jimmy Pinoargote with about 10 expletives in a minute-long tirade after his 5-7 7-5 7-6(5) loss against 61st-ranked Roman Safiullin in a third-round match. The ATP rule book calls for fines of \$60,000 at Masters 1000 tournaments. A tour spokesman said no decision has yet been made on the matter. The 17th-ranked Tiafoe was angered by being docked his first serve for a time violation at 5-5 in the decisive tiebreaker. Pinoargote judged that Tiafoe was not making a genuine attempt to serve when he tossed the ball in the air at the baseline. Tiafoe at first protested before continuing to play. Two points later, the match was over and he congratulated Safiullin at the net before turning toward the umpire's chair and shouting the first expletives. Tiafoe passed to the other side of the net toward his chair and shouted that the umpire had messed up the match. The 26-year-old American said he had been battling on court for three hours for his livelihood, peppering his words with more expletives. Before leaving the court, Tiafoe added: "Never again." Tiafoe could face fines for verbal abuse of an official and for using obscenities. The tournament can take away some of his prize



money, and the case could also be sent to the ATP Member Fines Committee for further investigation. Safiullin advanced to face Novak Djokovic in the round of 16. Tiafoe had a stellar run of form in the summer reaching the final of the Cincinnati Open, where he lost to Jannick Sinner, then reaching the semifinals at the US Open where he lost in five sets to fellow American Taylor Fritz.

Arshdeep Singh enters top 10 among bowlers in ICC T20I rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI
Riding on a string of impressive performances, Indian seamer Arshdeep Singh entered the top 10 among bowlers and was placed eighth in the ICC T20I rankings issued here on Wednesday. The left-arm seamer, who returned 3/14 in the opening T20I against Bangladesh in Gwalior last Sunday, jumped eight spots with 642 rating points to reach the eighth position. He is the only Indian bowler in the top 10. England's Adil Rashid continues as the top-ranked bowler in the shortest format followed by Akeel Hossain of the West Indies and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan at the second and third spots respectively. "Arshdeep is also a big winner in the latest rankings update, with the left-arm pacer rising eight places to equal eighth on the updated list for T20I bowlers and reaching a new career-high rating following his three-wicket haul against Bangladesh," the ICC said on its website. Hardik Pandya, who blasted a 16-ball 39 with five fours and two sixes, moved up seven



places to reach the 60th spot among batters. The ace Indian all-rounder also returned 4-0-26-1 and moved to the third spot as he rose four positions in the list of top all-rounders, which is headed by England's Liam Livingstone with Nepal's Dipendra Singh Airee at the second position. Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is not a part of the India squad for the three T20Is against Bangladesh, dropped one position to fifth and was leapfrogged by Pakistan's Babar Azam. Washington Sundar also improved his ranking as he got to 35th among T20I bowlers, moving up four positions.

Ishan Kishan returns as Jharkhand captain after controversial pullout last season

PTI ■ RANCHI
India batter Ishan Kishan on Wednesday returned to the Jharkhand Ranji team as its captain, following his controversial pullout last season that led to his exclusion from the BCCI central contract. The explosive left-hander, who became a regular in India's white-ball squad after Rishabh Pant's road accident in December 2022, took a break during India's tour of South Africa last year. Post break, he did not participate in any official BCCI matches, which raised a few eyebrows as the board stressed on players prioritising domestic cricket when not on national duty. The 26-year-old resurfaced this February, playing in the privately organised DY Patil T20 Cup ahead of the IPL and sparking a debate over balance between franchise cricket and state commitments.



His absence from domestic cricket during this period contributed to his omission from the BCCI's 2023-24 central contracts. However, Kishan has since worked his way back into the BCCI's good books with strong performances in domestic

cricket, including a century for India C on his return in the Duleep Trophy last month. He also represented the Rest of India in the Irani Cup, scoring 38 in his only innings. Now, as captain of Jharkhand's 16-member squad, Kishan is set to lead a young squad with last season's designated skipper Virat Singh as his deputy and Kumar Kushagra as the wicketkeeper. Jharkhand begin their Ranji Trophy campaign against Assam in Guwahati in Elite Group D. Last season, Jharkhand

finished third from the bottom in Group A, winning two, losing two, and drawing three of their seven matches. "Ishan is an experienced player and he has international experience," chairman of Jharkhand's selection committee Subroto Das was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "We have picked a very young team. Saurabh Tiwary, Shahbaz Nadeem and Varun Aaron had all retired after last season so we had to rethink our strategy. Ishan is capable of leading this young side and we're confident of doing well this Ranji season." **SQUAD:** Ishan Kishan (c), Virat Singh (vc), Kumar Kushagra (wk), Nazim Siddique, Aryaman Sen, Sharandeep Singh, Kumar Suraj, Anukul Roy, Utkarsh Singh, Supriyo Chakraborty, Saurabh Shekhar, Vikas Kumar, Vivekanand Tiwary, Manishi, Ravi Kumar Yadav and Raunak Kumar.



Anmoljeet takes 9 on 'debut' as India U19 complete clean sweep vs Australia

PTI ■ CHENNAI
Debutant off-spinner Anmoljeet Singh and leg-spinner Mohamed Enaan picked 16 out of 20 Australian wickets as India U-19 comfortably won by an innings and 120 runs in the second Youth Test to complete a 2-0 series sweep here on Wednesday. Australia colts lost as many as 17 wickets on the third day after commencing on their overnight score of 142 for 3 in reply to India's massive first-innings total of 492. The visitors were all out for 277

in their first essay with skipper Oliver Peake (117 off 143 balls) and keeper Alex Lee Young (66) adding 166 for the fourth wicket. After Lee Young was dismissed, the last six wickets fell for 59 runs. Kerala boy Enaan (4/60 in 22.2 overs), who had once attended Saqlain Mushtaq's clinic in Dubai and Ldhiana's Anmoljeet (4/72 in 24 overs), who hero worships Harbhajan Singh, were the wreckers-in-chief. In four-day cricket, the follow-on can be enforced if the team batting second is trailing by

more than 150 runs. India U-19 had a lead of 115 runs. After being enforced to follow-on, Anmoljeet, who had taken an astounding 65 wickets in the Vijay Merchant (U-16) Trophy in the 2023 season, came back to get 5 for 32 in 13.3 overs as Australia were skittled out for 95 in 31.3 overs. Eight Aussie players failed to reach double digits and four of them didn't bother to trouble the scorers. While Anmoljeet had match figures of 9/104, Enaan wasn't left far behind with 7/97 to show for his efforts.