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MANE LEADS AIR RIFLE DOMINANCE WITH DOUBLE GOLD 11 SPORTS

NO DIVINTY ON THE ROAD

SC to give guidelines on removing illegal religious structures



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will lay down pan-India guidelines on demolition of properties and any religious structure in the middle of a road, be it a 'dargah' or a temple, "has to go" because public interest is paramount. The SC reiterated that merely because somebody is an accused or even a convict cannot be a ground for demolition of property. A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said unauthorised construction made by any person, irrespective of his religion or belief, has to be removed. The

Bench reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas which have alleged that properties, including those accused of crime, were being demolished in several states. The SC said its September 17 order, which had said there will be no demolition of properties till October 1 without its permission, will continue till it decides the matter. "Whatever we are laying down, we are a secular country. We are laying it down for all the citizens, for all the institutions, not for any particular community," the Bench said. "On the first day we had pointed out, if there is any religious structure on the

middle of a road, may it be a 'dargah' or some temple, it has to go because public safety and public interest is paramount," it said, observing that there cannot be a different law for a particular religion. "We are going to make it clear that merely because somebody is an accused, or even somebody is a convict, can't be a ground for demolition," said the court. The SC made it clear that it will not protect any encroachment on public places, roads, footpaths, government lands, forests, water bodies and the likes. "Whatever directions we issue, it will be applicable pan-India," it said, adding,

"We will take care to ensure that our order does not help the encroachers on any of the public places." During the hearing, the Bench observed that notices for demolition of properties be sent through registered post to the owners and it should also be displayed on an online portal so that a digital record is there. It also observed that judicial oversight may also be required over the correctness of order passed by the authorities. The Bench suggested there should be a time window of 10 or 15 days between the order of demolition and its implementation so that people can make alternate arrangement. "... it is not a happy sight to see women and children on the roads," the Bench observed, adding, if demolition is done after 15 days, nothing is going to be lost. The SC was hearing the petitions filed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind and others seeking directions to various state governments to ensure no further demolition of properties of those accused in cases of rioting and violence takes place. The Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind had earlier filed a plea in the SC over the demolition of some buildings in Jahangirpuri area of the national capital.

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War in West Asia will hit fuel in India

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing geopolitical crisis in West Asia, and further escalation in the Israel-Iran-Lebanon conflict is likely to impact India soon. Industry insiders said it is certain that crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports will get dearer since the supply could hit both the international and domestic markets. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85 per cent of its requirement. "Our economy is too sensitive to oil price volatility and it directly affects inflation, trade imbalance, foreign exchange reserves, and an acute fluctuation in rupee valuation. While the situation is precarious and both the government as well as business stakeholders are keeping a watch on the hourly crisis in West Asia, we are evaluating the current global oil flows as international oil prices could see an increase anytime. For India it's a festive season and it heavily impacts us," an industry source explained, on conditions of anonymity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday spoke to his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu over the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Modi expressed his concerns about the escalating tensions



Smoke rises from an Israeli airstrike that hit the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, Tuesday AP/PTI

in West Asia, emphasising that "terrorism has no place in our world." According to media reports, crude oil futures on Tuesday declined 0.5 per cent to Rs 5,739 per barrel as participants trimmed their positions on low demand. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for October delivery fell Rs 3 or 0.5 per cent to Rs 5,739 per barrel with a business volume of 17,697 lots. Globally, West Texas Intermediate crude was trading 0.18 per cent higher at USD 68.29 per barrel, while Brent crude was trading 0.17 per cent up at USD 71.82 per barrel in New York. Analysts said Oil and LNG prices are expected to increase significantly if Iran decides to block the Strait of Hormuz, through which countries such as India import crude oil from

Saudi Arabia, Iraq and UAE, resulting in a surge in inflation, due to the Iran-Israel conflict. India, which relies on overseas suppliers for over 85% of its crude oil requirements, imports oil from Saudi, Iraq and UAE as well as liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar through the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow sea passage between Oman and Iran. It is approximately 40 km wide at the narrowest point, with two kilometres of navigable channels for incoming and outgoing ships. It serves as the primary route for the export of crude oil by Saudi Arabia (6.3 million barrels per day), the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq (3.3 million bpd) and Iran (1.3 million bpd).

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SIT pauses Tirupati laddu probe

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Ch. Dwaraka Tirumala Rao on Tuesday said that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the State government will temporarily stall its probe into the alleged 'adulteration' of Tirupati laddus with animal fats. The probe has been put on hold as the matter is sub-judice in the Supreme Court. Over the last two days, the SIT has probed the procurement and sampling processes, trying to understand how it is possible to adulterate the laddus, said Rao. "First they (SIT) have to understand the process, study it and take all the information, but in the meantime, an order has come from the Supreme Court and in line with that, we have stopped it (probe)," the DGP said while speaking to reporters. When the case is being examined under the purview of the apex court, it is not appropriate to talk more, he said, hinting at the next hearing of the case in the Supreme Court on October 3. The top court was hearing a batch of pleas, including those seeking a court-monitored probe into the alleged use of animal fat in making Tirupati laddus.

Sonam Wangchuk on indefinite fast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and several others who were detained at the Delhi border while marching to the capital to demand Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh on Tuesday, launched an indefinite fast at police stations where they have been kept. Meanwhile petitions were filed in the Delhi High Court against the detention. The bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela agreed for listing on October 3 by a lawyer for Wangchuk's "next friend". Wangchuk was leading the march, 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra', which began from Leh a month ago. He and around 120 others from Ladakh were detained on Monday night. The march was organised by the Leh Apex Body (LAB), which along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), has been spearheading an agitation for the past four years to demand statehood for Ladakh. They also seek its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, an early recruitment process along with a public service commission for Ladakh, and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts.

Continued on page 8

Team India creates Test history

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian cricket team broke many records and secured a comprehensive Test series victory against Bangladesh on Tuesday. With this win India sealed the series. The game was disrupted due to heavy rain on day two and three. India pulled out a seven wicket win in a historic Test Match at Kanpur. Indian bowlers made their mark, and wiped out team Bangladesh with 233 in the first innings. Jasprit Bumrah took the charge with spin duo R. Ashwin-Ravinder Jadeja to swing the match in India's favour. With this win India broke many records in its cricket history. It is for the first time in 85 years that Indian batting did not play a single maiden over in the whole match, which indicated the attacking approach to pass the lead to Bangladesh in day's play. In 1939, at the England South-Africa match at Durban, England won without playing a single maiden over in the match. Now India and England have become the only test teams in history of Test cricket who won the Test match without playing a single maiden over in the team innings. After breaking multiple world records with their batting on Day



Indian cricket team players pose for photographers with the trophy after winning the second test cricket match between India and Bangladesh, at the Green Park stadium, in Kanpur, Tuesday PTI

4, the hosts bowled out the visitors early on Day 5, and chased down a modest target of 95 with over a session to spare. Their aggressive batting style has led to the setting of a new 19-year-old world record. The Indian team has established a new world record for the highest team scoring rate across both innings during their impressive victory in Kanpur. In the first innings, they scored 285/9 declared in just 34.4 overs, achieving a remarkable run rate of 8.22. In the second innings, they spearheaded by Yashasvi Jaiswal, they chased down the 95-run

target in 17.2 overs at a run rate of 5.65. This results in a combined run rate of 7.36 across both innings, significantly surpassing the previous world record of 6.80 set by South Africa against Zimbabwe in 2005. India has achieved an impressive streak of 18 consecutive Test series victories at home, starting with a clean sweep against Australia in 2013. The last team to beat India in a home Test series was England in 2012. Since their loss to South Africa during the 2021-22 series, India has not lost a Test series, either at home or abroad.

Record voter turnout in J and K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir recorded an overall voter turnout of over 62 per cent in all three phases of the maiden Assembly polls, held after the Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A in 2019. The entire poll process was completed peacefully amid unprecedented security arrangements. However, the 2024 Assembly polls could not breach the previous best 65.91 per cent voter turnout recorded during the 2014 Assembly polls. In 2008, a 61 per cent voter turnout was recorded across Jammu and Kashmir. The highest voter turnout of over 66 per cent was recorded across 40 Assembly segments across seven districts on Tuesday. The first and the second phases witnessed 61.38 and 57.31 per cent voter turnout respectively. The first-time voters, belonging to the West Pakistani refugee community, Valmikis, and Gorkha community danced to the polling booths in jubilation and also distributed sweets as they exercised their right to franchise for the first time in the Assembly polls.



People wait in queues to cast their votes at a polling booth during the third and final phase of Jammu & Kashmir Assembly elections, at Gurez valley in Bandipora district, J and K, Tuesday PTI

In the Jammu region, 18 out of 24 Assembly segments (across Jammu, Samba, Kathua, and Udhampur districts) witnessed over 70 per cent voter turnout while only two assembly segments of Bahu and Jammu West witnessed less than 60 per cent polling till 5 pm. In Kashmir valley, only two Assembly segments of Gurez and Handwara witnessed over 70 per cent voter turnout while seven segments (across Bandipora, Kupwara, and Baramulla) witnessed over 60 per cent voter turnout. Five Assembly constituencies witnessed over 55 per cent voter turnout and 2 Assembly segments of Sopore and

Baramulla witnessed less than 50 per cent voter turnout on Tuesday. Stakes were high for the Bharatiya Janta Party in the final round of polling across 24 Assembly segments. Compared to 2014, the 11 Assembly segments of Jammu district witnessed approximately eight per cent less polling in 2024. The significant drop in voter turnout may alter the poll results on seats that were witnessing close contests between the BJP and the Congress/National Conference. BJP is placed comfortably in the Udhampur district.

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Actors Rajinikanth, Govinda stable

CHENNAI

MUMBAI

The health condition of Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth is stable and the actor got admitted to a corporate hospital here for a "periodic check-up," Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma. Subramanian said on Tuesday. The actor would return home after the check-up, the minister said. Rajinikanth was admitted to the hospital late Monday night. Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi said in a post on the social media platform: "I stand with the millions of devoted fans of Thiru Rajinikanth around the globe, in praying for his swift and smooth recovery." Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin wished the superstar a speedy recovery, and scores of the top actor's fans sent their prayers on social media and wishes, too, for his quick recovery. The 73-year-old popular actor is likely to be discharged on Tuesday evening, the source added.

Actor Govinda was injured in the leg on Tuesday after his revolver accidentally went off at his Mumbai residence, police said. The 60-year-old actor is out of danger and recuperating at a private hospital, a Mumbai police official said. Govinda, a favourite with audiences for his impeccable comic timing and dancing skills, later issued a statement informing his fans he is doing better. "With the blessings of my fans, my parents and god, I am doing better now. I was hit by a bullet, which has now been removed," Govinda stated. The accident happened around 4.45 am when he was about to leave home to catch a 6 am flight to Kolkata for a show, according to his manager Shashi Sinha. The trigger of the licensed revolver was pushed accidentally while the actor was keeping the gun in the cupboard, and the bullet hit his leg, police said.

A soldier's bittersweet homecoming

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



Family 'sad and happy' as mortal remains return after 56 years

More than five decades after he went missing in an air crash at Rohtang Pass in Himachal Pradesh, Elanthoor village in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district is getting ready to welcome the mortal remains of Thomas Cherian, a craftsman in the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers of the Indian Army and bury him near the tombs of his late parents OM Thomas and Eliyamma. It was on February 7 1968 that the then Soviet Union made AN-12 transport aircraft went missing somewhere near Rohtang Pass while it was carrying 102 troops from Chandigarh to Leh. The twin-engine aircraft with the entire passengers perished in the snowy slopes of Rohtang Pass, nearly 4000 meters above sea level. Various units of the

Indian Army have been searching for the remains of the aircraft and the passengers since then. Cherian's siblings, Thomas Varghese, Thomas Thomas and Mary Thomas, are now in a dilemma. Should they cry, or be happy, over the news that their elder brother, who would have turned 78 had he been alive, is coming home. "There was not a single day, even in happiness and sorrow, he was

away from our memories. It was on February 8 or 9, 1968, that our father came home with a newspaper which had reported that an aircraft belonging to the Air Force had gone missing, and our brother was one of the travelers in the flight," Thomas Thomas, one of the younger brothers, told The Pioneer. It took another couple of days for the family to get an official communication from the EME Center about Cherian's death. "Our parents were shattered over the news. Ours is a close-knit family and we had a strong bond. My mother who breathed her last in 1998 had always hoped that Achayan (Malayalam for elder brother) would come home one day," Mary Thomas said. She was just 12 years old when she saw Cherian for the last time. Thomas Cherian was the second son in the family of five. The elder brother late Thomas Mathew too had served the

defense forces and later joined the Forest Department of Kerala. The two brothers and Mary Thomas consider the tracing of the remains of Cherian as a "miracle and gift from God Almighty". "We are choked with emotions of all kinds. God in Heaven has heard our prayers and my brother can have his eternal sleep along with our parents in the family tomb at the village church," Mary said, while Thomas Varghese sat nearby unable to speak even a word. Both Thomas Thomas and Mary expressed their gratitude to the Center for providing family pension to their mother Eliyamma till her last. "The only sorrow is that we do not have a single picture of our brother, and are dependent on the Army headquarters for retrieving a picture," Mary said, with tears rolling down her cheeks.

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Bioplastic Industrial Policy, other proposals get Cabinet approval

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Twenty five proposals, including Bioplastic Industrial Policy, Chief Minister Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan, and UP Agri Project worth Rs 4,000 crore, were approved in the cabinet meeting headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath here on Tuesday evening.

Under the UP Agri Project scheme, market support system and training will be provided to the farmers' crops and fertilisers. A proposal for the policy of purchasing maize, sorghum and millet has been passed.

Under the Kanhar Irrigation Scheme in Sonbhadra, Rs 3,394.65 crore has been approved. Farmer families around Sonbhadra will get the benefit of irrigation and drinking water.

Under the Chief Minister Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan Scheme, one lakh youth will get a loan of up to Rs 5 lakh without interest every year. Those who return loan timely will be provided additional loan of Rs 10 lakh in which 50 per cent rebate will be provided on interest besides cut in margin money. The loan is to be repaid within five years.

Approval has also been given to open two private universities in the state in the cabinet meeting. Maize, millet and sorghum will be purchased at the support price. Maize will be purchased at the rate of Rs 2,225/quintal, millet at Rs 2,625/quintal, and sorghum hybrid at Rs 3571/quintal.

Maize will be purchased in 21 districts, millet in 32 districts, and sorghum in 11 districts from October 1 to December 31.

Govt to reopen closed cinema halls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant move, the UP cabinet has approved a proposal to reopen closed cinema halls across the state, while also endorsing the Integrated Incentive Scheme aimed at promoting multiplex construction in districts lacking such facilities. This initiative will support both single-screen cinema halls and the modernisation of existing ones over the next five years.

State Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna announced that the scheme would fund projects through the SGST collected from cinema halls and multiplexes, ensuring no extra financial burden on the state government.

KEY GRANTS UNDER INTEGRATED INCENTIVE SCHEME

100% SGST for 3 years: For demolishing a closed or operational cinema to build a commercial complex and modern cinema.

75% SGST for 3 years: For reopening closed or operational cinemas with structural changes. 50% SGST for 3 Years: For reopening closed single-screen cinemas without structural changes by March 31, 2025.

100% SGST for 3 years: For constructing a new single-screen cinema with at least 75 seats.

100% SGST for 5 years: For opening a multiplex in districts without one.

100% SGST for 3 years: For

constructing a new multiplex in districts where one already exists.

Upgradation grants: An amount equivalent to the SGST collected for upgradation, capped at 50% of actual investment.

ADDITIONAL INDUSTRY STATUS FOR IT SERVICES

The Yogi government is also set to grant industry status to the Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled Services (ITeS) sectors, with plans to offer land at industrial rates and provide power at lower costs to attract investments. This reclassification is expected to yield approximately 18% savings in power costs, boosting profitability for IT/ITeS units in Uttar Pradesh.

As many as 28 districts of eight divisions will be included in the UP Agri Project. The project worth about Rs 4,000 crore will be for six years. Through the project, work will be done to increase the productivity and quality of major crops. A market support system will be set up. Training work will also be done. A proposal to create SEZ for the agricultural sector has also been passed.

Other major decisions also taken in the cabinet meeting included:

Approval of the proposal to develop solar parks on the build on and operate phase on both sides of Bundelkhand Expressway.

Approval for the establishment of Planetarium Science City and Science Lessons in Agra.

Approval for the fifth amendment in the Uttar Pradesh Advocate General and Law Officer Establishment Service Rules 2009.

Approval for amendment in Excise Policy 2024-25.

Approval for the purchase of 380 new vehicles in place of old vehicles in UP 112.

Approval to purchase 75 forensic mobile vans in 75 districts.

Approval to Uttar Pradesh Labour Welfare Council Employee Service Rules 2024.

Approval also given to open two private universities in Meerut and Mathura. Investors

in the private university scheme will be given a 20 to 50 per cent discount on stamp duty. Due to this, the top five foreign universities will get 100 per cent exemption in stamp duty. Apart from this, the proposal to expand Lucknow's King George Medical University (KGMU) has also been accepted.

Incentive policy has been approved for running closed cinema halls again, their reconstruction, opening multiplex cinemas.

Approval of the proposal to provide 19324.67 square meter Nazul land free of cost to the Tourism department for the ancient Shiva Temple Corridor in Gola tehsil of Lakhimpur Kheri.

Delivery boy murder case: Police recover looted mobile phones

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after detaining one of the accused in the murder case of delivery agent Bharat Kumar, police announced the recovery of the looted mobile phones, including an iPhone, that the accused had ordered through an e-commerce company. The arrested accused, Akash Sharma from Barabanki, was residing in Indiranagar at the time of his arrest.

DCP (East) Shashank Singh revealed in a press conference that Akash and his accomplice, Gajanan—who is the prime accused—had placed the order for the phones and killed Bharat after he demanded payment.

"Bharat asked Gajanan to pay for the mobile phones, but he paid for that request with his life. They lured Bharat into a room where they strangled him with a phone charger wire. They then stuffed his body into a luggage bag belonging to the company and disposed of it in a canal," he stated.

The DCP did not clarify how the suspects managed to transport the body in a bag or whether they dismembered it to fit it inside.

The investigation began when an official from the online shopping company reported Bharat missing.

"We collected every detail regarding the items Bharat was

supposed to deliver and the customers he was to meet. During this process, we discovered that Bharat was scheduled to deliver two mobile phones to Gajanan, who had placed the order under his neighbour's name," the DCP explained.

While Gajanan managed to escape, the police apprehended Akash, who confessed to the crime.

"Teams from NDRF and SDRF are currently searching for the bag that contained the body, which was dumped in the canal. We have yet to recover the bag," he added.

Bharat's family members said that they had petitioned senior government officials to expedite the search for their missing son after he disappeared on September 23. However, these claims were not mentioned in the police's official communications.

The accused stole a gold chain from 70-year-old IAS officer Prem Narayan Dwivedi while he was out for an evening walk. In an attempt to protect his chain, the officer suffered a fracture in his shoulder during the struggle with the accused. Initially, police believed the theft was carried out by a single perpetrator.

Those arrested were identified as Raj Pratap Singh (24), an unemployed resident of Lucknow, and Indal Kumar (25), a private driver. Another accomplice, Rahul Srivastava, remains at large.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), North, Ram Nayan Singh confirmed that the stolen gold chain was recovered, along with Rs 7,810 and a .32 bore pistol from the accused. The DCP stated that the investigation team reviewed CCTV footage and, with the assistance of an informer, apprehended the suspects near the Vikas Nagar mini stadium. Police records indicate that Raj Pratap Singh has six prior cases against him, while Indal Kumar has three cases registered in various police stations across the city.

The incident occurred when Dwivedi, who retired around ten years ago after serving as district magistrate in several UP districts, was on an evening walk near his home in Sector 3, Vikas Nagar, on Saturday.

Tipsy youth attacks retd Jal Nigam engineer, kin

Lucknow (PNS): A drunken youth allegedly attacked a retired Jal Nigam engineer and his daughter-in-law who came to his rescue in the Ashiyana police station area. The accused is yet to be apprehended by police.

According to the victim, Kamta Prasad Kanaujia, a retired engineer from Jal Nigam and a resident of Sector-L in Ashiyana, the incident occurred around 7 pm on Sunday. His neighbour Abhishek Tiwari returned home intoxicated and was standing in the lane, allegedly mouthing abuses.

Kamta Prasad attempted to intervene, advising Abhishek to stop using foul language in public, especially with women and children present in nearby homes. However, Abhishek became enraged, allegedly entered Kamta Prasad's house and attacked him.

Hearing the commotion, Kamta Prasad's son and daughter-in-law rushed to help, but Abhishek allegedly assaulted both of them as well. The accused fled the scene only when neighbours began to converge on the scene. The victim promptly contacted the police control room and later filed a formal complaint at the Ashiyana police station. A case has been registered, and an investigation is underway.

Insurance inquiry blows lid off murder plot

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A query from an insurance company unveiled the mystery surrounding the death of a woman in an accident in Chinhat. The police claimed to have worked out the case, which resembles a plot straight out of a film. Those arrested include Kuldeep Singh from Barabanki, Deepak Verma from Indiranagar, and Alok Nigam from Hasanganj.

The victim, Puja Yadav of Chinhat, was run over by a vehicle on May 20, 2023. Her father-in-law Ram Milan initially filed a case regarding her death, leading to a report of a road accident and subsequent filing of a chargesheet. DCP (East) Shashank Singh explained that Puja's family had taken out an insurance policy in her name, prompting the insurance company to reach out to the police with some queries.

"The questions posed by the insurance company were alarming, leading the police to reopen

the investigation," he said. The prime conspirator, Kuldeep Singh, had arranged for Puja to marry Abhishek, Ram Milan's son. According to police, Puja's husband Abhishek and her father-in-law Ram Milan, along with accomplices Kuldeep Singh, Deepak Verma (the driver of the vehicle that hit Puja), and Alok Nigam (a lawyer), planned her murder.

They intended to stage it as a road accident to claim the insurance payout of Rs 50 lakh. The group also secured a loan of Rs 10 lakh from Mudra Bank, financing four four-wheelers and two two-wheelers in Puja's name. "They burdened Puja, who was unaware of their malicious intent, with substantial financial liabilities," the DCP said.

When the insurance company investigated the incident, doubts arose, leading to a complaint being filed with the police. The investigation revealed that the entire plan was orchestrated to claim the insurance money.

Man throws boiling milk on wife

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man, frustrated by his wife's alleged argumentative behaviour, threw boiling milk on her, causing minor burns in the PGI police station area on Monday morning. The incident occurred after a heated dispute between the couple, identified as Sonu Kaushal and Mohini Kaushal. Following the incident, both Sonu and Mohini went to the police station and filed complaints against each other.

Sonu was taken into custody by the police, who are currently interrogating him. Sonu Kaushal, who works as a salesman at an electronics showroom, lives with his wife and their two daughters in a rented house in Kumhar Mandi, Telibagh.

According to Mohini, they had been married for five years. She explained that the argument started on Sunday

night while she was boiling milk for their child. During this time, she received a call from a female friend and stepped outside to take the call. When Mohini returned, she found Sonu upset, having seen the milk boiling unattended. The two began to quarrel as Sonu accused her of neglecting her responsibilities. The argument escalated when Mohini defended her friend.

According to Mohini, Sonu then physically assaulted her, slamming her head against the wall and pouring boiling milk over her, causing burns. Mohini claimed that Sonu refused to allow her to seek medical treatment and kept her in pain throughout the day. Telibagh police station in-charge Nimesh Dubey stated that both the husband and wife have filed complaints against each other, and an investigation is underway.

36.80 cr saplings planted from July 20 to Sept 30

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh set a historic record by planting 36.51 crore saplings in a single day on July 20. The state has now surpassed this achievement, with over 36.80 crore saplings planted between July 20 and September 30.

Making the above claims here on Tuesday evening, an official spokesman of the government claimed that the department of Rural Development led the efforts with 13.53 crore saplings, closely followed by the Forest department with 12.92

crore. Sonbhadra district ranks first, having planted more than 1.55 crore saplings. Additionally, in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a leader in the 'Ek Ped Ma Ka Naam' campaign, he claimed.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the 'Ped Lagao, Ped Bachao Jan Abhiyan-2024' by planting saplings in Lucknow on July 20.

On the same day, he extended the momentum of the campaign by planting saplings in Gorakhpur and Prayagraj. The initial goal was to plant 36.50 crore saplings on July 20, but

the state exceeded this target by planting 36,51,45,477 saplings—1,45,477 more than planned.

The campaign continued uninterrupted under the guidance of CM Yogi, and as a result, the total number of saplings planted increased to 36.80 crore by September 30. This achievement was made possible through the combined efforts of all departments, led by the Forest, Wildlife, and Environment department.

Sonbhadra led the campaign with the highest number of saplings planted, reaching 1.55 crore by September 30, up from 1.53 crore on July 20. In

Jhansi, the count rose from 97 lakh saplings on July 20 to 98.70 lakh by September 30. Lakhimpur Kheri saw its numbers grow from 95 lakh to 96.18 lakh, while Jalaun increased from 94 lakh to 95.22 lakh during the same period.

In Mirzapur, the number of saplings planted rose from 93 lakh to 94.06 lakh. The department of Rural Development spearheaded the plantation efforts, planting 13,54,62,142 saplings by September 30. The Forest department played a crucial role in enhancing the state's green cover by planting 12,92,66,486 saplings.

Youth abducted, beaten up over disagreement

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A group of youths allegedly abducted a young man over a minor disagreement, forced him into their car, and drove him around the city for two hours before finally dumping him by the roadside in Gomti Nagar. The incident took place late Saturday night and into early Sunday morning. The victim, Akash Singh (26), has filed a complaint with the police, but it has yet to be addressed. According to his account, the assailants abandoned him in an injured state after beating him throughout the two-hour ordeal.

The altercation began at a petrol pump in the Gomti Nagar police station area. Akash, a resident of Viram Khand-4 who works in the travel industry, had gone to the petrol pump with his friends Uddeshya, Tanmay, and another companion at around midnight on Saturday.

He got into a minor argument with another young man. Infuriated by the disagreement, the youth called his associates. Within moments, 8-10 men arrived in three cars. "They grabbed me and forced me into one of their cars. They drove around the city for two hours, beating me the entire time with sticks. I suffered several injuries, and they even broke my phone to prevent me from calling for help," Akash alleged.

The group later stopped at a petrol station at the Madhurima crossing to refuel their vehicles. By that time, Akash's friends had informed the police. Sensing trouble, the assailants threw Akash out of the car before fleeing the scene. Akash and his friends immediately went to the Gomti Nagar police station to report the incident, but they claim that their

Pathak stresses on need for awareness to prevent communicable diseases

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Health Minister Brajesh Pathak emphasised the importance of awareness in preventing communicable diseases during the launch of a month-long campaign at the Aliganj Community Health Centre (CHC) on Tuesday.

"The government is committed to eliminating communicable diseases. We are running campaigns throughout the year, and starting today, teams will go door-to-door as part of this initiative," said Pathak, who is also UP's deputy chief minister. He highlighted the critical roles of councillors, social workers,

and local residents in combating diseases such as dengue, malaria, chikungunya, and kala-azar.

"Our efforts involve coordination with 13 departments, including health, municipal corporations, rural development, LDA, and housing development, and we have seen significant success so far," he noted.

Pathak urged the public to take preventive measures by avoiding water accumulation both inside and outside their homes. "Keep empty plots clean and do not allow dirt to build up. Avoid filling water in coolers, pots, or tires, as this can reduce

mosquito breeding significantly. Pouring burnt motor oil or kerosene into collected water can also help," he said.

"Anti-larvae spraying will be conducted, along with a cleanliness drive to protect people from communicable diseases. Health workers will visit homes to check for mosquito larvae and will assist in eliminating them. If a dengue or malaria patient is identified, testing will be extended to family members and neighbours," he explained.

Pathak stressed the importance of identifying sensitive areas prone to dengue, malaria, and other communicable diseases.

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

Be it known to all that the name of my son Tayyab Quraishi, as mentioned in his Passport No. N4832188, has been changed to Tayyab Aamer Quraishi. In future he should be known as Tayyab Aamer Quraishi for all purposes. Aamer Hafeez Quraishi. 48 Shadab Colony, Mahanagar, Lucknow

NOTICE
I have changed my name from HAZRA BEGUM to HAZRA BEGAM for all future Purposes. Hazra Begam W/O Intikhab Alam 89/140, Ramchandi Akkada Dalt Purwa Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE
I have changed my name from MOHD PARVEJ to MOHAMMAD PARVEZ KHAN for all future Purposes. Mohammad Parvez Khan S/O Mohd Aslam R/O 19/384, Husain Nagar Shuklaganj Unnao (U.P)

NOTICE
I have changed my name from Bipin Kumar to Bipin Kumar Vishwakarma, in future I shall be known as Jagdish Prasad Vishwakarma. Jagdish Prasad Vishwakarma, s/o Vindheshwari Prasad Vishwakarma, Ashapur Jethwara, Prayagraj UP.

NOTICE
It is informed to the general public that in my service record my wife's name is Radha and date of birth is 10 October 1968 and in the Aadhar card my wife's name is Radha Singh and date of birth is 01 January 1968. But both these names are of the same person. Hence they should be known and identified as the same person. Yogendra Singh son of late Rustam Singh Resident 906/10 New Bastepur Tehsil Sadar Raebareli

CLASSIFIEDS
NOTICE

NOTICE
Be it known to all that the name of my son Furqan Quraishi, as mentioned in his Passport No. N3580946, has been changed to Furqan Aamer Quraishi. In future he should be known as Furqan Aamer Quraishi for all purposes. Aamer Hafeez Quraishi. 48 Shadab Colony, Mahanagar, Lucknow

NOTICE
I have changed my name from FURQAN AHMAD SIDDIQUI to MOHAMMAD FURQAN SIDDIQUI for all future Purposes. Mohammad Furqan Siddiqui S/O Mohammad Mumshad Siddiqui R/O 2/15, Eidgh Colony Benajhabar Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE
I have changed my name from Jagdish Prasad to Jagdish Prasad Vishwakarma, in future I shall be known as Jagdish Prasad Vishwakarma. Jagdish Prasad Vishwakarma, s/o Vindheshwari Prasad Vishwakarma, Ashapur Jethwara, Prayagraj UP.

NOTICE
I Kulsum Begum W/o Israr Ahmad R/o 311/4, Juhi Lal Colony, Kanpur-208014. Have changed my name to Kulsum Nisha for all future purposes

NOTICE
I, Pushpendra Verma S/o Sh. Mukesh Kumar Verma declare that I have lost my Class - X Marksheet and Pass Certificate of I.C.S.E., Unique ID 7197417, passed in the year 2020, document serial no. TR 20166692. Any type of use will be illegal.

Youth abducted, beaten up over disagreement

A group of youths allegedly abducted a young man over a minor disagreement, forced him into their car, and drove him around the city for two hours before finally dumping him by the roadside in Gomti Nagar. The incident took place late Saturday night and into early Sunday morning. The victim, Akash Singh (26), has filed a complaint with the police, but it has yet to be addressed. According to his account, the assailants abandoned him in an injured state after beating him throughout the two-hour ordeal.

The altercation began at a petrol pump in the Gomti Nagar police station area. Akash, a resident of Viram Khand-4 who works in the travel industry, had gone to the petrol pump with his friends Uddeshya, Tanmay, and another companion at around midnight on Saturday.

He got into a minor argument with another young man. Infuriated by the disagreement, the youth called his associates. Within moments, 8-10 men arrived in three cars. "They grabbed me and forced me into one of their cars. They drove around the city for two hours, beating me the entire time with sticks. I suffered several injuries, and they even broke my phone to prevent me from calling for help," Akash alleged.

The group later stopped at a petrol station at the Madhurima crossing to refuel their vehicles. By that time, Akash's friends had informed the police. Sensing trouble, the assailants threw Akash out of the car before fleeing the scene. Akash and his friends immediately went to the Gomti Nagar police station to report the incident, but they claim that their

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Notice Inviting Tender

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

| Sr. No. | Name of Work/Item | Period/Tentative Qty |
|---------|---|---|
| 1. | For Verka Mohali Dairy Hiring of agency for packaging of dahi pouch/ cups/ matkas, lassi pouches, kheer cups, ghee, paneer and yoghurt packaging and recombination of white butter and reconstitution of SMP. | As per day to day requirement of Market |
| 2. | For Verka Bathinda Dairy Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Wifi & LAN networking infrastructure complete in all respects for Verka Bathinda Dairy. | 01 complete job |
| 3. | For Verka Ludhiana Dairy a) Hiring of passenger vehicles Innova crysta without driver for minimum running of 2000 kms per month on lump sum basis. b) Pest control service, DIET (GADVASU) and MCCs which include control of flies, mosquitoes, lizards, rodent etc. c) Transportation of LSHS/HPS (Heavy Petroleum Stock) from Panipat/ Mathura refinery to Verka Ludhiana Dairy. | 01 No. Annual/One job Annual |
| 4. | For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Lifting/Sale of Paneer whey from Verka Jalandhar Dairy. b) Labour contract for loading/unloading of milk products (SMP/WMP, Dairy Whitener, White Butter, Ghee, Pio etc) and empty tins, cartons, jars etc. | Annual Annual |
| 5. | For Verka Sangrur Dairy Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Wi-Fi, LAN networking infrastructure complete in all respects for Verka Sangrur Dairy. | - |
| 6. | For Verka Cattle Feed Plant, Bhatiana (Khanna) a) Transportation of Molasses from The Budhewal and The Morinda cooperative sugar mills ltd. to Verka cattle feed plant, Bhatiana (Khanna). b) Disposal of old bardana (Jute & P.P Bags) | Annual Annual |

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

NA/12/25746/2023/38151 Dated CHD :- 10/1/2024
Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

Athletes, sportspersons must stay away from drugs: CM

Medal winners felicitated

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated on Tuesday that athletes and sportspersons must stay away from drugs, emphasising, "Drugs lead to destruction; those who turn to drugs will not achieve anything significant in life." The chief minister also cautioned them against smart-phone addiction. Speaking at a ceremony organised at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow to honour athletes who made the country and UP proud on a global scale, Yogi shared his mantra for success with the youth and athletes. The CM noted that smart-phones have become the greatest challenge for today's young generation, affecting both their time and efforts. He encouraged the youth to prepare themselves, assuring that both the Central and state governments are creating suitable conditions for their progress. "Sports facilities are being developed in cities and villages across the state to integrate sports into their lives. Alongside quality training, skilled trainers are also being made available," he added. To motivate the youth towards sports, CM Yogi also shared the inspirational stories of the athletes attending the felicitation ceremony. In the programme called 'Jinhone Badhaya Desh Ka Maan, Aisi Pratibhaon Ko Samman', 14 Olympians and Paralympic athletes were felicitated. During the ceremony, Yogi distributed prize money of ₹ 22.70 crore to these athletes. The event was attended by a total of 7 medal-winning Olympians and Paralympians, as well as seven other participants from the Games. The honoured medal winners included Praveen Kumar, Suhay LY, Ajit Singh, Preeti Pal, Simran, Lalit Upadhyay, and Raj Kumar Pal. Emphasising that every competition, whether small or large, provides an opportunity for athletes to progress, Yogi said, "Today, the sports environment in the country has transformed. The results of the systematic efforts made over the last decade for the promotion of sports and athletes, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are evident to everyone." He added, "The Khelo India Abhiyan, Fit India Movement, and Sansad Khel Pratiyogita launched by Prime Minister Modi have transformed the sports environment across the country." CM Yogi highlighted that leagues have now begun at the university level and sports competitions at the village level, offering players a platform to advance. He further noted that UP has initiated various programmes as part of the national efforts to pro-

motivate sports, and significant progress is being made in this regard. Highlighting the infrastructure development for athletes, Yogi stated, "The double-engine government is continuously focusing on this. Currently, UP has 84 stadiums, 67 multi-purpose halls, 38



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a felicitation ceremony to honour the medalists, participating players and coaches of Paris Olympics and Paralympics 2024 in Lucknow on Tuesday. UP BJP president Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary is also seen. PTI

'Sports policy a game-changer'

Lucknow (PNS): The athletes and sportspersons expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, hailing his sports policy as a "game-changer". Acknowledging the transformation in Uttar Pradesh's sports landscape since CM Yogi took office in 2017, athletes said that when they compete with dedication, the Yogi government rewards them with respect, recognition, and awards, serving as powerful motivation. They

highlighted that the chief minister's public acknowledgment of athletes on stage instills a heightened sense of responsibility to excel. "As I can recall, we earned a medal at the 2016 Paralympics as well, but we did not receive similar respect at that time. However, after winning two medals in the 2020 Paralympics, we felt a marked difference in recognition. The respect was also given for our achievements at the

Asian Games. The respect athletes are experiencing in 2024 is now visible to everyone," said Praveen Kumar, who won gold medal at the Paralympic Games-2024. He added: "Under CM Yogi, significant progress is being made in sports in UP, with numerous positive changes taking place. The Yogi government has not only implemented a comprehensive sports policy but is also actively encouraging athletes."

structure development for athletes, Yogi stated, "The double-engine government is continuously focusing on this. Currently, UP has 84 stadiums, 67 multi-purpose halls, 38

swimming pools, 15 synthetic hockey stadiums, and three synthetic running tracks ready." He further said that the state has developed two international cricket stadiums, 16 hostels, 47 state-of-the-art gyms, 20 synthetic tennis courts, and 19 dormitories for athletes. Additionally, two judo halls, 13 wrestling halls, six shooting ranges, two indoor volleyball courts, 12 weightlifting halls, and 14 synthetic basketball courts have been established in the state. The chief minister said that the state government is working with ambitious goals to promote sports and support athletes. The state aims to build playgrounds and open gyms in over 57,000 gram panchayats, mini stadiums in all 826 development blocks, and stadiums in all districts. "Sports facilities are being provided to athletes at the gram panchayat level," he said. Yogi pointed out that former athletes from international, Olympic, Paralympic, Commonwealth, Asian Games, and World Championships are being appointed as trainers to coach young players. He further said that the state government has introduced the Laxman Award for athletes participating in any international competition and the Rani Laxmibai Award for female athletes, which includes both a cash prize and a citation. Additionally, the state government provides assistance of ₹20,000 to players receiving national-level awards and offers monthly financial support to elderly athletes.

Yogi stated that the Eklayva Krida Kosh has been formed in the state and that the first sports university, named after Major Dhyanchand, is being constructed in Meerut. While encouraging the youth of the state, Yogi emphasised that the government is committed to providing sufficient funding for athletes. "Youth should immerse themselves in the world of sports and bring glory to the country and the state by winning medals. The Sports department is fully supportive of this endeavour," he added. He said that the state government has decided to appoint athletes who elevate the state's and country's pride in sports as gazetted officers. Specifically, two players will be appointed as deputy superintendents of police, two as naib tehsildars, one as revenue tax officer, and two as district youth welfare officers. BJP state president Chaudhary, Deputy CM Bhupendra Singh, Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak, Finance Minister Suresh Khanna, Sports Minister Girish Chandra Yadav, Mayor Sushma Kharakwal, MLA Neeraj Bora, Legislative Council Member Avnish Singh, and BJP Mahanagar president Anand Dwivedi were present on the occasion.

Nagar, won the gold medal at the 2024 Paralympics and received a cash prize of Rs 6 crore. — Lalit Upadhyay from Varanasi and Rajkumar Pal from Ghazipur, who played for the Indian hockey team, earned bronze medals in the Olympics and were awarded Rs 1 crore each. — UP IAS officer Suhay LY secured a silver medal in para badminton, while Ajit Singh from Etawah won silver in the javelin throw event in para athletics. Both were awarded Rs 4 crore each. — Preeti Pal from Muzaffarnagar won bronze medals in both the 100m and 200m events, receiving a total of Rs 4 crore, while Simran from Ghaziabad earned a bronze medal in the 200m race in her category and was awarded Rs 2 crore. — Parul Chaudhary, Anu Rani, Priyanka Goswami, Prachi Chaudhary, Sakshi Kasana, Dipesh Kumar, and Yash Kumar received incentives of Rs 10 lakh each for bringing honour to Uttar Pradesh through their participation in the Paris Olympics and Paralympic Games. — CM Yogi also honoured four trainers who coached the athletes for the Paris Olympics and Paralympics. The trainers recognised were Gajendra Singh (para athlete), Gaurav Khanna (para badminton), Rakesh Kumar Yadav (para athlete), and Dr Satyapal Singh (para athlete).

THE AWARDEES: Uttar Pradesh's athletes delivered outstanding performances at the Paris Olympics and Paralympics, securing six medals, including one gold. — Praveen Kumar, a para high jumper from Gautam Buddha

CM to launch fifth phase of Mission Shakti tomorrow

UP to organise Women's Fest

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to organise the Women's Festival as part of the fifth phase of Mission Shakti, dedicated to the safety, dignity, and self-reliance of women in the state. This initiative aims to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship among women. Additionally, under this phase, provisions for retiring rooms for women will be ensured at all workplaces across the state. Furthermore, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed that crèches be established at all workplaces to support women. ADG, Women and Child Protection Organisation, Padmaja Chauhan announced that the chief minister would officially launch the fifth phase of Mission Shakti from his official residence on October 3, the first day of Sharadiya Navratri. Mission Shakti nodal officers (deputy commission-

ers of police/additional superintendents of police) from various districts will join the programme virtually. Simultaneously, women empowerment rallies will be organised in all commissionerates and districts, including the state capital, Lucknow. "Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also unveil various government schemes aimed at enhancing the safety, empowerment, and self-reliance of women. The Women's Fest, to be held at the 1090 intersection in Lucknow, will provide a platform for women to pursue self-employment and entrepreneurship. Organised by women's self-help groups, the fest will feature an exhibition showcasing products made by these groups. A variety of events, including cultural evenings, health check-up camps, motivational talks, street plays, quiz programmes, and cleanliness and health sessions, will also be part of the festivities," she elaborated. Additionally, working women's hostels will be constructed in key locations such as police lines, PAC battalion campuses,

and medical colleges, with special security measures in place for women. Each police station in the state will also have dedicated women's barracks. In line with initiatives in Lucknow, pink booties and pink scooters will be introduced in all commissionerates for enhanced women's safety. Public places such as malls, monuments, bus stands, railway stations, and zoos will be equipped with feeding rooms for infants. Furthermore, rest areas will be set up for women working in unorganised sectors, such as construction sites and factories, allowing them personal space during their workday. Pink toilets will also be arranged in these locations. To ensure the success of the fifth phase of Mission Shakti, 12 departments will work in coordination, including Home, Women and Child Development, Urban Development, Panchayati Raj, Basic Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education, Rural Development, Revenue, Medical Health and Family Welfare, Culture, and Youth Welfare.

UP STF arrests 13 in fake certificate scam for gramin dak sevak recruitment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the arrest of 13 accused, the Meerut team of the UP STF claimed to have busted a gang that facilitated the selection of candidates using fake certificates for gramin dak sevak posts in the Postal department arrested 13 individuals. A case has been registered against the accused in Aligarh. Two postal superintendents and a driver are also believed to be involved in the gang. A report has been sent to top officials in the government and the department for further action. Giving details, ASP, STF, Brijesh Singh said that the Postal department had invited applications for approximately 45,000 gramin dak sevak positions (branch postmaster and assistant branch postmaster) across the country. The recruitment notification was issued on July 15, 2024, and the merit list was released on August 23. Recruitment was conducted for 5,000 posts in Uttar Pradesh, and the work of document verification is currently ongoing. Singh explained that during this recruitment process, a gang was active in helping candidates gain employment based on fake certificates. The gang was busted, resulting in the arrest of 13 individuals, including the kingpins — Sajid and Saqib. Sajid, from Amroha, was responsible

for creating fake documents and entering them into the online system, while Saqib, from Hapur, was tasked with bringing in candidates, he claimed. Additionally, Vikal Yadav, a driver for the Mainpuri post superintendent, facilitated arrangements within the department. Sajid is known to have connections with Devendra Kumar (currently CPM, Jhansi), who was the post superintendent in 2023, and would often seek his assistance. Currently, Vikal also drives for post superintendent Sanjay Kumar Singh, who is stationed in Aligarh and is implicated in the gang's activities, Singh added. On Sajid's instructions, Vikal arranged for the verification of each candidate with Sanjay Kumar Singh, who received an amount of Rs one lakh for each verification. The role of post superintendent Devendra is still under investigation, he said. Meanwhile, Sajid and Saqib charged candidates between ₹4 to 5 lakh each. The STF has recovered soft copies of documents from five to six universities that the gang had tampered with. The recovered documents include marksheets from Subharti University (Meerut), Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University, the Bihar Sanskrit Education Board in Patna, and the West Bengal Council of Rabindra Open Schooling.

Vigilance Establishment raids houses of Jal Nigam officials

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant crackdown on corruption, the Vigilance Establishment on Tuesday conducted raids at the residences of Jal Nigam officials in connection with a disproportionate assets case. According to sources, officers are currently conducting raids in the Indiranagar, Gomti Nagar, and Vikas Nagar areas of the state capital. The area surrounding the homes has been sealed off, restricting access. Reports indicate that officials recovered numerous documents related to substantial investments made by the accused in benami properties. The officials under investigation have been identified as project manager (C&DS department of Jal Nigam) Raghavendra Gupta, chief executive engineer Satyaveer Singh, executive engineer (now retired) Ajay Rastogi, project manager Kamal Kumar Kharbanda, and assistant engineer Krishna Kumar Patel. These officers are accused of acquiring assets disproportionate to their income. The Vigilance department began investigating these officials in 2019-2020 on government orders. The investigation uncovered evidence of disproportionate asset acquisition against them, leading to the filing of 11 cases, which are currently being investigated across

Disproportionate assets case

different sectors of the Vigilance Establishment. Investigation orders were issued on June 12, 2020, in response to complaints of corruption. Kamlesh Kumar Kesari, the former project manager of C&DS, was found guilty of having assets disproportionate to his income. During the investigation, it was revealed that he spent over ₹1.78 crore on property maintenance, despite having a total income of only ₹58.60 lakh during the prescribed period. He could not provide a satisfactory explanation for spending ₹1.19 crore more than his total income. Similarly, Krishna Kumar Patel, the then assistant engineer (project manager) of C&DS, was also found guilty. Investigations revealed that he spent Rs 39.56 lakh on maintenance and properties, while his total income for the same period was ₹29.56 lakh, indicating an excess expenditure of about ₹10 lakh without a satisfactory explanation. Ajay Rastogi, the former superintending engineer of the Human Resource Development Cell of Jal Nigam, has also been implicated. His total income during the prescribed period was ₹65.90 lakh; however, he

reportedly spent ₹1.14 crore on maintenance and properties, resulting in an excess of ₹48.27 lakh for which he could not provide a satisfactory explanation.

State Bank Of India

Regional Business Office, - 03, Fatehpur U.P. (Near Agrasen Chauraha, Jail Road, Behind DPS School) PIN No. 212601

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersign being the authorized officer of the State Bank of India, R.B.O.-3, Agrasen Chauraha, Jail Road, Fatehpur 212601, under the securitisation & Reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest act 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under sub section 13(2) & 13(12) read with rule 8 & 9 of the security interest (enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices calling upon the borrower/guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest expenses and other charges etc. thereon within 60 days from the date of said notices. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrower/guarantor in particular and public in general and that undersigned has taken possession of property described herein below in exercise of power conferred on him U/S 13(4) of the said act read with rule 9 of the said rule on the date mentioned and there against the borrower/guarantor in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property any delinks with property will be subject to charge of State bank of India, R.B.O. 03, AGRASEN CHAURAHA, JAIL ROAD, FATEHPUR 212601, under for SBI Branch PASHCHIM SHARIRA Distt. Kaushambi U.P. (12495), for an amount and interest and other charges thereon mentioned against each account herein below.

| Sr.No. | Borrower Name & Address | Account Details | Details of property |
|--------|---|--|--|
| (01) | Smt. SHANTI DEVI W/o Shri Heera Singh R/o Vill. Dedhawal Post Paschim Sharira Distt. Kaushambi U.P. | Demand Notice dt: 23/01/2024 Possession Dt: 26/09/2024 Outstanding Amount: Rs. 10,72,827.62/- (Rupees Ten Lakhs Seventy Two Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Seven & Sixty Two Only) Interest + etc. | Registered Mortgage Property in the Name of Mrs. SHANTI DEVI W/o Shri Heera Singh Arazi No. 844, Vill. Dhedawal Upharhar, Distt. Kaushambi (U.P.). |
| (02) | Shri Krishna Kumar Singh S/o Shri Heera Singh R/o Vill. Dedhawal Post Paschim Sharira Distt. Kaushambi U.P. | Boundaries: North: Field Of Mamta Gupta. South: House Of Ravi Shankar Singh. East: Kali Road. West: Field Of Rama Shankar Pandey | Registered in the office of sub registrar, Tehsil Manjhanpur, Distt. Kaushambi (U.P.) on Book No. 01, Zild No. 3212 Page No. 351 to 362, at Per Document no 1470 Dated On 21/04/2023 |
| (03) | Shri Jay Prakash Singh S/o Shri Heera Singh R/o Vill. Dedhawal Post Paschim Sharira Distt. Kaushambi U.P. | Admeasuring 230 sq. mtr. | State Bank Of India Branch PASHCHIM SHARIRA KAUSHAMBI (12495) A/C No.: 41851417408 |

Dated: 02.10.2024 Place: PASHCHIM SHARIRA Authorised Officer, State bank Of India, RBO-3, Fatehpur

SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CO. LTD.

Corporate Office : 425, Udyog Vihar Phase IV, Gurgaon-122015 (Haryana)
Ph. : 0124-4212530/31/32, E-Mail: customercare@shubham.co website : www.shubham.co

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited (hereinafter called Shubham) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice calling upon borrowers to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described hereinbelow in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited for an amount detailed below and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Details are as below:

| S. No. | Loan No./Borrower(s), Co-Borrower | Demand Notice Amount | Date of Demand Notice | Secured Asset | Date of Affiliation |
|--------|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | DLK02204000005046299, Ravi Prakash Mishra, Kajal Tiwari | Rs. 13,80,762/- | 20-07-2024 | Part of Plot No. 08, Gala No- 271 mtr Situated at Village Rasulpur, Kayastha, Pargana - Mahona, BKT District Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226021 | 28-09-2024 |
| 2. | OGKP2301000005056924 & OGKP2307000005066900, Santosh Kumar, Sonam | Rs. 13,41,420/- Rs. 8,17,665/- | 20-07-2024 | Arazi No.3670, Situated in Mauja-Dumari Khas Tappa Kewatali, Pargana Havelli, Tehsil Chauri Chaura & Distt- Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh-273202 | 28-09-2024 |
| 3. | 0VRN2202000005044283, Shiv Kumar, Archana Maurya | Rs. 9,11,260/- | 20-07-2024 | H.No.- N10/39-A-1-K-J, Arazi No-435, Mauza Lakhraw, Kakramata, Ward- Nagawa, Pargana - Dehat Amanat, Tehsil-Sadar, Varanasi Uttar Pradesh -221106 | 28-09-2024 |
| 4. | DALB2308000005068146, Mo Akhlaq, Shasta Parveena | Rs. 4,88,804/- | 20-07-2024 | Plot Part of Arazi 75 Mauja Iradatganj Pargana Arai, Tehsil Bara, Distt. Prayagraj, Allahabad Uttar Pradesh -212111 | 28-09-2024 |
| 5. | DALB1906000005020571, Shallesh Kumar Varma, Sanju Devi Varma | Rs. 3,37,407/- | 20-07-2024 | House No.122/93, Malakraj Parg, and Tehsil- Sadar, Allahabad Uttar Pradesh -211003 | 28-09-2024 |
| 6. | DLK0200700005028697, Seema Agrawal, Manas Agrawal, Ashish Agrawal | Rs. 18,57,078/- | 20-07-2024 | Flat No.E-117 on Property NO 96/88 Old No -96/76 on 4th floor S.M Apartment Situated at Grain Market Old Ganeshganj Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226001 | 28-09-2024 |

PLACE:- GURGAON, DATE :- 01-10-2024

Authorized Officer,
SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LTD.

Indian Bank

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

ALLAHABAD

POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)

[Under Rule-8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said Rules. The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charges of the Indian Bank. The Borrower's / Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. This Possession Notice is being served to the Borrower (s), Guarantor (s) & Mortgagor (s) to deposit the said dues. Details as under:

| S. No. | Name & Address of the Borrower (s)/ Guarantor (s)/ Proprietor / Mortgagors | Description of the Immovable Property | Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Outstanding Amount |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Branch: Rajkamal Road Barabanki | | | |
| 1. | M/S Shukla Rice Mill (Prop- Daya Shankar Shukla S/O Badri Vishal Shukla) (Proprietorship Firm), Vill & Post- Ram Sahai, pargana Daryabad, Tehsil Sirauli Gauspur, Distt- Barabanki 225403 | 1. All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Kharsa No 423/1, Vill & Post Ram Sahai, Pargana Daryabad, Tehsil Sirouli Gauspur Distt Barabanki within the registration Sub-district Sirouli Gauspur and District Barabanki Area: 630 sq mtr (6778.80 Sq Ft), belongs to Shri Dayashankar Shukla (CERSAI Asset ID & Security ID: 100001829392) | 10.07.2024 27.09.2024 Rs. 24,21,653.60 and interest thereon |
| 2. | Dayashakar Shukla S/O Badri Vishal Shukla (Borrower-Mortgagor), Vill & Post- Ram Sahai, pargana Daryabad, Tehsil Sirauli Gauspur, Distt- Barabanki 225403 | 1. All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Kharsa No 1826 m Village Badel, Lakhpedabagh, out of nagar Parishad Limit, within the registration Sub-district Nawabganj And District Barabanki (Area: 139.35 Sq Mtr) belongs to Late Shrimati Malti Shukla (CERSAI Asset ID- 200083604485 Security ID- 400081832079) | 16.07.2024 26.09.2024 Rs. 43,52,637.53 and interest thereon |
| Branch: Literacy House Branch | | | |
| 2. | Borrower: Ansh Surgicals, S-232 Transport Nagar, Kanpur Road, Lucknow Partner/Guarantor: 1. Sanjay Awasthi, H No. 569 Ka/214, Sneh Nagar, VIP Marg Alambagh Lucknow 226005 2. Vijay Awasthi, H No. 569 Ka/214, Sneh Nagar, VIP Marg Alambagh Lucknow 226005 Guarantor: Kundan Kumar S/o Krishan Chand, 548 CHH/208 KA Surya Nagar Lucknow | All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No. /Plot No. F 391-A, Transport Nagar Scheme, Admeasuring 140 sqmtr. Or 127.78 sqmtr. Situated in Phase -2 Hind. Rang Kanpur Road Lucknow within the Registration sub-district Sarojini Nagar And District Lucknow, Bounded by:- North: Plot No.F 392, South: Plot No.F 391, East: 12 M wide Road, West: Plot No.F 389A | 16.07.2024 26.09.2024 Rs. 43,52,637.53 and interest thereon |

Date : 02.10.2024 Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer Indian Bank

Farmers given subsidy of ₹9.9076 cr: Shahi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi said that till now, loans of ₹69.56 crore of 16,026 farmers have been redeemed in the district and under the seed distribution scheme a total of 1,00,921 farmers have been given a subsidy of ₹9.9076 crore by distributing 60,524.08 quintals of seeds.



Samman Nidhi Yojana, a total amount of ₹12.653 crore has been given and out of that ₹746.289 crore has been sent directly to the accounts of 2,84,146 farmers by the central government. Besides, Shahi said that under Khet Talab Yojana, a total of 27 ponds have been constructed in the district so far and a grant of ₹0.14175 crore has been given through DBT and in Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Kisan Samridhi Yojana, 1434.39 hectares of rugged, barren and problematic land has been improved in the district with a total financial support of ₹3.72 crore. He said that a total of 2,886

farmers in the district were given the benefit of single agricultural equipment and a grant of ₹7.7115 crore was given through DBT. Along with this, a total of ₹1.7214 crore has been paid through DBT till now by establishing 55 Farm Machinery Banks (FMBs) and 37 Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs). Apart from this, more than 62,483 packets of pulses, oilseeds and 3,026 seed minikits of food grain have been distributed free of cost to the farmers since the year 2017-18. The minister said soil health cards have been given to a total of 2,58,111 farmers in the district so far and under the e-Kisan Credit Card Distribution Programme, a total of 85,719 Kisan Credit Cards have been distributed since the year 2017-18 till now. Under the crop loan distribution, a total of ₹3261.5356 crore crop loan has been distributed from the year 2017-18 till now. According to him, with the aim of providing information related to seeds, agricultural protection, chemicals etc to farmers at one place, a total of 109 agri junctions have been established in the district under the Trained Agricultural Entrepreneur Self-Reliance Scheme (Agri Junction

Scheme), on which a total of ₹0.0717 crore has been spent as grant. He said that 35 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) have been formed in the district, out of which 14 FPOs have been benefited from Farm Machinery Bank. In the grading / ranking done at the state level in the year 2022-23, two FPOs of the district have got fifth and sixth rank. He said under the Million Farmers School (Kisan Pathshala) in order to increase the agricultural technical knowledge of farmers of the district, Kisan Pathshala has been organised at the gram panchayat level in 1,926 gram panchayats during Kharif and Rabi seasons, in which a total of 3,52,356 farmers participated and received information about the latest technology. He said under Uttar Pradesh Millets Revival Programme (International Millets Year), 3,026 packs of free seed mini kits were distributed in the district. For seed production, Jaya Seeds Farmer Pvt Ltd of the district was given a grant of ₹0.040 crore in the form of seed money. For increasing millets income in the district, the scheme is being widely publicised through various mediums, Shahi added.

Cash, valuables stolen from locked house

Kanpur (PNS): A teacher's locked house was burgled in Barra police station area on Monday. The miscreants entered the house through the boundary wall and committed the theft after brutally beating up the pet dog. They stole cash and valuables worth around ₹25 lakh from there. Police and forensic team carried out investigation. The incident came to light when the teacher returned home at night. PK Dubey of MIG-32, behind Pal Tower in Barra-6 an officer in BSF is presently posted in Siliguri. His wife Shalini Dubey, a teacher, is posted in a primary school in Jahanabad Chilli. Shalini said she had left for school after locking the house on Monday morning. After attending a 'bhoj' at sister Anita's house, she returned home around 8 pm and found the entire household goods ransacked. Her pet dog was crying on the floor in an injured state. She said cash, jewellery and clothes worth around ₹25 lakh were stolen. Station House Officer (SHO) Rajesh Sharma said three teams had been deputed for working out the case. In a CCTV footage recovered by the police, three bike-borne youths were seen escaping from the spot.

AI-based solution developed to combat abusive content on social media platforms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Researchers from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) have developed an effective AI-based solution to combat abusive content on social media platforms. Sharing this information, Dr Ravindranath Chowdhary C, Associate Professor, stated that India, home to the world's second-largest digital population, witnesses significant activity on social media platforms (SMPs) such as Facebook, X etc. While these platforms have become integral to our daily lives, they also expose users to cyberbullying. A unique challenge in the Indian context is that user content is often multilingual, involving a mix of languages like Hindi and English. Identifying abusive content is already a challenge in a single language, but it becomes even more complex with mixed-language texts. Dr Chowdhary added while significant efforts have been made to address cyberbullying in high-resource languages like English, mixed-language contexts have received minimal attention. Under the guid-

ance of Dr Chowdhary, research scholar Paras Tiwari has conducted an in-depth analysis of the complexities of Devanagari-Roman mixed text and proposed a cost-effective methodology with a 20.38 per cent relevancy score to collect and annotate coded-mixed abusive text instances. The dataset produced from this study is eight times larger than existing state-of-the-art datasets. Additionally, their work presents effective solutions using traditional machine learning techniques and advanced pre-trained large language models. Furthermore, their work extends to identifying hate speech and forecasting toxicity before it can impact users on SMPs. Their research contributes significantly to making SMPs safer for a diverse user base in India. Dr Chowdhary emphasised that this innovative research lays the foundation for developing more precise and dedicated solutions to combat cyberbullying in India's vast and diverse digital community. A part of this research has already been published in January 2024 in the prestigious research journal 'Language Resources and Evaluation'. Prof Amit Patra,

Director of the Institute, congratulated Dr Ravindra Chowdhary C and his team for this groundbreaking research.

PROF MAURYA GETS MEDAL
Oculoplastic Surgeon of Regional Institute of Ophthalmology, Banaras Hindu University, Prof RP Maurya received the International Commemorative Oration Medal (International Memorial Medal)-2024. He has been given this award for his continuous, tireless, selfless and dedicated eye care service in the community. He was given this honour during the 23rd International Assembly of Community Ophthalmologists held in Puri, Bhubaneswar recently. Prof Maurya was invited as chairperson and guest orator in this international assembly. While presiding over the ophthalmology symposium, he delivered a keynote address on the topic 'Orbital surgery made easy and simple' and also delivered an international lecture on 'Advances in ophthalmic oncology for community at large in Indian sub-continent'. More than 500 participants from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc participated in the assembly.

Mayor inaugurates communicable disease control campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Mayor Ashok Tiwari inaugurated a month-long communicable disease control campaign here on Tuesday. In the auditorium of the Nagar Nigam, the health workers including sanitation workers were sworn in to prevent mosquito-borne diseases and ensure their participation in the community. The objective of the campaign is to deal with the spread of water-borne diseases, communicable diseases and other diseases. The mayor also flagged off anti-larva, spraying workers and fogging machines from the office of Nagar Nigam premises (Siga). On the occasion, Tiwari said awareness and effective action are very important for the prevention of communicable diseases. A special programme of cleanliness, sanitisation and fogging should be



conducted during the campaign. Anti-larva spraying should be done in ponds, drains and sewers and garbage disposal should be done in a proper manner, he added. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that work will be done on a war footing in the district with inter-departmental coordination to make the campaign successful for the prevention of communicable diseases like malaria, dengue, chikungunya, diarrhoea etc. The campaign will be conducted in the district from October 1 to 31 and Dastak Abhiyan from October 11 to 31. He said all preparations have been completed to make

the campaign successful. For spraying and fogging, teams of various workers have been deployed by the Nagar Nigam in the city and by the Panchayat Raj department in the rural areas, including health workers. Apart from this, teams have also been prepared by the Education, Animal Husbandry and Agriculture departments. The programme was conducted by District Health Education and Information Officer Harivansh Yadav. On the occasion nodal officer and ACOMO Dr SS Kanaujia, District Malaria Officer Sharat Chand Pandey, Assistant Malaria Officer KK Rai, biologist Dr Amit Kumar Singh, Divisional Coordinator for UNICEF Pradeep Kumar Vishwakarma, DMC Dr Shahid, Malaria, inspector Ajay Kumar Mishra and others were present.

Swachhata pledge administered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the Swachhata Pakhwada at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), General Manager Sushil Kumar Srivastava administered the Swachhata pledge to the officers and employees in the Swagati Hall of BLW's administration building here on Tuesday. A large number of women railway employees also participated enthusiastically in the programme. Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Subroto Nath, Principal Finance Advisor Neeraj Verma, Principal Chief Engineer Vinod Kumar Shukla, Principal Chief Medical Officer Dr Devesh Kumar, Principal Chief Personnel Officer Janardan Singh, Chief Vigilance Officer Ankur Chandra, Chief Safety Officer SB Patel, Chief Mechanical Engineer (Service) Neeraj Jain, Chief Design Engineer (Electrical) Manoj Kumar Gupta, Chief Quality Assurance Manager Praveen Kumar and many department

heads, officers and employees of BLW were present. In another programme, a *prabh pheri* was taken out from Kundan trijunction located at BLW Central Market under the leadership of PCME Subroto Nath. It passed through Suryasarovar, BLW Inter College, Bank of Baroda, BLW Stadium and returned to Kundan trijunction again. Apart from the employees and officials of BLW, the personnel of Railway Protection Force, volunteers of Civil Defence Organisation, St John's Ambulance Brigade, and Bharat Scout Guide also participated in it. Earlier, BLW Cultural Organisation organised a grand cultural evening event in which importance of cleanliness was demonstrated through various programmes, including street plays in which artistes mesmerised everyone with their performances. The programme was conducted by the chief guest and PCME Alok Kumar Singh.

CSAU&T convocation on Oct 4



V-C CSAU&T Dr Anand Kumar Singh, addressing mediapersons on Tuesday.

As many as 601 students will be conferred degrees. Besides 14 chancellor's gold medals, 14 silver medals, 13 bronze medals and 21 sponsored medals will also be given to meritorious students. The recipient of medals comprised 62.90 per cent boys and 37.10 per cent girls. He said 30 students of primary and junior schools and anganwadi workers will also be present. Chairman of Media Committee Dr Vijay Yadav, Registrar Dr PK Upadhyaya, Dean (Agricultural Engineering) Etawah Dr NK Sharma, Director (Expansion) Dr RK Yadav, Dean (Forestry PG College) Dr Muneesh Kumar, Dr Kaushal Kumar, media incharge Dr Khalil Khan were also present.

Tree plantation organised



Tree plantation programme organised at MMV PG College on Tuesday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Under the aegis of Mahila Mahavidyalaya PG College, a tree plantation and oath-taking ceremony was organised by the Rovers and Rangers Committee under Swachhata Fortnight on Tuesday. Principal Professor Anju Choudhary spoke on the occasion. Rangers in charge Dr Anju Srivastava highlighted the

objective of cleanliness and tree plantation. She said the main objective of Swachhata Pakhwada is to spread awareness about cleanliness and protect the environment. "Through tree plantation, we not only keep the environment clean but also provide a healthy environment for the coming generations", she added. On the occasion, college students and Rangers volunteers participat-

ed enthusiastically and took the oath of cleanliness. Everyone together planted many trees and took a pledge to maintain cleanliness. At the end of the programme, Rangers co-convenor Professor Mamta Dixit proposed the vote of thanks. Prof Pratibha Srivastava, Prof Sangeeta Sitani, Prof Manisha Shukla, Dr Deepali Nigam, Dr Saba Yunus, Dr Sadaf Nizam, Dr Shobhana Dwivedi, Dr Namrata Pandey etc. contributed significantly in making the programme successful. **BLOOD DONATION CAMP:** On the occasion of National Voluntary Blood Donation Day on Tuesday 40 units blood was donated at the blood donation camp jointly organised by The Sportz Hub (TSH) and Indian Red Cross Society. CMO Dr Alok Ranjan inaugurated the camp as chief guest. Society's Chairman Dr Umesh Palwal and divisional president Dr Angad Singh were also present.

FIR registered in suspected cow slaughter case

PTI/PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAVAGRAJ

An FIR was registered against two named individuals and 20 unidentified persons over a suspected case of cow slaughter here on Tuesday, police said. The alleged incident took place near Bheti village under the Airport Police Station limits on Monday morning and was reported to the police by right wing groups, who claimed they were tipped off about it. The FIR has been lodged under provisions of the UP Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act and sections of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita. Police have booked Shamsad and Arif, and 20 unidentified people, according to the FIR. According to the complainant Vanshika Gupta, cow meat, skin, and blood were found at

the site, which were photographed and videographed. Police said samples of the meat and skin have been collected by the Chief Veterinary Officer for examination. "Multiple raids were conducted throughout the day and night on Monday, but the accused remain at large. Confirmation of cow slaughter will depend on the results of the sample tests," Airport Police Station in charge Arun Kumar Singh said.

DIBYAKANT SHUKLA RETIRES
After 27 years of service, Dibyakant Shukla retired from the post of Joint Director (JD) of Education (Prayagraj Division) on Monday. A farewell ceremony was organised at the Government Inter College (GIC) campus here. Shukla shared some memories of his service period.

EBSB-2024: KV NTPC Dibiypapur 1st in group dance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The cluster level Rashtriya Ekta Parv 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB)-2024' was organised with great enthusiasm at KV, IIT Kanpur. The event was a beautiful amalgamation of talent, culture and tradition aimed at celebrating the diverse art forms and cultural heritage of India. The event started with the welcome of chief guest Rachna Agarwal, the first lady of IIT Kanpur and guest of honour Amrita Bhusan by the participants and NCC cadets. The event began with lighting of lamp, followed by Ganesh Vandana performance by the children of KV IIT Kanpur. Venue principal RC Pandey extended formal welcome by presenting a sapling to the guest. Total eight schools from IIT cluster participated in group dance, group song, on the spot painting and artifacts. The teams were given



Chief guest Rachna Agarwal inaugurating the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat-2024' programme at KV IIT Kanpur.

title on the various rivers of Meghalaya. The event was judged by the panel of distinguished practitioner judges from various fields. The programme was concluded with the enthusiastic valedictory function under which participants and escorts gave their impressions. The results were announced by venue Principal RC Pandey. KV NTPC Dibiypapur stood first in group dance, PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya RRC, Fatehgarh (first in group song), KV NTPC Dibiypapur won first position in on the spot painting and PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya Chakeri No-2 secured first position in display of artifacts. The vote of thanks was proposed by senior PGT Priyanka Tiwari.

Hindi not just a language but also a culture: Joshi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAVAGRAJ

General Manager, North Central Railway (NCR) Upendra Chandra Joshi inaugurated the main function of Rajbhasha Pakhwada and the prize distribution programme by garlanding the statue of Maa Saraswati and lighting the lamp here. Addressing the officers and employees present on the occasion, Joshi said Hindi is not just a language but also a culture. Hindi is a symbol of those national values which we have received from our rich cultural and historical heritage. These reflect the basic spirit of our Constitution. Due to these reasons, Hindi was given the constitutional status of official language on September 14, 1949. This year on September 14, 75 years of that historic day have been completed, hence this Rajbhasha Pakhwada has its own special significance in the celebration of the

diamond jubilee of Hindi Diwas being celebrated this year. As the connecting language and the common language of the country, Hindi reflects the concept of unity in diversity. Joshi said the entire working area of NCR has been a stronghold of the rich heritage of literature and culture. This area has been the birthplace or work place of well-known Hindi litterateurs and Hindi has been enriched and refined in this area. Prayagraj is also called the capital of literature and culture. It is a matter of pride for all of us that we have got the opportunity to be associated with such a great Karmabhoomi. While working in this literary zone, which is witness to the great contribution and fame of poets and litterateurs like Sur, Tulsi,

Maithilisharan Gupta, Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, Sumitranandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma and Harivansh Rai Bachchan, it is the moral responsibility of all the officers and employees to use full readiness to the pilgrims and tourists coming from India and abroad in the upcoming Kumbh Mela of Prayagraj. We have to display the spirit of unity in our cultural diversity by providing information and services of passenger facilities to the passengers through simple and easy Hindi. During this Kumbh Mela, we will provide information related to passenger facilities in major Indian languages of the country at our stations in Prayagraj. Chief Official Language Officer and Principal Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Satendra Kumar said our country is a vast one with diverse languages and dialects. Hindi and all Indian languages have special importance from constitutional and national point of view. He informed that for excellent work in Hindi, Chief Personnel Officer/Administration of NCR Mudit Chandra and Chief Traffic

Planning Manager Rajesh Kumar will be awarded the Railway Minister Rajbhasha Rajat Medal. In the kavi sammelan the poets enthralled the audience with their melodious poetry recitation. Well-known poet and lyricist Yash Malviya and Jankavi Prakash were present on the occasion. Yash Malviya enthralled the audience by reciting poetry in his well-known style and manner, while Jankavi Prakash impressed everyone with his composition. Bhushan Tyagi's poem 'Bhagat Singh Ki Chithi' captivated the crowd. An attractive Rajbhasha exhibition of the work being done in Hindi in the departments was organised. In it the Signal and Telecommunication Department was awarded the shield for the best exhibition and the Mechanical department was awarded the second prize and the General Administration department the third prize trophy.

Kashi Jewellers wins 2 awards



Chief Manager of Kashi Jewellers SM Athar receiving the award.

Kashi Jewellers did the city proud by winning two national awards at a function for Retail Jewellers Guild Awards 2024 organised by the world fame Informa Markets in Delhi recently. These awards were received by the chief manager of Kashi Jewellers SM Athar from the actor and jury Alifa Kapadia, Founder NVUZ Navin

Sadrangani, chief Informa Markets Navjit Gangoli and jury Informa Markets Vrinda Arora. These awards were given for promoting and driving the jewellery industry towards a new dimension on international level. Vice-President of Kashi Jewellers Shreyansh Kapoor said eminent jewellers and jewellery houses of the state and country had participated in this award ceremony. Rajendra Kapoor, Shail Kapoor, Shreyansh Kapoor and Dr Devika Kapoor of Kashi Jewellers, while thanking their well-wishers and customers, said this was possible only due to their continuous love and support. **KIDS ENJOY MATCH:** As many as 250 EWS children, enrolled with The Sportz Hub (TSH) for training in different sports, enjoyed the India-Bangladesh Test match live at the Green Park stadium here on Tuesday. They were sent to the stadium under the supervision of TSH coaches. After witnessing the match, EWS children and their guardians thanked the TSH and its coaches for arranging such an enjoyable visit.

LAC situation stable but sensitive amid India-China standoff: Army Chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh is stable but not normal and remains sensitive, Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi said here on Tuesday. His remarks came in the backdrop of continuing standoff between Indian and Chinese militaries in the region. Though a "positive signalling" is coming out from the diplomatic talks between the two sides, the execution of any plan depends on the military commanders on the ground, he said. In the entire gamut, the "trust" has become the "biggest casualty", General Dwivedi said at a curtain raiser event on Chanakya Defence Dialogue. "The situation is stable, but it is not normal and it's sensitive. If that be the case what are we wanting. We are wanting that the situation that was there pre April 2020 should be restored," he added. The military standoff between the two sides began in early May of 2020.

The full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points. "Till the time the situation is not restored, as far as we are concerned, the situation will remain sensitive, and we are fully operationally prepared to face any kind of a contingency," the Army Chief said. He listed several pending issues such as troops on ground, buffer zones along the LAC and resumption of patrolling by troops as planned. General Dwivedi also briefly touched upon the Indian military's overall approach towards China. "As far as China is concerned, it has been intriguing our minds for quite some time. And I have been saying that with China, you have to compete, you have to cooperate, you have to coexist, you have to confront and contest," he said. India and China held two rounds of diplomatic talks in July and August with an aim to find early resolution of outstanding issues in their standoff on the LAC in

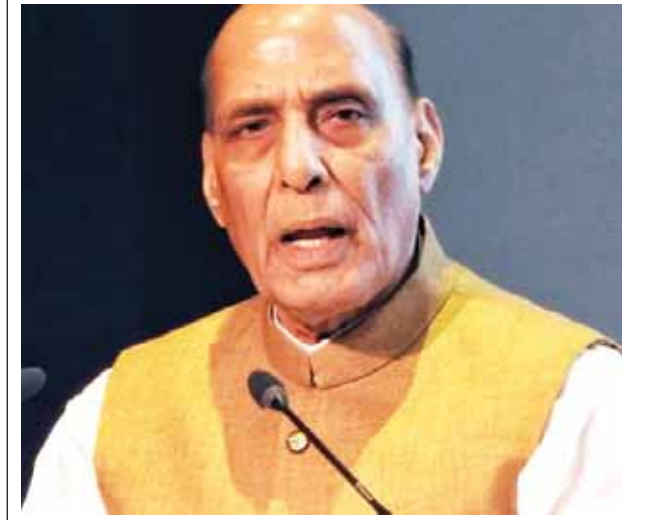


eastern Ladakh. "The positive signalling is coming from the diplomatic side, but what we need to understand (is that) the diplomatic side gives options and possibilities," General Dwivedi said. "But when it comes to the execution on ground, when it relates to ground per se; it is dependent on the military commanders on both sides to take those decisions," he said, responding to a question. The Army chief also referred to disputes in Depsang and Demchok and said all the pending issues are on the table. "Whatever one can imagine is on the table along the northern front and that includes Depsang and Demchok," he said. Asked about China's construction of villages along the frontier with India, the

Army Chief said that country is carrying out "artificial immigration" and "settlements". "No problem, it is their country," he said, adding India is also having "model villages" in border areas. "But more importantly, now the state governments have been empowered to put in those resources and this is the time when the army, state governments and supervision by the central government are all coming together," he said. The model villages that are being built now will be even better, the Army Chief said. He said there is no Chinese population close to the LAC and that is the reason Beijing is carrying out the "artificial immigration". The Army Chief also cited how the Chinese fishermen first came to the South China Sea and then the military arrived. Last month, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks in the Russian city of St Petersburg with a focus on finding an early resolution to the row. In the talks held on the sidelines of a conclave of

BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) nations, the two sides agreed to work with "urgency" and "redouble" efforts to achieve complete disengagement in remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh. In the meeting, Doval conveyed to Wang Yi that peace and tranquility in border areas and respect for the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are essential for return of normalcy in bilateral ties. The ties between the two countries nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas. The two sides have so far held 21 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks to resolve the standoff. India has been pressing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok areas. The two sides held the last round of high-level military talks in February.

30 lakh defence pensioners linked to SPARSH: Rajnath Singh



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said here out of a total of 32 lakh defence pensioners, 30 lakh have been successfully linked to the SPARSH (System for Pension Administration (Raksha)) portal. He made this observation during the 277th Annual Day celebrations of Defence Accounts Department (DAD) at Bharat Mandapam. While commending DAD's focus on technology adoption, the defence minister asserted that despite numerous challenges, the department has been successful in the implementation of this web-based system, which processes pension claims and credits the pension directly into bank accounts of defence pensioners without any external intermediary. He commended the efforts of DAD towards modernisation and strengthening of the country's defence ecosystem through optimum utilisation of resources, efficiency and transparency in accounting and adoption of latest technologies. He lauded the department for focusing on every little detail, which leads to necessary improvements in defence related policies and proposals. Reflecting on the progress achieved in the defence sector in the last few years,

Rajnath Singh stated that there was a time when acquisitions were mainly dependent on imports, and the positive impact of defence expenditure on the economy was very limited. He added that due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government's efforts to attain self-reliance, India is today seen as a defence exporter. The defence minister urged the DAD to prepare a roadmap to make the department a 'Centre of Excellence' in the field of defence finance and economics. He also batted for establishing a robust and comprehensive data management system that gives analytical reports to the government on the impact of defence expenditure on the country's economy, such as the contribution of defence vendors in revenue generation and employment generation. This will prove to be helpful in establishing a holistic policy regime, which would develop a sense of 'Whole of the Government approach', he added. Tracing its roots to the appointment of the Military Pay Master in 1747, the DAD has continuously re-invented itself to provide exemplary services to the Armed Forces, and in turn to the Nation, in the fields of Internal Audit, Accounting, Financial Advice and Defence Pensions Management.

Arti Sarin appointed first woman DG of AFMS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, on Tuesday became the first woman officer to take over as the Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS). The DGAFMS is directly responsible to the Ministry of Defence for overall medical policy matters which relate to the Armed Forces, defence ministry said here. Prior to assuming the appointment of 46th DGAFMS, the Flag Officer held the coveted appointments of DG Medical Services (Navy), DG Medical Services (Air) and Director and Commandant of Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune. She is an alumna of AFMC, Pune and was commissioned into the Armed Forces Medical Services in December 1985. She is an



MD in Radiodiagnosis from AFMC, Pune and Diplomate National Board in Radiation Oncology from Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, complemented with training in Gamma Knife Surgery from University of Pittsburgh. In a career spanning 38 years, the Flag Officer has held prestigious academic and administrative appointments including Professor and Head, Radiation Oncology, Army Hospital (R&R) and Command Hospital

(Southern Command)/AFMC Pune, Commanding Officer, INHS Asvini, Command Medical Officer in the Indian Navy's Southern and Western Naval Commands. The Flag Officer has the rare distinction of serving in all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces, having served as Lieutenant to Captain in the Indian Army, from Surgeon Lieutenant to Surgeon Vice Admiral in the Indian Navy and as an Air Marshal in the Indian Air Force. The Flag Officer has been recently appointed as a member of the National Task Force by the Supreme Court to formulate safe working conditions and protocols for medical professionals. She has been at the forefront of motivating young women to join the Armed Forces and is a shining icon for the Nari Shakti initiative of the Government.

PM sends birthday greetings to former president Kovind



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday greeted former president Ram Nath Kovind on his birthday, and said he is widely respected for his service to society and con-

tribution to national progress. Kovind, who served as the President from July 2017 to July 2022, turned 79 on Tuesday. "Birthday greetings to our former President, Shri Ram Nath Kovind Ji. He is widely respected for his

service to society and contribution to national progress," Modi said in a social media post. "His insights into various subjects are also very enriching. Praying for his long and healthy life," the prime minister said.

India to support Jamaica's development in key sectors: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Jamaican counterpart Andrew Holness prior to their meeting at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi on Tuesday. Photo By: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has been a "trusted partner" in Jamaica's development journey and it is ready to share expertise in a range of areas, including digital public infrastructure, biofuel, innovation and health with the Caribbean nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday. He made the remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness. In his media statement, Modi said he and Holness also discussed regional and global issues and agreed that all tensions and disputes should be resolved through talks and that both sides will continue to work towards ensuring global peace and security. India and Jamaica are unanimous that reform of all global institutions, including the UN Security Council, is necessary, he said. Modi said India has been a "trusted and committed" development partner in Jamaica's growth journey and it will remain so. "We are ready to share our experience with Jamaica in areas of digital public infrastructure, biofuel, innovation, health, education and agriculture," he said. In the defence sphere, we will move forward on imparting training and capacity building of Jamaica's armed forces, Modi said. The prime minister also identified organised crime, drug trafficking, terrorism as common challenges facing both nations. India-Jamaica relations are based on shared history, democratic values and strong people-to-people ties, he added. Holness arrived here on Monday. It is the first ever bilateral visit of a prime minister of Jamaica to India.

Experts urge NAT to enhance blood donation safety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As India grapples with a persistent blood donation deficit, experts have advocated for the mandatory implementation of Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) to enhance the safety of patients in need given that the rate of infections is higher in replacement donors. NAT is an additional blood safety measure in addition to ELISA screening method as it directly detects the genetic material (RNA & DNA) of the infecting organism or viruses namely HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in reducing their window periods. On the National Voluntary

Blood Donation Day marked on October 1, the experts also stressed on an urgent call to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation and the pressing need for voluntary contributions. "Voluntary blood donation has seen growth, yet we still have a significant gap in meeting national demand," said Dr RishiRaj Sinha, Transfusion Medicine Specialist at AIIMS Delhi. Anubha Taneja Mukherjee, Member Secretary of the Thalassemia Patient Advocacy Group, emphasised that many people are unaware of the urgent need for blood, which affects their motivation to donate.



Despite a potential donor base of 402 million people, India consistently falls short of around one million units. This gap is attributed largely to myths and misconceptions about blood donation, particularly concerns over

contracting infections like HIV, as well as a general lack of awareness about the needs of patients requiring regular transfusions, said the medicos. To address the safety concerns surrounding blood supply, especially for patients needing frequent transfusions like those suffering with blood disorders such as hemophilia and thalassemia, experts favoured the NAT. For instance, thalassemia patients often need transfusions every 15 to 20 days. "This (NAT) highly sensitive testing method can detect even minute amounts of viruses in donated blood, significantly improving the

safety of transfusions," said Dr Sinha. He explained that while all donated blood undergoes testing, NAT offers a crucial enhancement by reducing the risk of transmitting infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C through early detection. VK Khanna, Director of the Institute of Child Health Preeti Tuli Thalassemia Unit at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi too agreed that implementing NAT testing would particularly benefit patients with conditions requiring regular transfusions, such as thalassemia, sickle cell disease, and cancer.

Defence Minister flags off car rally to celebrate IAF's 92nd anniversary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday here flagged off 'Vayu Veer Vijeta' car rally from the National War Memorial to mark the 92nd anniversary of the Indian Air Force (IAF). With the send-off, over 50 air warriors, including women, have left for Thoise in Ladakh, from where they will undertake an expedition to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, covering a total of 7,000 kms across nine States/Union Territories (UTs). The rally will also witness the participation of former Air Force Chiefs in different legs. Speaking on the occasion, the defence minister lauded the air warriors for serving the motherland in difficult circumstances with bravery, dedication and patriotism. "IAF has achieved significant feats in its bid to protect the country and its people. It is

capable of giving a befitting reply to the country's enemies by striking them deep into their territory. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are committed to equip IAF with most advanced aircraft/platforms and make them more capable through the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative," he said. The defence minister extended his best wishes to the air warriors, who will be part of the rally that would traverse through tough and varied terrains. The formal flag-off will take place on October eight from Thoise, which is one of the world's highest altitude air force station at 3,068m above mean sea level. The air warriors will halt at Leh, Kargil, Srinagar, Jammu, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Agra, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Darbhanga, Bagdogra, Hasimara, Guwahati, Tezpur and Dirang, before concluding the rally in Tawang on October 29, 2024.

The aim of the rally is to raise awareness among the people about the glorious history of IAF; the deeds of valour of the air warriors in different wars and rescue operations and attract the youth to serve the motherland. The defence minister stated that during the car rally, the air warriors will hold interactions with the youth at schools and colleges in various States/UTs, exuding confidence that the exchanges would motivate the young ignited minds to join the Armed Forces and lead the life of pride and honour. Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, former Chiefs RKS Bhaduria (Retired) and A Y Tipnis (Retired) and other senior officials of IAF were present on the occasion. The rally has been organised by IAF in coordination with the veterans of Uttarakhand War Memorial. The Adventure Cell of IAF is leading and coordinating the rally.

IIT Madras innovates laser heating for retinal drug delivery

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a ray of hope for millions suffering from retinal disorders in the country, researchers at IIT Madras have developed a groundbreaking method to enhance drug delivery directly to the retina by utilising mild laser heating. The innovative approach promises to significantly improve the efficacy of treatments administered through eye injections. Published in the peer-reviewed Wiley Heat Transfer journal, the research focuses on overcoming the challenges posed by the gel-like vitreous humour in the eye, which is often replaced by less viscous fluids after retinal laser surgery. Traditional methods of drug delivery rely on slow natural diffusion, which can take hours or even days for drugs to reach effective levels at the target site. Prof. Arunn Narasimhan, Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT Madras, designed an experiment using



a glass eye mimic geometrically similar to the human eye, water, and silicone oil for the vitreous liquid and a heater to simulate laser heating. The researchers injected a dye as a drug mimic at specific points in the vitreous region of the eye, and measured concentrations at different retinal locations with and without heating the vitreous liquid. Remarkably, while natural diffusion alone took 12 hours to achieve effective concentration, the application of mild heating reduced this time to just 12 minutes. "While with natural diffusion alone, the drug mimic took 12 hours to achieve effective concentration at the target region of the retina, heating

the vitreous liquid reduced it to just 12 minutes," said Shirinvas Vibuthe, Graduate Student, at IIT Madras. This research is particularly vital for the estimated 11 million individuals in India affected by retinal disorders. Since the retina is the region of the eye that contains blood vessels and nerves, such treatments must be performed carefully and with precision, the team said. "Using glass-eye experiments and bioheat simulations to analyse invasive treatments in the human eye, we have shown that mild targeted heating can enhance drug delivery to the retina. The medical community needs to take this further and implement it in treatments of retinal diseases," Narasimhan said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Saving Ladakh

Sonam Wangchuk's foot march highlights the urgent need for ecological protection and local autonomy of Ladakh

Ladakh, a region known for its breathtaking landscapes and unique culture, is now under threat from an ecological disaster. Climate change and unchecked development are eroding its delicate environment, pushing it towards a tipping point. In the face of this growing crisis, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has emerged as a key figure in the fight to protect Ladakh. Recently, he, along with over 100 supporters, embarked on a foot march from Leh to New Delhi to demand concrete steps for safeguarding Ladakh's fragile ecosystem and securing the region's autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, upon reaching Delhi's Singhu border, Wangchuk and his supporters were detained by the police for violating prohibitory orders. Despite this setback, the march has already sparked widespread attention and support for his demands. Ladakh's environment is one of the most sensitive in India. Nestled in the Himalayan range, the region is already witnessing alarming impacts of climate change. Melting glaciers, shrinking water sources, and unpredictable weather patterns are threatening not only the ecosystem but also the livelihoods of the local population.



The rapid melting of glaciers is particularly concerning as they are the primary source of water for the region. This has caused Ladakh to face a severe water crisis, with rivers and streams drying up at an unprecedented rate. Unchecked tourism and infrastructure development further exacerbate the issue. Waste management remains a significant challenge, and the increasing construction of roads and buildings has disrupted the natural landscape. Wangchuk, who is known for his innovative environmental solutions like the 'Ice Stupa' project, has been vocal about the need for sustainable development in Ladakh. His demands are not only about preserving the environment but also about giving the local people the power to manage their resources and protect their cultural identity. One of his primary demands is to include Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Sixth Schedule provides special protections and autonomy to certain tribal areas in India, allowing them to preserve their culture, manage their resources, and have law-making powers over local matters. Ladakh, with its predominantly tribal population and distinct cultural heritage, has been seeking similar protection. The people of Ladakh in general have expressed disappointment with the current governance structure, which is led by a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the central government. Right now the people of Ladakh have a limited say in decision making. Granting Ladakh Sixth Schedule status would empower its people to make decisions that are in line with their unique environmental and cultural needs. It would allow them to enact laws that protect their fragile ecosystem, manage resources more effectively, and ensure sustainable development. The people of Ladakh are making their voices heard. Now, it is up to the government and the rest of the nation to listen and take meaningful action.

Stupa' project, has been vocal about the need for sustainable development in Ladakh. His demands are not only about preserving the environment but also about giving the local people the power to manage their resources and protect their cultural identity. One of his primary demands is to include Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Sixth Schedule provides special protections and autonomy to certain tribal areas in India, allowing them to preserve their culture, manage their resources, and have law-making powers over local matters. Ladakh, with its predominantly tribal population and distinct cultural heritage, has been seeking similar protection. The people of Ladakh in general have expressed disappointment with the current governance structure, which is led by a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the central government. Right now the people of Ladakh have a limited say in decision making. Granting Ladakh Sixth Schedule status would empower its people to make decisions that are in line with their unique environmental and cultural needs. It would allow them to enact laws that protect their fragile ecosystem, manage resources more effectively, and ensure sustainable development. The people of Ladakh are making their voices heard. Now, it is up to the government and the rest of the nation to listen and take meaningful action.

PICTALK



A view of Humayun's Tomb, a UNESCO world heritage site, in New Delhi

Walking through the woods in UK

Suspension of winter fuel allowances, Starmer's push to reset relations with Europe, and the forgotten legacy of the Gorkhas are echoing in the woods of the UK



ASHOK K MEHTA

Hadlow Stair is a village in Tonbridge Kent, UK, with the Old Hadlow Road leading to it. Tonbridge is a poorer cousin of the historic Tunbridge Wells but a great place for a walking-talking vacation this September when the sun broke through the clouds permitting invigorating small walks. Hadlow Stair is the perfect escape from rain-soaked London, just 40 minutes away by train to Charing Cross in Trafalgar Square. Ordinary Brits have been stunned by the new Labour, suspending Pound 200 winter fuel allowance to pensioners, ostensibly to fill the Pound 22 bn deficit left by the Tories though inflation is below 3 per cent. In the village, most read newspapers only on the weekend: the talk is about Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon and Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife accepting gifts. Former civil servant Sue Gray who sorted out Boris Johnson for his indiscretions during the pandemic is now the chief advisor to Starmer with a pay package of Pounds 180,000, surpassing the wages the PM gets. Modernising Britain's Continuous Sea Deterrence as well as upgrading its nuclear submarines from Vanguard to Dreadnought class is also underway. Peers in the House of Lords warned that 2.5 per cent on defence spending (at present 2.3 per cent) may not be enough to meet the challenges and fix the military. Here too, there is a Pound 10 bn hole which is proposed to be filled up by taxes. India's spending is below 2 per cent with immeasurably bigger threats. But who cares! All this and more, John Lawson, my walking companion shares with me. Amongst all the walks the one in the undulating woods nearby is most enjoyable as John takes myriad routes and detours along the soggy earthy soil. You can do a dozen different trails here and not know they are in the same woods. Go south from Hadlow Road past the Scottish St Andrews Church across fields and through apple orchards with apples to eat and apples to cook. But there are no pickers due to Brexit, laments John.



The Chinese have invented an apple-picking machine which is yet to make its commercial debut. Here, in the fields too, John has manufactured several walking trails - the special one is along the Medway river to Tonbridge town which has everything from Marks and Spencers to Waitrose and Sainsburys to Kathmandu Valley and Dalchini restaurants to Humphrey and Bean Pub where we were privy to a brawl. There is also the Tonbridge Castle. My favourite walk though is through the Higham Woods. This I did every morning, meeting making friends with people walking their dogs. Every house here has a cat or a dog or even a horse! Almost every afternoon John and I did serious walking bringing the milometer to roughly 120 plus miles in 12 days. In his spare time, John moves auto parts and trucks in the UK and Europe where too, Brexit means cost and time overruns. At the Labour Party annual conference, Starmer said he wants to reset relations with European Union and make Brexit work with the EU reset. The biggest applause at the conference was reserved for the Home Secretary, who decried the recent racial riots. Migrants continue to sail



THE PLAN TO RAISE A THIRD BATTALION OF GORKHA RIFLES WAS ABANDONED THOUGH THREE GORKHA COMPANIES WERE RAISED FOR THE SPECIAL FORCES. ALDERSHOT IS WHERE RETIRED GORKHAS ALLOWED RESIDENCY IN BRITAIN LIVE, WHILE THE BATTALION IS FURTHER SOUTH

across the Channel and since Rwanda is a closed issue, they will be settled in Britain. I've been travelling to the UK since the 1970s and can say this: Indian or Asian or coloured are no longer looked down upon even though many of the menial jobs are still being done by them. I was horrified to learn that there is a Gorkha Cleaning Company in Kent. The Gorkhas, the Brits once worshipped in battle are all but forgotten except by the likes of Joanna Lumley. This became more evident in London where along a side lane from Whitehall Avenue resides the life-sized stone statue of the eternal Gorkha soldier. The plan to raise a third battalion of Gorkha Rifles was abandoned though three Gorkha companies were raised for the Special Forces. Aldershot is where retired Gorkhas allowed residency in Britain live, while the battalion is further south. The other battalion is in Brunei for which the Sultan pays. Sadly, very few recognise the badges of the Gorkha Regiment any more. Why blame the Brits when we have offered the poor choice of Agniveer to Nepali Gorkhas who stopped joining five years ago? The British Army is 70,000 (with a reserve of 30,000) soldiers and Infantry

less than the size of our Gorkha Brigade. The Navy and Air Force together make another 70,000 warriors but all field state-of-the-art equipment including conventional and strategic forces which are the best in Europe.

The military component of the Indian High Commission in Aldwych has been downsized from three officers to just one with a Naval Commodore holding the fort instead of the Army Brigadier. Returning to my trudge on the tarmac along Whitehall Avenue, the old MoD has become Raffles Hotel, RUSI next door renovated and a few meters ahead are bronze statues of leaders who won fame in India: Field Marshals Slim, Auchinleck, and Allandbrooke. Another Indian famous is the Duke of Wellington honoured in Trafalgar Square and Wellington Corner. The Brits nurture the military and that's one reason they are respected. Thoughts that wafted during the walk in the woods. We must learn.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WEST ASIA TURMOIL

Madam —Apropos, 'West Asia on fire' (September 30). Israel which had vowed 'enough is enough' in the aftermath of a brutal terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7 last year, has dealt a body blow to Hezbollah, the most powerful militant and political force in Lebanon, by eliminating its head Hassan Nasrallah, who had been a global figurehead of anti-Israel resistance for decades. He had been a prime target of Israel since the last Lebanon War of 2008. Now, Hezbollah, considered the vital part of the Axis of Resistance, is leaderless and thus rudderless. However, Nasrallah's demise may only keep Hezbollah lying down for a while. It cannot be written off. Wounded but not destroyed, it may not be long before Hezbollah tries to avenge Nasrallah by raining a barrage of missiles on Israel to keep its people from returning to the northern region. Netanyahu stakes his political fortunes on this. Meanwhile, with thousands of its citizens fleeing northern Israel in wake of Hezbollah strikes, Israel's main task remains unaccomplished. Its bombing Lebanon may go on till Netanyahu gets war-weary and domestic pressures mount or until breakthrough on the hostage issue. It is an opportune time for the international community should it desire to prevail upon Tel Aviv to agree for ceasefire. But peace is unlikely to return to Gaza till Hamas frees hostages and a ceasefire is reached.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

NON BJP STATES WITHDRAW CBI CONSENT

Madam — Karnataka has joined the long list of states that have withdrawn general consent to the CBI to conduct investigations relating to corruption, economic offences and crime or violence in that particular state. The Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, under which the CBI was setup, has defined general consent and

Women education empowers India



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar made insightful remarks on the significance of women's education. He said that a developed India is incomplete without women's empowerment, which is a powerful reminder of the crucial role they play in our society. Women constitute a substantial portion of our

population, and their active participation in all spheres of life is essential for holistic development. By investing in women's education, we not only unlock their individual potential but also empower their families and communities. Educated women are more likely to make informed decisions regarding health, nutrition, and child-rearing, leading to healthier and more prosperous families.

Moreover, women's education is a catalyst for economic growth. When women have access to education and employment opportunities, they contribute to the workforce, boost GDP, and reduce poverty. Their participation in decision-making processes ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more inclusive and equitable policies.

Fiza Fatima | Hyderabad

POTHOLES OF CORRUPTION

Madam —No matter which party is in power, the conditions of the roads all over the nation are pathetic. It requires no rocket science to understand why this is happening. Corruption is the root cause as inferior quality materials are used due to cuts taken by everybody from top to bottom in passing tenders and clearing bills. Therefore, it is hard to be enthused about the promise of pothole free roads by the CM of Delhi Atishi Marlena. Accidents caused by bad roads have come at a great cost including injury and sometimes fatality with no accountability fixed for the loss, what is worse, it is not just potholes but literally craters the vehicles are expected to navigate. Recently, there was a container truck that was completely swallowed by the road. This despite the vehicle owners being made to pay all kinds of taxes for permission to park their vehicles on such roads!

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Remembering Gandhi: A journey of justice and simplicity

Gandhi's transformative journey, which began with racial discrimination in South Africa, helped shape his lifelong pursuit of justice, equality and nonviolence



RAJDEEP PATHAK

On September 11, 2024, Union Minister for Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, inaugurated a restored railway coach at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi. This coach, donated by the Ministry of Railways and painted in brown with a 'III' marking for third class, represents Mahatma Gandhi's simple lifestyle and his close relationship with the Indian railways. A life-size sculpture of Gandhi stepping off the train further emphasises his connection with the masses. Organised by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, the exhibition offers an immersive experience of Gandhi's rail journeys. Shekhawat, in his address, highlighted how Gandhi turned the freedom struggle into a mass movement, remarking that the coach will inspire future generations to uphold the values of justice, equality, and peace for which Gandhi stood. Gandhi's association with the railways was deeply symbolic and formative in his transformation from an ordinary lawyer to the leader of India's independence movement.



A key moment occurred on June 7, 1893, in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, when Gandhi, then a young barrister, was forcibly removed from a first-class train compartment despite having a valid ticket. This act of racial discrimination left a lasting impact on Gandhi and ignited his lifelong dedication to justice and nonviolent resistance. He often referred to this incident as the turning point that set him on the path toward becoming the Mahatma.

Gopal Krishna Gandhi, Gandhi's grandson, poignantly reflected on this moment. He wrote that when Gandhi was thrown off the train, an Indian fell, but when Gandhi rose, both India and South Africa rose with him. The experience transformed Gandhi, turning a personal humiliation into a public cause. What began as a lawyer's indignation became a revolutionary's commitment to human justice. His later train journeys in South Africa, including those to Johannesburg and Pretoria, deepened his understanding of racial discrimination in the railway system. Gandhi confronted railway officials and managed to negotiate some concessions for Indian passengers, marking the beginning of his use of negotiation and protest as tools for change. Upon returning to India in 1914, Gandhi's relationship with the railways grew stronger. He followed the advice of his mentor, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, by traveling in third-class compartments to stay connected with India's impoverished masses. For

Gandhi, trains were a means to engage with ordinary people and understand their struggles firsthand. The challenging conditions he faced—overcrowded compartments, unsanitary surroundings—only strengthened his resolve to fight for social justice. His decision to travel third class symbolised his commitment to egalitarianism and helped transform the freedom struggle into a mass movement that resonated with the broader population. Gandhi traveled by train from Calcutta to Delhi and stayed at Birla House where he spent the last 144 days of his life. During this time, he tirelessly worked for peace amidst the communal violence of Partition. His assassination in January 1948 ended a life devoted to nonviolence and service to humanity. As we celebrate Gandhi Jayanti today as the International Day of Nonviolence, we are reminded of Gandhi's self-sacrifice, dedication, and compassion. (The writer is Program Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

SLEEP, SPIRITUALITY
AND THE MODERN MINDReclaiming quality sleep requires
reconnecting with spiritual practices

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

In the famous poem "Childhood", Ravindra Nath Tagore bemoans the loss of innocence as a child grows up. One thing we can all agree that to sleep like a child is a great asset. But as we grow up our minds begin to play havoc with our sleep. Before I go any further let us understand the basics of sleep. Sleep is one of the most important biological functions and inadequate sleep can cause many problems. Sleep is the time when the body rejuvenates itself. Sleep restores physical well-being and removes fatigue related to emotional activities.

Our brains are beehives of activities during sleep, including the time when one is dreaming. How much sleep is required? It depends on each individual according to age, type of activities, level of activities, etc. Lord Krishna has mentioned sleep as one of the four activities, which must be appropriate. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 6.17) We need sleep excellence. What does the modern man do? There are three types. One cuts on sleep and another cannot fall asleep and resorts to drinks and drugs.

The third sleeps too much wasting precious human life. Taking up the busy ones, they have no respect for rules made by God – the Creator of our bodies. They feel that they can do with less sleep and nothing adverse will happen. But they get harmed in many ways.

The first causality is the energy level; it goes down. Physical health is affected in many ways, but it takes a long; one feels that he is fine until hit by some serious health problem. Performance declines; cognitive ability reduces; memory consolidation is affected as does mental health. You cannot copy someone else, because, as stated earlier,



er, it is, person specific – a bodily necessity. The second group suffers no less, if anything substantially more in the long term.

One thinks that he can order the body to sleep whenever one wants. Have you tried to postpone sleep? What happens? Circadian rhythms are 24-hour cycles that are part of the body's internal clock. Its primary function is sleeping and waking.

We cannot take charge; it controls us. So what does the modern man do? He resorts to artificially induced sleep by taking drinks and drugs. We all know what drinks do to our liver. And drugs are similarly harmful to the brain. Both are habit forming. One is stuck once this is continued over some time. Why is one unable to fall asleep, when bodily and mentally tired? Because we have allowed our minds to take charge of our lives.

We have unlimited desires for a sense of enjoyment, power, fame, etc. We are being driven by emotions like lust, greed, anger, hate, etc. By the way, drinks and drugs do not stop bad and scary dreams from coming, which leave a very bad feeling upon waking up.

The third kind harms oneself in more ways than one by making sleep one's shelter. Let us come to our senses. Shelter is available in God. There are simple spiritual practices, which connect one to God. He will help us curb our wrong tendencies, as only God can. But one has to first accept that one is wrong; one has to give up overblown ego.

It is quite strange that a small, ignorant and helpless soul has such a big ego. What is the conclusion? There is only one shelter, as instructed by Lord Krishna. You will get plenty of sleep and of good quality too sans bad dreams.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Transforming lives
of the Indian farmersSHIVRAJ SINGH
CHOUHAN

Through modern infrastructure, expanded credit support, and sustainable farming methods, PM Modi's policies are revolutionising Indian agriculture

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's deep concern and sensitivity towards farmers is visible in the decisions, policies and plans taken for the farming community. Transforming the lives of our food providers (Annadata) is the first and foremost goal of our Prime Minister. This is the reason why agriculture and farmers remained the top priorities in the first 100 days of the third term of the NDA government. Under his leadership, the government is making unprecedented efforts for the empowerment and upliftment of the agriculture sector. We are committed to increasing farmers' income, which is reflected in schemes such as the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), and PM AASHA. Post-harvest losses in India are a major challenge, which threatens the production capacity of the agricultural sector and it also adversely impacts the hard work put in by lakhs of farmers. According to the latest estimates, about 16-18 per cent of the total food production is affected every year in India due to this.

These losses can be attributed to various stages of agriculture such as harvesting, threshing, storage, transportation and processing. Lack of proper storage, cold chain, inadequate processing units, and lack of efficient logistics contribute to these huge losses, as a result of which the overall food security of our country gets affected.

Keeping all these factors in mind, the Modi government is working with renewed enthusiasm towards strengthening this. Under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is making efforts to take the research of scientists from lab to land, due to which the cost of production has reduced considerably and profits have increased for farmers. The Prime Minister with a visionary approach launched the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) way back in July 2020 as a transformative initiative under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. Its objective is to increase the income of farmers and address post-harvest management issues through farm assets to reduce food wastage. These challenges have to be addressed by promoting new projects and new age technologies. Under AIF, banks provide interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum with an interest cap of 9 per cent and financial institutions will provide loans up to Rs 2 crore with credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises) for loans. Through this initiative, the government aims to not only increase production to preserve quality and quantity, but also help farmers access markets more efficiently, and as a result, their income will also increase.

Due to the able leadership of the Prime Minister, the benefits of the scheme, till August 2024, the amount sanctioned under this scheme has crossed Rs 47,500 crore. Of this, more than Rs 30,000 crore has already been disbursed for various projects. Notably, 54 per cent of the projects that were sanctioned are linked to farmers, cooperative societies, agricultural production organisations and self-help groups (SHGs), which is in line with the Prime Minister's vision. It reflects the strong participation of farmers in providing farm-gate level infrastructure. Prime Minister Modi is very committed towards strengthening farm gate infrastructure to solve the major problem post-harvest losses in agricultural produce. He prioritised the development of infra-



structure in storage (dry and cold), transportation, etc., so that farmers could be protected from such crop loss. In terms of dry storage, in comparison to food grain production, India has an infrastructure in terms of 1,740 lakh metric tonnes of storage capacity, and at present, there is a shortage of 44 per cent in the storage capacity for the overall grain production in India, which is very concerning.



THE PRIME MINISTER WITH A VISIONARY APPROACH LAUNCHED THE AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (AIF) WAY BACK IN JULY 2020 AS A TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVE UNDER THE 'ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT' INITIATIVE

Similarly, for horticulture produce, about 441.9 lakh metric tonnes of cold storage is available in India, while the cold chain capacity is only 15.72 per cent of the production of fruits and vegetables in the country. AIF initiative has helped bridge the storage capacity gap by approximately 500 lakh metric tonnes. Contributing to saving about Rs 5,700 crore post-harvest losses for the nation. Furthermore, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the development of proper cold storage facilities has reduced the loss of horticulture products by 10 per cent, due to which 3.5 lakh metric tonnes of produce is being secured post harvest and about Rs 1,250 crore is being saved every year. This commitment of the Prime Minister towards the agriculture sector and farmers will not only ensure economic empowerment but also raise their standard of living. Under the guidance of the Prime Minister, the AIF is providing new impetus to the growth and development of agricultural infrastructure. As of August 2024, as many as 74,695 agriculture infrastructure-related initiatives across the country have been approved under AIF. These include 18,508 custom hiring centres, 16,238 primary processing centres, 13,702 warehouses, 3,095 sorting and grading units, 1,901 cold stores and cold chains, and 21,251 other types of infrastructure facilities. These 74,695 projects have attracted a total investment of Rs 78,702 crore in the agriculture sector since 2015, which marks significant progress in the sector. Prime Minister Modi has encouraged entrepreneurship among farmers, as approximately 50,000 new agricultural enterprises have been set up in the country. These efforts have helped create more than 8,00,000 employment opportunities, and this number will only increase in the future, even-

tually leading to the creation of 2.5 million jobs, directly or indirectly. The Prime Minister's welfare policies have brought about positive changes in the working style of farmers. The creation of advanced infrastructure on farms has facilitated farmers to sell directly to a wider consumer base, thereby enhancing price realisation and increasing their overall income. Due to modern packaging and cold storage systems, farmers can time their market sales more strategically, resulting in better value realisation.

On average, this infrastructure initiative has enabled farmers to get 11-14 per cent higher prices for their produce. Prime Minister Modi's policies will not only encourage the development of agricultural infrastructure but also reduce credit risk. Through credit guarantee support and interest subvention, lending institutions can give loans with minimal risk, thereby helping their customers. This helps in expanding their base and portfolio diversification. Significantly, this fund is involved in the creation of agricultural infrastructure in collaboration with the refinance facility of NABARD, reducing the effective interest rate for Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) to 1 per cent.

This has brought significant benefits to thousands of farmers associated with such PACS. Under AIF, 9,573 PACS projects have been approved with a loan amount of Rs 2,970 crore to date by NABARD. In an important step under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the central government has approved the progressive expansion of the ambitious Agriculture Infrastructure Fund scheme, making it more inclusive and substantially more influential. The make agriculture a profitable business we have come up with a six-point strategy to increase the income of farmers, such as increasing production, reducing the cost of farming, fair prices for production, providing the appropriate amount of relief during natural disasters, diversification of agriculture and natural farming.

At present, some promising projects for agricultural asset development, such as hydroponic farming, mushroom cultivation, vertical farming,

aeronic farming, polyhouse and greenhouse, are reserved for only farmer groups and collectives.

Now by expanding the scheme coverage to include integrated processing projects, farmers will get better prices for their produce through the creation of integrated processing plants, which include both primary and secondary processing. In addition to this, component A of PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhayan) Yojana provides the facility for the installation of solar power plants up to 2 MW on barren, fallow, cultivable, pasture or marshy lands, and it can be easily converged with the AIF scheme. This strategic convergence will help individual farmers and empower farmer groups, enhancing their role from being 'Annadata' (food givers) to 'Ujjadata' (energy providers). The dedicated credit guarantee cover window, which was exclusively kept for FPOs, i.e. NAB Sanrakshan Trustee Company Private Limited, will remain open for AIF beneficiaries as well, where they will be eligible for guarantee fee reimbursement. These changes will increase processing capabilities, diversify food production, and increase and improve the quality of the yields.

They will increase the shelf life of the produce, boost transport capacity and improve rural supply by linking it to the urban demand. Additionally, these changes will help in generating rural employment opportunities. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is making a significant contribution towards the development of the agriculture sector and empowerment of Indian farmers, by providing a sustainable solution. Due to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, even the minutest problems faced by farmers are being resolved, intense communication and combined efforts have brought a new dawn in the context of farmers' welfare, and this will prove to be a key milestone to fulfil the dreams of a developed agriculture sector of a Viksit Bharat.

(The writer is the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development; views are personal)

Navigating manufacturing landscape: Bridging growth, disparities, and industrial ambitions

India stands as the world's fifth-largest manufacturing powerhouse, generating nearly \$560 billion in goods annually

India is the world's fifth largest manufacturing powerhouse producing nearly 560 Billion Dollars' worth of goods per year but our share in global manufacturing output is below 3 per cent. And the share of manufacturing in India's Gross Value Added (GVA) is stuck at just 17 per cent, not far ahead of the share of agriculture. It is often stated that India seems to be transitioning directly from a primary sector-dominant economy into one dominated by the service sector. The question often asked is whether manufacturing is going to play its part in India's often paradoxical and counter-intuitive growth story. However, one element of India's industrial landscape is quite predictable. The concepts



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

of growth poles first propounded by the French Economist Perroux along with its accompanying concepts of the inevitability of unbalanced regional growth in industrial clusters, with an agglomeration effect that will accentuate regional diversity, seems pretty close to India's development experience. Thus, even where India had set up new industrial townships in

places like Rourkela, Bokaro or even Jamshedpur in an earlier era, these do not appear to have led to broader regional development, with the nearby hinterland areas remaining under-developed for the most part.

The broader issue of regional disparities that have emerged in India has been sought to be addressed institutionally by the various Finance Commission's devolution formula which gives overwhelming weightage to per capita income and, therefore, ensures higher resource flows into backward areas.

The market, on the other hand, has responded to these disparities by the movement of migrant labour to the faster growing parts of the country, with the migrant labour being

the unsung hero of the construction and manufacturing growth in these areas. The concepts of growth poles and growth centres are now being supplemented by the phenomena of port-led industrial growth with major ports, old and new, serving as growth centres in many countries.

The National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) takes on the challenges of accelerating India's manufacturing growth, creating multiple industrial growth foci and linking industrialisation to transport nodes, head-on. The NICDP has focused on the development of industrial townships adjacent to 11 key transport corridors. Eight such townships had been approved till the current



year, four of which are shovel-ready with the industrial plots being allotted, and four others are being implemented with trunk infrastructure being set up. As against eight projects implemented or under implementation over the last 17 years, the Government has recently approved twelve such smart industrial cities in 10 States, at one go, with a big bang approach which is characteristic of PM Modi's style which focuses on Speed and Scale.

All these sites have been validated using the geospatial data on the PM Gati Shakti National Platform to minimise disturbances to existing habitations and ecology, with prioritisation to availability of land parcels with the State Governments, covering land of relatively lesser agricultural value, with proximity to major transport modes for multi-modal connectivity.

A new aspect of using PM Gati Shakti to not only ensure the enhancement of transport infrastructure for improved connectivity but also to combine such network planning with an area planning approach by asking States to start filling social infrastructure gaps (schools, Anganwadis, ITIs, accommodation) concurrently with project implementation, has been initiated.

This combination of transport network planning and area planning should lead to these green field industrial cities getting plug and play infrastructure and multi-modal transport links ahead of demand for the private sector and particularly for foreign investors who wish to participate in India's growth story. It may be recalled that India's Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) ranking had improved from 143 in 2014 to 63 in 2020, in the last year that such rankings were published by the World Bank. While contract compliances and improvement are linked to the broader issue of judicial reform, the NICDP programme will substantially address, along with

parallel initiatives by the States, the issues of land availability and its transparent administration, for any investors seeking industrial sites in these cities. The NICDP Programme also de-risks the investor from one key compliance burden that new investors are concerned about, the issue of environmental clearances by ensuring that full environmental clearance for the entire township is already in place and is backed up by a full spectrum of utility services like power, sewage and waste treatment, roads etc., in a smart city with state-of-the-art infrastructure and digitized grievance redressal mechanisms.

(The writer is former Secretary, DPIIT and currently OSD, Ministry of Defence; views are personal)

PM to lay foundation stones for several sanitation projects today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Marking the completion of 10 years of the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission on October 2, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for several sanitation and cleanliness projects on Wednesday, Jal Shakti minister C R Paatil said here on Tuesday.

The Minister said projects worth over Rs 6,800 crore, aimed at enhancing urban water and sewage systems under AMRUT and AMRUT 2.0, 10 projects worth over Rs 1,550 crore focused on improving water quality and waste management in Ganga basin areas under National Mission for Clean Ganga and 15 Compressed Biogas (CBG) Plant projects worth over Rs 1332 crore under GOBARdhan Scheme will be kicked off.

"The Swachh Bharat Diwas programme will showcase India's decade-long sanitation achievements and those in the recently concluded Swachhata Hi Seva campaign. It will also set the stage for the next phase



of this national endeavour," he said at a press conference here.

Paatil said the prime minister will also launch and lay the foundation stone for several sanitation and cleanliness projects worth over Rs 9,600 crore and these include projects under AMRUT and AMRUT 2.0, National Mission for Clean Ganga and GOBARdhan Scheme.

Paatil said the programme will also include nationwide participation from local government bodies, women's groups, youth organizations, and community leaders, ensuring that

the spirit of Sampoorna Swachhata reaches every corner of India.

Under Swachhata Hi Seva 2024, he said over 19.70 lakh programmes have been completed with public participation of more than 17 crore people. Transformation of around 6.5 lakh Cleanliness Target Units has been achieved. Nearly 1 lakh Safai Mitra Suraksha Shivirs have also been organised, benefitting over 30 lakh Safai Mitras.

Further, over 45 lakh trees have been planted under the Ek Ped Maa ke Naam campaign, he said.

1,492 people died during 2024 monsoon season: IMD data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 1,492 people died in India during extreme weather events in the 2024 monsoon season, according to data compiled by the India Meteorological Department. The data revealed that 895 people lost their lives due to floods and rain-related incidents, while 597 fatalities were caused by thunderstorms and lightning strikes during the monsoon season.

The IMD reported that the country experienced 525 heavy rainfall events (precipitation between 115.6 mm and 204.5 mm) -- the highest in the last five years -- and 96 extremely heavy rainfall events (above 204.5 mm) during the 2024 monsoon.

According to the data, 17 people died from heatwaves -- 13 in Jharkhand and four in Rajasthan -- during the early part of the season. Kerala, which witnessed devastating landslides in the ecologically fragile Wayanad district on July 30, recorded 397 deaths due to floods and heavy rains.

Assam and Madhya Pradesh recorded 102 and 100 deaths,



respectively, due to floods and heavy rains.

In the national capital, 13 deaths were reported as a result of floods and heavy rains.

The data also revealed that Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of deaths (189) due to thunderstorms and lightning strikes, followed by Uttar Pradesh (138), Bihar (61), and Jharkhand (53).

The 2024 southwest monsoon season officially ended on Monday, with India recording 934.8 mm of rainfall -- 107.6 per cent of the long-period average and the highest since 2020.

Central India received 19 per cent more rainfall than the long-period average for the region, the southern peninsu-

la recorded 14 per cent more than normal, and northwest India saw 7 per cent more than usual.

In contrast, east and northeast India registered 14 per cent less rainfall than normal, according to the data. The country experienced an 11 per cent rainfall deficit in June, followed by an excess of 9 per cent in July, 15.3 per cent in August, and 11.6 per cent in September.

Only three meteorological subdivisions recorded deficient rainfall this monsoon season. India's geographical area is divided into 36 meteorological subdivisions. Twenty-one subdivisions recorded normal rainfall, 10 experienced excess rainfall, and two saw large excess rainfall.

Indian Navy ships arrive at Iran as part of long range training deployment



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

During the visit, the ships will engage in activities aimed at enhancing maritime security and interoperability between Indian Navy and IRI Navy. Professional exchanges, cross training visits, wreath laying, friendly sports fixtures and Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) are planned during the ship's stay.

Earlier, the Iranian Training Flotilla ships Bushehr and Tomb had visited Mumbai in March this year as part of training interaction. IRI Naval Ship Dena had also participated in the multi lateral Naval Exercise MILAN 24 in February. The extant visit underscores India's commitment to maritime cooperation with regional states in line with the vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).

In an effort to further strengthen maritime ties between the two countries, the Indian Navy ships of the First Training Squadron (ITS) - INS Tir, INS Shardul and ICGS Veera arrived at the port city of Bandar Abbas, Iran as part of long range training deployment in the Persian Gulf, navy official said here on Tuesday. They said the visit signifies a vital step in strengthening maritime cooperative engagement and fostering mutual understanding. The ship's were escorted by IRI Naval ship Zereh into harbour and received a ceremonial welcome on jetty by dignitaries from IRI Navy's First Naval District and the Indian NA.

Doctors resume cease work following threats, attacks

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Junior doctors of Bengal demanding "justice for Abhaya" --- the lady doctor who was on August 9 raped and murdered inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital --- and better security in Government hospitals resumed cease work from Tuesday alleging the promises made earlier by the State in support of their demands had not been fulfilled. The second phase of cease work begins barely within a fortnight of the first phase when the agitating doctors

inside the hospitals ... but while the Government is claiming in the Supreme Court that major steps have been taken things seem to be running in a snail's pace ... our colleague in RG Kar Medical College was attacked and murdered due to this slack security system ... despite such a big incident and words given by the Government there has been three to four attacks at Sagor Dutta Medical College, CNM Medical College, Rampurhat Medical College and today at Burdwan Medical College ... whereas the Government is indifferent ... so we had no other way but to

Police Commissioner and two Directors of Health following talks with the Chief Minister, Dr Aniket said that "those were not the entire list of demands ... they were only some preliminary steps that we had asked for."

He also pointed out at how senior politicians and MLAs like Humayun Kabir of Murshidabad were publicly threatening the doctors with dire consequences everyday should they not stop their agitation, saying "we have come to treat and serve people ... we have come to learn as junior doctors and not to die at the

hospital should implement a digital system to monitor bed vacancies.

5. Task forces, with elected junior doctor representatives, must be established in all hospitals and medical colleges to oversee the installation of CCTVs, on-call rooms, and bathroom facilities.

6. Police presence in hospitals should be strengthened by hiring permanent male and female officers, rather than relying on civic volunteers.

7. Immediate action is needed to fill all vacant positions for doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers in hospitals.

8. Investigative committees must be set up in each medical college to probe individuals involved in threat activities, with a state-level inquiry committee also formed.

9. Student council elections must be conducted in all medical colleges without delay, with recognition of RDAs and elected student and junior doctor representation in decision-making bodies.

10. Immediate investigation is required into the widespread corruption and disorder within the West Bengal Medical Council (WBMC) and the West Bengal Health Recruitment Board (WBHRB). While there was no immediate response from the Chief Minister senior TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said that he hoped "good sense will prevail and the doctors will return to work as they also do not want people to die ... by resuming their cease work they will only harm the common people and none else."

Meanwhile, the joint forum of doctors have called for a Mahamichil or a Grand rally on Mahalaya day --- or the day when Devi Paksha sets in according to the Hindu calendar --- in demand for Justice for Abhaya or the RGKMCH victim.



called off their strike following talks with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who reportedly assured them of all cooperation that included creating right kind of working environment inside the hospitals. The resumption of cease work comes after attacks over the past one week on junior doctors in three State-run medical colleges.

"We were hopeful that after our talks with the Chief Minister and following that the Chief Secretary concrete measures would be taken to ensure safety and security of the doctors

return to the cease work," said Dr Kinjal Nanda one of the leaders of the Joint Platform of Junior Doctors.

Doctor Debashis Haldar said one of the leaders of the movement also said how "we were left with no option but to cease work as despite assurances given by the Chief Minister we are being attacked whereas the administration is sitting idle ... if this continues then how far away is a second RG Kar like incident." When asked about the removal of senior officers including the former Kolkata

hands of hoodlums." A list of ten demands presented by the doctors read:

1. Abhaya's demand for justice should be addressed without delay, avoiding any extended judicial proceedings. The Health Ministry needs to be held accountable for administrative failures and corruption, and should promptly remove the Health Secretary from their role.

3. A state-wide centralised referral system must be swiftly introduced in all hospitals and medical institutions.

4. Each medical college and

Cyber attacks have emerged as major threat to national security: President Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said here cyber attacks have emerged as a major threat to the national security and the civil services and armed forces must join hands to create a secure nationwide system capable of thwarting them.

She said the country's security concerns extend beyond preservation of territorial integrity and encompass other areas of national well-being such as economic, environmental, energy security, and cyber security related issues.

"Addressing these concerns requires intensive research, and calls for a holistic approach in dealing with these wide-ranging issues," the president said addressing faculty and course members of 64th National Defence College course, who had called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

President Murmu said cyber attacks have emerged as a major threat to the national security. Dealing with and countering cyber attacks requires high-end technological intervention as well as robust digital infrastructure along with a well-trained and specialised human resource, she said.

"It is an issue that affects the entire governance framework of the country across all sectors. This is one of the areas where our civil services and armed forces must join hands to create a secure nationwide system capable of thwarting such attacks," the President said. She said huge amounts of data and sensitive information are available in the governance systems "which cannot be left unsecured" and urged them to understand the gravity of this issue besides taking concrete measures to address it.



President Murmu said the role of the armed forces has expanded far beyond traditional military matters and that the future conflicts will require a multi-state, multi-agency approach.

"One of the major bottlenecks in achieving the goals is that various organisations and departments work in silos. On one hand, achieving the larger goals become difficult while on the other hand, similar jobs are performed by different departments thus creating a resource crunch," the president said. She said it has also been observed that officers working in the same department also keep performing overlapping tasks due to systemic gaps or lack of clear delineation of jobs.

"This course, therefore, makes an important contribution in preparing the officers for enhancing cooperation to perform efficiently," President Murmu told the faculty and course members. The NDC course is aimed at providing a holistic view of contemporary eco-

nomics, political and related aspects with particular emphasis on security issues to the participants drawn from different disciplines -- including those from Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers among others.

Visits to important military stations and frontier posts and some foreign countries form an integral part of the course curriculum.

She said the dynamic global geo-political environment poses numerous challenges. "The fast pace at which events have unfolded in the recent past, could not have been foreseen perhaps a decade earlier.

Thus, all officers, whether from civil services or defence services, must be aware of the challenges and vulnerabilities they face, and the strengths that can help deal with such challenges," the president said.

Addressing the faculty and course members, she said technology is advancing rapidly and it is imperative to keep pace with it.

"Whether it is artificial intelligence, data science, machine language processing or blockchain, you have to be aware of these technologies and should utilise them in your departments for creating a more efficient, transparent and productive work culture," the President said.

She said innovation is another factor that will keep the officers future ready. "Each nation is guided in its actions by its national interests and objectives. Sometimes, you have to face unforeseen situations and crisis. For you to be always prepared for dealing with such situations, it is necessary to be innovative, resourceful and open to collaborations," the president said.

War in West Asia will hit... No divinity on...

From page 1

According to international news agencies, the Israeli military on Tuesday warned people to evacuate nearly two dozen Lebanese border communities hours after announcing the start of "limited" ground operations against Hezbollah. The militant group denied Israeli troops had entered Lebanon. Hezbollah and Hamas are close allies backed by Iran, and each escalation over the past year has raised fears of a wider war in the Middle East that could draw in Iran and the United States, which has rushed military assets to the region in support of Israel. Israel advised people to evacuate to the north of the Awali River, some 60

kilometres from the border and much further than the Litani River, which marks the northern edge of a UN-declared zone that was intended to serve as a buffer between Israel and Hezbollah after their 2006 war. Hezbollah vowed Monday to keep fighting even after its recent losses. European countries have begun pulling their diplomats and citizens out of Lebanon. A British government-chartered flight is due to leave Beirut on Wednesday to evacuate UK nationals. The UK has also sent 700 troops to a base in the nearby island nation of Cyprus to prepare for a potential evacuation of the estimated 5,000 British citizens in Lebanon.

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It had also said no demolition should be carried out without following the due process of law and sans prior notice. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, said the SC had rightly indicated that the court would lay down guidelines for the entire country. He referred to an affidavit filed earlier by the Uttar Pradesh government which said merely because a person is alleged to have been part of some offence, can never be a ground based upon which his immovable property can be demolished. "Even if he is convicted, can that be a ground?", the bench asked. "It can't be," Mehta responded, adding, "Conviction can

never be a ground for demolition." The advocates appearing for the petitioners told the Bench that there have been instances where demolition has been carried out immediately after filing of an FIR against an accused.

One of the counsels said people belonging to almost every community have faced demolition action and their concern was with respect to the misuse of municipal laws as a "punitive measure". Another counsel claimed there were instances where notices were not received by concerned persons before demolition action was carried out. While hearing the matter earlier, the top court had observed that even one instance of illegal demolition was against the "ethos" of the Constitution.

Sonam Wangchuk...

From page 1

Wangchuk and those accompanying him were detained at the Delhi border for violating prohibitory orders. They were taken to different police stations, including Bawana, Narela Industrial Area and Alipur, according to a police officer. "We tried to convince them to go back as Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) (which prohibits assembly of five or more people) is imposed in the National Capital but they were adamant," the officer said, adding that they remain under detention, he said. Meanwhile, Aam Aadmi

Party (AAP) workers mounted a protest against Lt. Governor VK Saxena after Delhi Chief Minister Atishi was stopped from meeting climate activist Sonam Wangchuk at Bawana Police Station. After being denied permission to meet Wangchuk, the CM slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Lt. Governor. "I reached Bawana Police Station to meet Sonam Wangchuk ji and 150 brothers and sisters of Ladakh. Delhi police did not let me meet them. We were told that LG sahab called and ordered not to let me meet them. This dictatorship is not right," Atishi said.

A soldier's bittersweet...

From page 1

The people of Pathanamthitta were always enthusiastic about joining the Defense Forces, the men as soldiers and women as nurses. Many Malayalam short stories and novels have had Pathanamthitta and the Indian Army as the background. For the young and adventurous from the region which had no industries or major business establishments till the 1970s, the Indian Army was a major employment provider before the West Asian gates opened its floodgates. The East Odalil family has been busy since Monday evening making arrangements for Cheriyan's

last journey. His mortal remains are expected to reach home this weekend. Cheriyan after completing his pre-university course (equivalent to modern day class 12th) joined the Corps of EME when he was hardly 18. He laid down his life for the nation when he had turned 22. Once the body is brought back to Elanthour, Cheriyan's name would figure in the record books for the feat of Dogra Scouts of the Indian Army and Tiranga Mountain Rescue for recovering a soldier after 56 years of search mission. Till date only nine bodies out of the 102 passengers who were in the ill-fated aircraft could be retrieved.

Record voter turnout...

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All four Assembly segments recorded over 70 per cent voter turnout. Similarly, six Assembly segments of Kathua also recorded a healthy voter turnout of 70.53 per cent while Samba recorded 72.41 per cent voter turnout. In Kashmir, Baramulla district recorded a 55.73 per cent turnout till 5 pm while Bandipora reported 63.33 per cent polling and Kupwara

witnessed 62.76 per cent polling in the final phase. The strong bastion of Peoples Conference leader Sajad Lone witnessed close to 70 per cent polling while Langate, strong bastion of Er Rashid witnessed close to 60 per cent polling. The remote areas of Karnah, Lolab and Trehgama also recorded over 60 per cent polling. The fate of several senior leaders including two former deputy Chief Ministers Tara Chand and Muzaffar Beig

was sealed in the voting machines. Prominent among others in the fray included People's Conference chairman and former Minister Sajad Lone and National Panthers Party India president Harsh Dev Singh. While Lone contested from the two seats from Kupwara, Singh is contesting from the Chennai seat of Udhamapur. Former Ministers Raman Bhalla (R S Pura), Usman Majid (Bandipora), Nazir

Ahmad Khan (Gurez), Taj Mohiuddin (Uri), Basharat Bukhari (Wagoora-Kreeri), Imran Ansari (Pattan), Ghulam Hassan Mir (Gulmarg), Choudhary Lal Singh (Basohli), Rajiv Jasrotia (Jasrota), Manohar Lal Sharma (Billawar), Sham Lal Sharma and Ajay Kumar Sadhotra (Jammu North), Mula Ram (Marh), Chander Prakash Ganga and Manjit Singh (Vijapur) were other strong contenders in the fray.

I pleaded guilty to journalism for freedom: Assange

AP ■ STRASBOURG

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange said Tuesday that he was freed after years of incarceration because he "pled guilty to journalism." Assange gave evidence of the impact of his detention and conviction to the legal affairs and human rights committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France. The Parliamentary Assembly includes lawmakers from 46 European countries. A group of supporters, holding a banner that said "Thank you, Julian," greeted Assange as he stepped out of van smiling and raising his fist in defiance along with his wife, Stella, and WikiLeaks editor-in-chief, Kristinn Hrafnsson. "Assange is free! We are here. The world is with you," one supporter shouted before Assange entered the Council of Europe building for his first public address since his release from



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and his wife Stella Assange raise their arms as they arrive at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, eastern France, Tuesday. AP/PTI

prison in June "I am not free today because the system worked," Assange said. "I am free today after years of incar-

ceration because I pled guilty to journalism." He added: "I pled guilty to seeking information from a source. I pled guilty to obtaining information from a source. And I pled guilty to informing the public what that information was."

Assange was released in June after five years in a British prison after he pleaded guilty to obtaining and publishing US military secrets in a deal with Justice Department prosecutors that concluded a drawn-out legal saga. Prior to his time in prison, he had spent seven years in self-imposed exile in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he claimed asylum on the grounds of political persecution. The transition from years in a maximum security prison to addressing the European parliamentarians has been a "profound and a surreal shift," Assange said as he detailed the experience of isolation in a small cell. "It strips away one's sense of self,

leaving only the raw essence of existence," he said, his voice cracking while he offered an apology for his "faltering words" and an "unpolished presentation."

"I'm not yet fully equipped to speak about what I have endured — the relentless struggle to stay alive, both physically and mentally," Assange said. The Australian internet publisher was accused of receiving and publishing hundreds of thousands of war logs and diplomatic cables that included details of US military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. His activities were celebrated by press freedom advocates, who heralded his role in bringing to light military conduct that might otherwise have been concealed.

Among the files published by WikiLeaks was a video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Baghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists. Critics say his conduct put American national security and innocent

lives — such as people who provided information to US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan — at risk, and strayed far beyond the bounds of traditional journalism duties.

The yearslong case ended with Assange entering his plea in a US district court on the Northern Mariana Islands, an American commonwealth in the Pacific. Assange pleaded guilty to an Espionage Act charge of conspiring to unlawfully obtain and disseminate classified national defence information. A judge sentenced him to the five years he had already spent behind bars in the UK fighting extradition to the United States.

Assange returned to Australia a free man in late June. At the time his wife, Stella, said he needed time to recuperate before speaking publicly. His appearance on Tuesday comes after the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly published a report on Assange's detention in a high-security UK prison for five years.

Japan's parliament elects Ishiba as PM

AP ■ TOKYO



Japan's parliament on Tuesday formally elected Shigeru Ishiba, head of the governing Liberal Democratic Party, as the country's new prime minister. Ishiba was chosen as the party's leader on Friday to replace Fumio Kishida, who then stepped down earlier on Tuesday to pave the way. Ishiba will announce his new Cabinet later on Tuesday. Kishida took office in 2021 but left so his party could have a fresh leader after his government was dogged by scandals. Ishiba plans to call a parliamentary election for October 27.

"I believe it is important to have the new administration get the public's judgment as soon as possible," Ishiba said Monday in announcing his plan to call a snap election. Opposition parties criticised Ishiba for allowing only a short period of time for his policies to be examined and discussed in parliament before the national election. Kishida had announced in August he would resign at the end of his three-year term. Kishida and his ministers stepped down at a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday morning, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said. Kishida left his office after a brief send-off ceremony in which he was presented a bouquet of red roses and applauded by his staff and former Cabinet members.

"As we face a critical moment in and outside the country, I earnestly hope key policies that will pioneer Japan's future will be powerfully pursued by the new Cabinet," Kishida said in a statement, citing the need to bolster security amid a deepening global divide, such as Russia's war in Ukraine, while tackling a declining birthrate and population, as well as economic and political reforms at home. Ishiba earlier announced his

party's leaders ahead of naming his Cabinet. Former Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, who came in third in the party leadership race, will head the party's election task force. He is expected to name defense experts Takeshi Iwaya as foreign minister and Gen Nakatani as defense chief. The majority of his Cabinet ministers, like Ishiba, are expected to be unaffiliated with factions led and controlled by party heavyweights, and none are from former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's powerful group linked to damaging scandals.

Ishiba's lack of stable power base could also mean a fragility of his government, and "could quickly collapse" even though Ishiba hopes to build up party unity as it prepares for the upcoming election, the liberal-leaning Asahi newspaper said. The move is also seen as revenge by Ishiba, who was largely pushed to the side during most of Abe's reign. Ishiba has proposed an Asian version of the NATO military alliance and more discussion among regional partners about the use of the US nuclear deterrence.

He also suggested a more equal Japan-US security alliance, including joint management of US bases in Japan and having Japanese Self Defense Force bases in the United States. Ishiba outlined his views in an article to the Hudson Institute last week.

Gunmen kill 6, including local paramilitary Guard chief in Iran

AP ■ TEHRAN

Unidentified gunmen killed six people, including a local chief of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, in two separate attacks on Tuesday, state TV reported. The head of a town council and two volunteer members of the Guard were also among the dead in the first attack, it said.

It occurred after the victims participated in a school ceremony in Nikshahar town, about 1,350 kilometers (840 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran, the report said. It identified the town council chief as Parviz Kadkhodaei but provided no other details of the attack in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan. Two police officers were killed



in the second attack, which took place in Khash town in the same province, it said. No one immediately took responsibility for the attacks. In September, gunmen killed four border guards in the province in two separate attacks. The militant group Jaish al-Adl, which seeks greater rights for the ethnic Baluch minority, claimed responsibility for one of the attacks, in which one officer

and two soldiers in the border guard were killed. The province, bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, has been the site of occasional deadly clashes involving militant groups, drug smugglers and Iranian security forces. It is one of the least developed parts of Iran. Relations between the predominantly Sunni Muslim residents of the region and Iran's Shiite theocracy have long been strained.

UK chartered plane to fly out British nationals from Lebanon

PTI ■ LONDON

A UK government-chartered flight will on Wednesday fly out of Lebanon those British nationals who want to leave following escalating violence in the region. UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy's announcement on Monday evening comes amid growing safety concerns following the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Israeli airstrikes on Beirut at the weekend. Prime Minister Keir Starmer previously called on British nationals in Lebanon to "leave immediately" as tensions continue to mount in West Asia. Lammy, who described the situation in Lebanon as "volatile" and warned it could "deteriorate quickly," said in a statement: "The safety of British nationals in Lebanon continues to be our utmost priority." "That's why the

UK government is chartering a flight to help those wanting to leave. It is vital that you leave now as further evacuation may not be guaranteed," he said. According to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), British nationals, their spouse or partners and children under the age of 18 are eligible to be accommodated on the charter flight which is due to leave Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport on Wednesday. The FCDO said it has been working with partners in recent weeks to increase capacity on commercial flights to enable British nationals to leave, with the chartered flight intended to provide additional capacity. Those who have registered their presence with the FCDO will be sent details on how to request a seat. "If you are a British national in Lebanon

who has not already registered your presence, please do so immediately. Vulnerable British nationals and their spouse or partner, and children under the age of 18, will be prioritised for this flight," the FCDO said. The UK government said it would pay to charter the flight, with British nationals expected to pay a fee of GBP 350 per seat. It reiterated that no one should arrive at the airport unless they have a confirmed seat on the plane. Any non-British dependants boarding the flight will require a visa granted for at least six months to enter the UK in line with usual immigration rules and entry process, it said. Meanwhile, 700 British troops alongside Border Force and Foreign Office officials have been deployed to Cyprus to continue contingency planning for a range of scenarios in the region.

Walz and Vance to face off in their only VP debate

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Tim Walz and JD Vance will meet for their first and possibly only vice presidential debate Tuesday, in what could be the last debate for both campaigns to argue their case before the election. The debate in New York hosted by CBS News will give Vance, a Republican freshman senator from Ohio, and Walz, a two-term Democratic governor of Minnesota, the chance to introduce themselves, make the case for their running mates, and go on the attack against the opposing ticket. Tuesday's matchup could have an outsized impact. Polls have shown Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump locked in a close contest, giving added weight to anything that can sway voters on the margins, including the impression left by the vice presidential candidates. It also might be the last debate of the campaign, with the Harris and Trump teams failing to agree on another meeting. The role of a presidential running mate is typically to serve as an attack dog for the person at the top of the ticket, arguing



against the opposing presidential candidate and their proxy on stage. Both Vance and Walz have embraced that role. Vance's occasionally confrontational news interviews and appearances on the campaign trail have underscored why Trump picked him for the Republican ticket despite his past biting criticisms of the former president, including once suggesting Trump would be "America's Hitler." Walz, meanwhile, catapulted onto Harris' campaign by branding Trump and Republicans as "just weird," creating an attack line for Democrats seeking to argue Republicans are disconnected from the American people. A new AP-NORC poll found

that Walz is better liked than Vance, potentially giving the Republican an added challenge. After a Harris-Trump debate in which Republicans complained about the ABC News moderators fact-checking Trump, Tuesday's debate will not feature any corrections from the hosts. CBS News said the onus for pointing out misstatements will be on the candidates, with moderators "facilitating those opportunities." Ahead of the debate, allies of both men were lowering expectations that their candidate will have a decisive performance. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., called Vance "an accomplished debater" and contrasted that

with Walz, saying he was "not a lawyer-debater type." Klobuchar said Walz spent time growing up thinking about football, not debating. Jason Miller, a senior adviser to Trump, portrayed Walz much differently than Klobuchar. "Tim Walz is very good in debates, really good. He's been a politician for nearly 20 years. He'll be very well prepared for tomorrow night," Miller told reporters Monday. He predicted the Democratic governor of Minnesota will be much more "buttoned up" than he is on the campaign trail and ready to defend his record, but added, "That's not to say that JD Vance won't be prepared tomorrow, or that somehow he isn't up to the challenge."

Vance, speaking to reporters last week, said he didn't "have to prepare that much" for the debate because he had "well-developed views on public policy." But Vance has been doing debate prep sessions where he's been joined by his wife, Usha Vance, Miller, senior Vance aides, and Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Minn., who has played Walz, according to a person familiar with his preparations who requested

anonymity to discuss strategy. Moderating their mock debates was Monica Crowley, who served in the Trump administration, hosts a podcast and contributed to Project 2025, a conservative blueprint for remaking government that Trump claims he knows "nothing about."

"JD Vance is prepared to wipe the floor with Tim Walz and expose him for the radical liberal he is," Emmer told reporters on Monday. Walz's debate prep has included sessions hunkered down in a Minneapolis hotel, with Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg standing in for Vance, according to a person familiar with the process who requested anonymity to discuss the campaign's internal dynamics. Others helping in the preparations include Rob Friedlander and Zayn Siddique, who helped Harris prepare for her debate with Trump, along with other aides to Walz and the campaign. Klobuchar said Walz will show the American people "a real person" who brings "buoyancy" and positivity to the debate stage that will contrast with Vance, but "he is not going to be shy about pointing out the problems."

Suspected Yemen Houthi rebel attack targets ship in Red Sea

AP ■ DUBAI



A suspected attack Tuesday targeted a ship in the Red Sea, likely marking their first assault on commercial shipping in weeks as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to become a regional conflict.

The attack comes as Israeli ground forces entered Lebanon after days of Israeli airstrikes that killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and other top leaders and the earlier explosions of sabotaged electronic devices used by the Shiite militia. The Houthis had threatened "escalating military operations" targeting Israel on Monday after they apparently shot down a US military drone flying over the country. The attack Tuesday morning took place some 110 kilometres off the port city of Hodeida in the Red Sea, which has become a battlefield for shippers since the Houthis began their campaign targeting ships travelling through a waterway that once saw USD 1 trillion a year of cargo pass through it. A captain on a ship saw four

"splashes" near his vessel, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said in a warning. That likely would have been missiles or drones launched at the vessel. "All crew are safe and the vessel is proceeding to (its) next port of call," the UKMTO said. The Houthis did not immediately claim the attack. However, they sometimes take hours or days to acknowledge one of their assaults. Houthis have targeted more than 80 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They have seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that has also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea

or failed to reach their targets, which have included Western military vessels. The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the US or the United Kingdom to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran. The last attack on a merchant ship by the Houthis came on September 2. The Houthis claimed an attack targeted American warships last week. The rebels fired more than a half dozen ballistic missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles and two drones at three US ships that were travelling through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, but all were intercepted by the Navy destroyers, a US official said Friday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet publicly released.

The Houthis also continue to launch missiles targeting Israel, drawing retaliatory airstrikes from the Israelis this weekend on Hodeida.

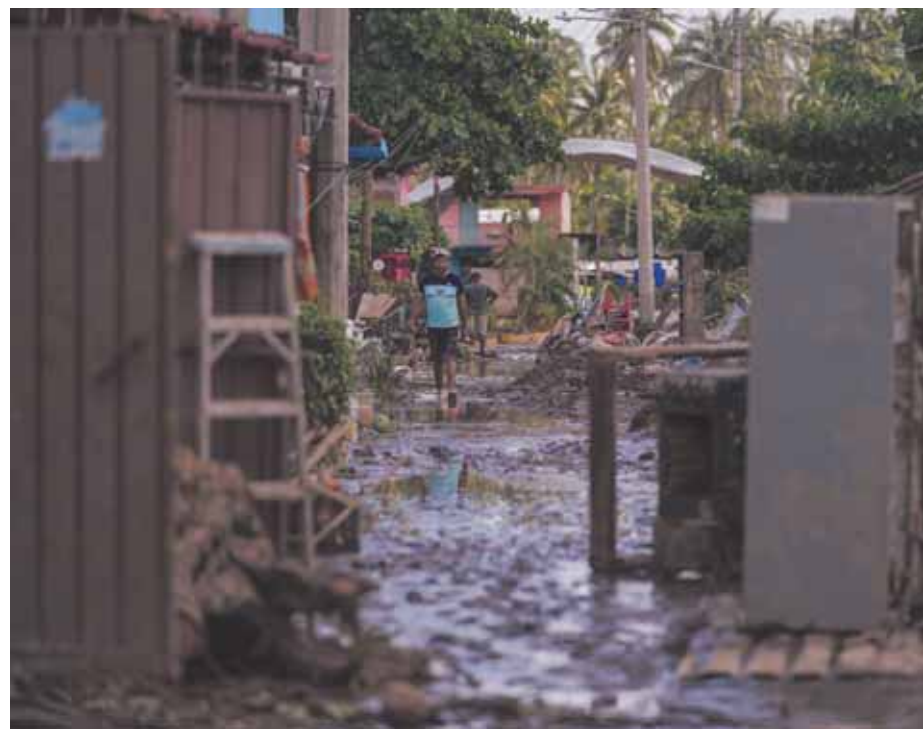
Congo rebel group generates \$300,000 monthly from seized mine, says UN

AP ■ DAKAR

An armed rebel group in Congo generates around USD 300,000 a month in revenue through its control of a mining area in the east of the country, the UN Security Council heard. In April, the M23 — a rebel group with alleged links to Rwanda — seized the Rubaya mining area in eastern Congo, which holds deposits of a key mineral used in the production of smartphones and computers. Over 15 per cent of the world's supply of tantalum, a rare metal extracted from coltan, comes from Rubaya, Bintou Keita, head of the UN mission in Congo, told the Security Council. "Unless international sanctions are imposed on those benefiting from this criminal trade, peace

will remain elusive and civilians will continue to suffer," Keita said. Tantalum is among the minerals that was identified earlier this year in a letter from Congo's government questioning Apple about the tech company's knowledge of "blood minerals" being smuggled in its supply chain. The decadeslong conflict in eastern Congo has produced one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with more than 120 armed groups fighting for power, land and valuable mineral resources while others try to defend their communities. Some armed groups have been accused of mass killings, rapes and other human rights violations. The violence has displaced some 6 million people in the country's east. M23, or the March 23 Movement, is a rebel military

group mainly made up of ethnic Tutsis that broke away from the Congolese army just over a decade ago. They staged a large offensive in 2012 and took over the provincial capital of Goma near the border with Rwanda, the same city they are threatening again. Congo alleges that Rwanda has been involved in war crimes in the east and US and UN experts accuse it of giving military backing to M23. Rwanda denies the claim, but in February admitted that it has troops and missile systems in eastern Congo to safeguard its security, pointing to a buildup of Congolese forces near the border. In July, UN experts estimated that between 3,000 and 4,000 Rwandan government forces are deployed in eastern Congo alongside M23, which has been making major advances.



A man walks through a damaged street after Hurricane John passed through Coyuca de Benitez, Guerrero state, Mexico, Monday. AP/PTI

Biden admn doubles down on tough asylum restrictions at border

Washington (AP): The Biden administration said on Monday it is making asylum restrictions at the southern border even tougher, as it's increasingly eager to show voters uneasy over immigration that it is taking a hard stance on border security. The new rules, which toughen restrictions announced in June, bar migrants from being granted asylum when US officials deem that the southern border is overwhelmed. Under the previous rules, the US could restrict asylum access when the number of migrants trying to enter the country between the official border crossings hit 2,500

per day. The daily numbers had to average below 1,500 per day for a week in order for the restrictions to be lifted. The version rolled out on Monday says the daily numbers will have to be below 1,500 for nearly a month before the restrictions can be lifted. And the administration is now counting all children toward that number, whereas previously only migrant children from Mexico were counted. These changes, which go into effect on Tuesday, will make it much more difficult to lift the restrictions and allow people entering the country between the official border crossings eventually to apply for asylum in the US.

India's manufacturing growth hits eight months low in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector growth fell to an eight-month low in September amid softer increase in factory production, sales and new export orders, a monthly survey said on Tuesday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from 57.5 in August to 56.5 in September, registering the weakest pace of growth since January. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "Momentum in India's manufacturing sector softened in September from the very strong growth in the summer months. "Output and new orders grew at a slower pace, and the deceleration in export demand growth was



especially evident as the new export orders PMI was the lowest since March 2023," Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said. The September PMI data revealed a mild setback in manufacturing growth across India. For the third straight month, rates of expansion in factory production and sales receded. Moreover, international orders rose at the slowest pace in a year-and-a-half.

On the price front, there were moderate increases in input costs and selling charges. As a result of rising purchasing prices, as well as greater labour costs and favourable demand conditions, Indian manufacturers marginally increased their charges in September. According to Bhandari, input prices rose at a faster rate in September, while factory gate price inflation eased,

intensifying the compression on manufacturers' margin. "Weaker profit growth might have an impact on companies' hiring demand, as the pace of employment growth slowed for a third month," Bhandari noted. Hiring growth also receded in September, reflecting a reduction in the number of part-time and temporary workers. Going ahead, the overall level of business confidence fell to its lowest since April 2023. Around 23 per cent of Indian manufacturers forecast output growth in the year ahead, while the remaining firms predict no change. The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

Car sales fluctuate in September

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian automotive market has showcased a diverse performance among key players in September, reflecting varying consumer preferences and market conditions. Talking about the stats, Mahindra & Mahindra reported a notable 24% surge in SUV sales, achieving 51,062 units compared to 41,267 units in the same month last year. The company also saw overall sales, including commercial vehicles (CVs) and three-wheelers, rise 16% year-on-year to 87,839 units. As the festive season approaches, Mahindra is also set to launch the much-anticipated Thar RoXX on October 3. Conversely, JSW MG Motor India experienced an 8% decline in retail sales, with only 4,588 units sold compared to 5,003 units in September 2022. The automaker noted that new energy vehicles (NEVs) accounted for 49% of their total sales, emphasizing a shift in consumer interest amidst market challenges.



Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported a 14% increase in wholesales, reaching 26,847 units, up from 23,590 units last year. The brand's success is attributed to significant growth in its SUV, MPV, and small car segments, bolstered by strategic operational

improvements that reduced waiting periods for popular models. Hyundai Motor India faced a 10% dip in total sales, down to 64,201 units from 71,641 units in the previous year. Domestic dispatches also fell by 6%, with exports down 25%. The

company noted that SUVs now comprise 70% of its overall sales and introduced new models to attract consumers during the festive season. In addition to the domestic dispatch of vehicles to dealers saw a 6 per cent dip to 51,101 units last month from 54,241 units in the year-ago period. Finally, Maruti Suzuki India showcased a slight 2% increase in total sales, reaching 1,84,727 units, up from 1,81,343 units a year prior. Sales of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tour S and WagonR, however, declined to 60,480 units as compared to 68,551 units in the year-ago month. However, domestic passenger vehicle sales declined by 4%, despite growth in utility vehicle sales. Exports showed positive momentum, rising to 27,728 units from 22,511 units last September. Overall, the fluctuating sales figures reflect a complex landscape in the Indian automotive market, influenced by consumer trends, economic conditions, and the approaching festive season.

Andhra Pradesh notifies new liquor policy

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has notified a new liquor policy, allowing private retailers to sell spirits on the lines of Haryana and others with the state expecting to rake in Rs 5,500 crore revenue. In a complete overhaul of excise policy based on best practices from other states, Andhra Pradesh has decided retail sales of liquor through 3,736 notified private shops across the state. The new policy will take effect from October 12, 2024, as per the notification dated September 30, 2024. The permission to sell IMFL (Indian-made foreign liquor) and FL (foreign liquor) will be granted to private persons or entities through a selection process, the notification said. The period of licence for



selling IMFL and FL by shops shall be from October 12, 2024 to September 30, 2026, it added. Out of the total number of shops to be licensed in 2024-26, as many as 3,396 will be in the open category, while 340 shops will be reserved for allocation to 'Geetha Kulalu'

(a toddy tapping community) with a view to empower them and promote equity and social justice. The selection process for granting licence will be through a draw of lots and an applicant can apply for more than one shop. There shall be no restriction on the number

of shop licences a person can hold, it added. Applicants will have to deposit a non-refundable fee of Rs 2 lakh for each shop. As per the notification, the retail excise tax (RET) ranges from Rs 50 lakh for locality with population of 10,000 to Rs 85 lakh per annum for a

municipality or municipal corporation having population above 5 lakh during the fiscal 2024-2025. It will be increased by 10 per cent for 2025-26. The overall exercise is estimated to result in the state government raking in Rs 5,500 crore. The RET per annum shall be paid in six equal advance instalments as applicable for each year during the licence period 2024-26. As per the notification, the retailer margin will be 20 per cent on issue price across all categories of IMFL and FL, including beer, wine and RTDs (ready to drink). For the premium stores, the notification said, "In order to provide an enhanced and high-end retail experience within the state of Andhra Pradesh, a total of 12 Premium Store Licenses shall be granted as a separate

category." These premium stores shall be strategically located across major municipal corporation cities namely Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Kakinada, Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapur or any other city as notified by the state government from time to time, it added. A cabinet sub-committee of the state government had studied the excise policies of states such as Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and also took extensive feedback from key stakeholders, before framing the latest policy. It had assessed the performance of the existing policy with respect to public health impact and other critical metrics including revenue generation efficiency, the state government said.

SEBI to enhance F&O regulations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi is expected to take measures regarding the Futures and Options (F&O) segment very soon, in a bid to enhance investor protection, its senior official said on Tuesday. In addition, Sebi has urged the government to introduce tax breaks for subscribers of municipal bonds, which are crucial for funding infrastructure development. The regulator will make a case for a tax break for municipal bonds during a meeting with the finance commission, the regulator's whole time member Ashwani Bhatia said here. Since 1997, municipalities have raised Rs 2,700 crore through bonds for infrastructure projects. Talking about F&O, Bhatia said, "Sebi is very soon going to do something about F&O. Study has come (recently)". The regulator, in its consultation paper recently, proposed seven measures to tighten the rules for index derivatives-- revise the minimum contract size and require upfront collection of option premiums intra-day monitoring of position limits, rationalisation of strike prices, removal of calendar spread benefit on expiry day and increase in near contract expiry margin. If implemented, these measures



would help in improving risk management and increase transparency in the derivatives market. In its consultation paper, the regulator had suggested to revise the minimum contract size for index derivatives in two phases, considering market growth. In phase 1, the minimum contract value at the time of introduction should be between Rs 15 lakh and Rs 20 lakh. After six months, phase 2 will raise the minimum value to between Rs 20 lakh and Rs 30 lakh. The current minimum contract size of Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh was last set in 2015. A recent study by Sebi revealed that 93 per cent of over 1 crore individual F&O traders incurred average losses of around Rs 2 lakh per trader (inclusive of transaction costs) during the three years from FY22 to FY24. The aggregate losses of individual traders exceeded Rs 1.8 lakh crore over the three-year period between FY22 and FY24.

CAG: Development of hinterland essential for India's goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Without the development of hinterland, India cannot become Viksit Bharat or a developed nation by 2047, Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu said on Tuesday. Noting that decentralisation of power has not taken to the extent it should have happened, he said, gram sabha or rural bodies are yet to get its due importance in the federal structure. "Without the development of grassroots level at the local level, we cannot achieve

Viksit Bharat. More than 50 per cent people live in rural area, and until their governance, their development, their administration, their resources are not augmented, we will not be able to reach (Viksit Bharat goal). As our prime minister says that if everyone take one step, we will have 1.4 billion steps... That is why, Jan Bhagidari is important," he said. There are about 2,60,000 panchayats and 7,000 urban local bodies in the country. He emphasised the need for strengthening of local bodies

so that efficiency of government schemes are achieved and the sooner it happens, the better it is for the country. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be achieved without strengthening local bodies, he said, adding, that accounting and auditing play important roles in flow of funds to the local bodies. With regard to urban local bodies, the CAG said, municipal corporations cannot be given permission to raise resources from market if they have not followed proper accounting norms.

Lenders recover ₹ 3.5 lakh crore through IBC: IBBI Chairperson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lenders have recovered Rs 3.5 lakh crore through resolution of stressed assets under the insolvency process in the last eight years, a period during which NCLT approved 1,000 resolution plans, IBBI Chairperson Ravi Mital said on Tuesday. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) provides for a market-linked and time-bound resolution of stressed assets. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) are key



institutions in the IBC ecosystem. In the last two years, NCLT has cleared 450 resolution plans. This accounts for 45 per cent of the 1,000 such plans approved in the last eight years, Mital said at a function to mark the eighth foundation day of the IBBI. According to him, Rs 3.5 lakh crore has been recovered

directly by lenders, of which Rs 1 lakh crore was in the last two years. Under the IBC, the recovery is about 84 per cent of the assets' fair value, as per official data. Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said a continuously improving and evolving bankruptcy system is important for economic growth.

Digi Yatra to be made available in regional, international languages

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Digi Yatra, which seeks to provide seamless movement at airport check points, will be made available in regional and international languages, according to a senior official. The facility is now available at 24 airports and is expected to be rolled out at 4-5 more airports in the coming months. Digi Yatra Foundation CEO Suresh Khadakhbavi on Tuesday said a pilot project is likely by June next year for connecting two countries with Digi Yatra. Under the pilot project, foreign citizens will be able to use Digi Yatra. Speaking at the CAPA India Digital Aviation Summit in the national capital, Khadakhbavi said a campaign will be started to sensitise passengers about the facility. While Digi Yatra is slowly gaining traction, concerns have been expressed in various quarters about the privacy of data of the passengers. He said Digi Yatra will be made



available in regional and international languages. Based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), Digi Yatra provides for contactless, seamless movement of passengers at various check points at airports. A not-for-profit entity, the foundation is the nodal agency for Digi Yatra, which was introduced in December 2022. The shareholders of the foundation are Airports Authority of India (AAI), Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL), Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL), Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (HIAL) and Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL).

Jet fuel prices cut, LPG hiked



Jet fuel, or ATF, price was on Tuesday reduced by 6.3 per cent to its lowest level this year, while the rate of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants was hiked by Rs 48.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends. Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price was cut by Rs 5,883 per kilolitre, or 6.29 per cent, to Rs 87,597.22 per kl in the national capital, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

This is the lowest price of jet fuel this year. The price reduction, the second in a month, will help ease the burden of airlines for whom fuel makes up for almost 40 per cent of the operating cost. Prices were on September 1 cut by Rs 4,495.5 per kl, or 4.58 per cent. The ATF rate in Mumbai was reduced to Rs 81,866.13 per kl on Tuesday from Rs 87,432.78 previously. Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes. Alongside, oil firms increased the price of commercial LPG

by Rs 48.5 to Rs 1,740 per 19-kg cylinder. This is the third straight monthly increase. Prices were hiked by Rs 6.5 per cylinder on August 1 and by Rs 39 on September 1. The three rounds of increase follow four monthly price reductions. In four price reductions, rates were cut by Rs 148 per 19-kg cylinder and now in three rounds of increase, prices have gone up by Rs 94 per bottle. Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,692.50 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,850.50 in Kolkata and Rs 1,903 in Chennai. The rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on the first of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate.

Reliance Infra approves US \$ 350 million fundraise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Board of Directors of Reliance Infrastructure Limited (Reliance Infrastructure) on Tuesday approved raising of funds upto US\$ 350 million (INR 2,930 cr) to VFESI Holdings Pte. Limited, an affiliate of Verde Investment Partners, LP, a leading global alternative investment firm. The FCCBs will be unsecured and will have ultra-low cost coupon of 5% p.a. with a long maturity of 10 years. The FCCBs will be convertible into Equity Shares at INR 330 per share. The Board of Directors also approved an Employees Stock Option Scheme (ESOS) for all employees of the Company and its subsidiaries. ESOS provides for grant of upto 2,60,00,000 fully paid-up equity shares of INR 10 each, representing approximately 5% of the Company's fully diluted capital.

INBRIEF

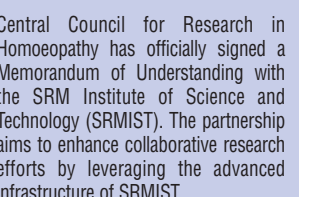
PARAMJEET SINGH GETS WARM FAREWELL

PATIALA: Er Paramjeet Singh, Director Generation, Punjab State Power Corporation Limited was given farewell on his retirement on Monday.



MOU BETWEEN CCRH AND SRMIST

Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy has officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST). The partnership aims to enhance collaborative research efforts by leveraging the advanced infrastructure of SRMIST.



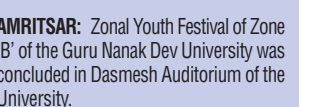
5000 LIGHTS TO BE INSTALLED IN NARELA

NARELA: On Sunday a ceremony was held in the Comfort Zone to commemorate the birth anniversary of martyr Bhagat Singh. The event's organizer Dheeran Maan shared that hundreds of tractors and vehicles formed a rally.



GNUD 'B' ZONE ZONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL CONCLUDED

AMRITSAR: Zonal Youth Festival of Zone 'B' of the Guru Nanak Dev University was concluded in Dasmesh Auditorium of the University.



REC SIGNS MOU WITH GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN

NEW DELHI: REC Limited has signed MoU with Govt of Rajasthan, Department of Finance during the Rising Rajasthan Investors meet today. As per MoU, REC will provide Rs. 50,000 Crore annually to finance projects for a period of six years.



MANE LEADS AIR RIFLE DOMINANCE WITH DOUBLE GOLD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

It was double delight for Parth Rakesh Mane as he was crowned junior world champion in 10m air rifle and also claimed a team gold to lead India's impressive performance at the ongoing ISSF Junior World Championship in Lima, Peru. In a thrilling 24-shot final, the 16-year-old Mane overcame a field oozing class with consummate ease, shooting 250.7 to edge out reigning junior Asian champion Huang Liwanlin of China by 0.7 points. Braden Peiser of the USA took the bronze medal. Paris Olympic silver medallist Victor Lindgren of Sweden was fourth while reigning double junior world champion Romain Aufrere was sixth. Parth's own compatriots, the in-form Ajay Malik and the seasoned-at-15 Abhinav Shaw finished fifth and seventh

respectively. Ajay went down in shoot-off to Lindgren to finish with 186.7 while Abhinav bowed out in seventh with 144.2. Mane also won the men's team event alongside Ajay Malik and Abhinav Shaw. India's third gold of the day came when Gautami Bhanot, Sambhavi Kshirsagar and Anoushka Thakur also picked up the junior women's 10m air rifle team title. Earlier in the 62-strong qualification round, Malik secured second place with a score of 628.8, followed by Mane in fourth with 627.7, and Shaw in sixth with 627.0 after 60 shots. Their combined total of 1883.5 easily surpassed teams from the USA (1877.6) and Germany (1873.9) to win the team gold. Two other Indians in the fray Umamahesh Maddineni (625.5) and Talwar Singh (625.2) finished 13th and 14th respectively.

INDIA SURGES AT LIMA JUNIOR WORLDS



Three Indians also made the junior women's air rifle final but missed out on individual medals. Gautami Bhanot finished second in the 90-strong qualification field with a score of 634.7 as China's Wang Zifei topped with a junior world record score of 635.7. Shambhavi Kshirsagar finished fourth (632.6) and Ojasvi Thakur (631.4) qualified in fifth place. Anoushka Thakur was 17th with 627.5, while Saumya Khedkar was 20th with 627.4. Gautami then finished fourth in the final, going down to the bronze-winning US athlete by 0.2 after the 20th shot. She finished with a score of 209.3. Shambhavi (188.4) was fifth and Ojasvi (146.1) bowed out in seventh place. Gautami and Shambhavi, however, combined effectively with Anoushka Thakur to clinch the team competition, bossing USA with a junior world team

record score of 1894.8. Norway was third. Indians also competed in the junior men's and women's skeet competition at the shotgun ranges but couldn't reach the finals. Gurfateh Singh Sandhu finished 29th with a score of 112 in qualification, while Bhavtegh Singh Gill shot the same score in the junior men's skeet to finish 31st on countback. Harmehar Singh Lally was 44th with 107. In junior women's skeet, Mansi Raghuvanshi was the best placed Indian in shotgun. Her score of 109 giving her 8th place as she missed out on qualification by a point. Mufaddal Dessawala and Shivani Raikwar shot scores of 98 each to finish in 30th and 31st positions respectively. With five gold medals till date, India continues to lead the overall medal tally at the championship.



Ronaldo scores winner for Al-Nassr in AFC Champions League Elite

AP ■ RIYADH

Cristiano Ronaldo scored the winning goal as Al-Nassr of Saudi Arabia defeated Al-Rayyan of Qatar 2-1 in the AFC Champions League Elite group stage on Monday. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner missed Al-Nassr's opening 1-1 draw against Al-Shorta of Iraq two weeks ago because of a viral infection. On Monday, he had a goal ruled out for offside, but his shot into the top corner with 14 minutes remaining in Riyadh proved to be decisive. Former Liverpool forward Sadio Mane headed home for Al-Nassr just before the break and the points seemed secure when Ronaldo added a second. Al-Rayyan came back in the game three minutes from the end when Roger Guedes scored from close range. Al-Nassr, seeking a first Asian

title, hung on, however. Riyadh Mahrez scored his first goal of the season as Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia won at Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates 2-0 for a second straight win. The Algerian attacker, who joined the Jeddah club from Manchester City in 2023, had been struggling for fitness. Mahrez opened the scoring after just three minutes. He ran on to a long pass from defender Roger Ibanez and shot home from inside the area. He returned the favor seven minutes before the break as his corner was headed home powerfully by Ibanez. Elsewhere, Al-Sadd of Qatar defeated Esteghalal of Iran 2-0, whose Tehran rival Persepolis drew with Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan 1-1. The 24 teams are divided into two groups of 12 - one based in the west and one in the east - with the top eight from each progressing to the round of 16.

HI announces 40 probables for national camp to prepare for home series against Germany

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hockey India on Tuesday announced a 40-member core probable squad for the senior men's national coaching camp in Bengaluru to prepare for the upcoming two-match home series against world champions Germany. The team for the two matches against Germany to be played at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium here on October 23 and 24 will be selected from the camp. The camp will run from October 1 to 19. The team heads into this camp following their recent successes that include a second consecutive bronze medal at the Paris Olympics and a successful title defence at the Asian Champions Trophy in China. The focus will be on honing



skills of the players and strategies during matches, a Hockey India release said. India captain Harmanpreet Singh said the camp will help in ensuring that the team is well-prepared and in peak condition before facing Germany. "Playing against the world champions is a tremendous opportunity for us to showcase our abilities, and having an exciting mix of players in this camp will allow us to improve our strategies and build the cohesion needed," he said.

"Each player in this core group brings unique strengths and varying levels of experience and we'll be focusing on how to harness these individual talents and help us grow as players. "Our objective is to create an environment where everyone pushes each other and by the end of this camp, we want to be an even stronger and better coordinated team." **THE PROBABLES:** **Goalkeepers:** 1. Krishan Bahadur Pathak; 2. Pawan; 3. Suraj Karkera; 4. Mohith **Defenders:** 1. Jarmanpreet Singh; 2. Amit Rohidas; 3. Harmanpreet Singh; 4. Sumit; 5. Sanjay; 6. Jugraj Singh; 7. Amandeep Lakra; 8. Nilam Sanjeev Xess; 9. Varun Kumar; 10. Yashdeep Siwach; 11. Dipsan Tirkey; 12. Mandeep Mor **Midfielders:** 1. Rajkumar Pal; 2. Shamsher Singh; 3. Manpreet Singh; 4. Hardik Singh; 5. Vivek Sagar Prasad; 6. Nilakanta Sharma; 7. Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh; 8. Mohammed Raheel Mousen; 9. Vishnukant Singh; 10. Rajinder Singh; 11. Poovanna CB **Forwards:** 1. Abhishek; 2. Sukhjeet Singh; 3. Lalit Kumar Upadhyay; 4. Mandeep Singh; 5. Gurjant Singh; 6. Angad Bir Singh; 7. Aditya Lalage; 8. Bobby Singh Dhami; 9. Sudeep Chirmako; 10. S. Karthi; 11. Maninder Singh; 12. Shilanand Lakra; 13. Dilpreet Singh.

Mumbai City FC hope happy homecoming against high-flying Bengaluru FC

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai City FC would look to notch their first win of the Indian Super League (ISL) this season and move up the points table when they face high-flying Bengaluru FC in a clash between two heavyweights here on Wednesday. Bengaluru have made a commanding start, winning all their three outings so far to sit atop the points table, while Mumbai are surprisingly placed at 11th after two away matches, with just one point. Mumbai have found the back of the net in their previous eight matches at home and are looking to equal their longest such ISL run, having done so in nine meetings between October 2022 and February 2023. Interestingly, they have also won their previous three matches versus Bengaluru. Bengaluru have scored one-third of their goals in the competition this year within the opening 15 minutes, the highest such rate for any team so far. Mumbai City head coach Petr Kratky said his team needs to avoid conceding goals from set-pieces. "We need to get better in the area where it's hurting us. And, we have to stop it as soon as possible because, in two games, we conceded five goals and four goals from set-pieces, which is unacceptable for me," he said.



"We have to keep working and keep going. We need to analyse and identify what's (going) wrong and have to find why. The 'why' is very important. "If we know why we're conceding, why we're losing, or why we're not getting the points, then we can figure out what to fix. So, this is our and my first goal." On the other hand, BFC head coach Gerard Zaragoza expressed his happiness at the impressive start but admitted that they cannot afford to slow down yet. "Let me enjoy. Three games, three wins, and we are happy. But it's too early," he noted.

"Mumbai City FC will be there, and Odisha FC will be there. We are going to Mumbai, and it will be difficult there." The two sides have face each other on 16 occasions in the tournament, with Mumbai winning on eight instances, as against seven victories for Bengaluru. One match ended in a draw. Meanwhile, Bengaluru FC legend and former India captain Sunil Chhetri has netted nine times versus Mumbai City in the competition. He will be aiming to become the first Indian to score on 10 occasions against a single opponent in the ISL.



Pegula out of China Open after a 4th round loss to Badosa

AP ■ BEIJING

Paula Badosa reeled off 11 of the last 12 games in a 6-4, 6-0 victory over US Open finalist Jessica Pegula at the China Open on Tuesday to reach her eighth career quarter-final at a WTA 1000-level event. From 3-1 down in the opening set, former No. 2-ranked Badosa dominated in her first-ever win over third-ranked Pegula. "She's one the of the players I never want to face -- she's very solid, hits very flat, changes very well direction," said Badosa, who was 0-3 previously against Pegula. "I prepared myself for a battle, but I think today everything worked pretty well. "Every point was very important for me, especially against Jessica, because she can come back at any moment." Badosa next faces 35-year-old Chinese player Zhang Shuai, who continued her resurgence with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Magdalena Frech of Poland. Zhang entered the China Open on a 24-match losing streak and ranked No. 595, but she's yet to drop a set in four

matches this week. That includes eliminating US Open semi-finalist Emma Navarro in straight sets for her first win over a Top 10 player in two years. Zhang is now in her first women's tour quarter-final since Tokyo in 2022, and her first at a WTA 1000 tournament since Cincinnati in the same year. Later Tuesday, No. 14-ranked Anna Kalinskaya was scheduled to meet Yulia Starodubtseva of Ukraine, before the marquee women's match of the day between four-time major winner Naomi Osaka and sixth-ranked Coco Gauff. It will be the first meeting between the two Grand Slam champions in over two years, with the head-to-head series tied at 2-2. On the men's side, Carlos Alcaraz was playing fifth-ranked Daniil Medvedev in the first semi-final, with the Spaniard holding a 5-2 advantage in their head-to-head history. Defending champion and top-ranked Janner Sinner was set to face No.

Women's soccer on a high as new Asian Champions League launches

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Women's soccer is on a high in Asia after some World Cup performances that captivated nations, raising expectations for the new AFC Champions League. North Korea's win over Japan in the women's Under-20 World Cup last month has the women's game back in focus across the continent. Australia's run to the semi-finals at the Women's World Cup it co-hosted last year with New Zealand drew record crowds and attention to the talent in the region. Now, the continental club championship has been revamped and the group stage of the Women's Asian Champions League launches this week with the Urawa Red Diamond Ladies flying the flag for Japan. The Reds defeated South

Korea's Incheon Red Angels in the final of the Women's Club Championship in May, a pilot tournament for the AFC's Women's Champions League, and would like nothing more than to repeat that success. "To have two Asian nations in the (under-20) World Cup final is good for Asia and good for us, too, as we have rivals to compete with," Urawa coach Naoki Kusunose said. "We are grateful for this new challenge in club soccer - and we want to move on to the next step and win the Women's AFC Champions League." The 12-team tournament, including four teams that advanced through a preliminary stage, is divided into three groups of four. Urawa kicks off against India's Odisha on Thursday and will go on to face Ho Chi Minh City and Taiwanese team Taichung Blue Whale.



The Group C games will take place in Vietnam as each group is played in a single venue over nine days, with the top two advancing to the quarter-finals next March along with the two best third-placed teams. The semi-finals and final will be held in May of 2025. Australia's Melbourne City is in Group B and kicks off

against Iran's Bam Khatoon in Thailand. Melbourne City who will also face Kaya-Iloilo of the Philippines and Thailand's College of Asian Scholars. "For women's football in general in Asia, it's a great opportunity," Melbourne City coach Michael Matricciani said. "To be in the inaugural campaign, it's an honor for us representing Australia, and also an opportunity for silverware and to test ourselves against the best in Asia." Incheon Red Angels are in Group A along with Sabah of Malaysia, China's Wuhan Jianga and Abu Dhabi Country Club from the United Arab Emirates. The Asian Football Confederation has confirmed that the champion will receive at least USD 1.3 million in prize money. "We are confident that the

competition will empower women in Asian football, contributing to gender equality and breaking down societal barriers, to make a positive impact on the growth of the women's game," AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa said in a statement. With varying degrees of professionalism in the women's game across the continent, going deep into the tournament can make a difference financially. There are concerns, however, that the new tournament does not reflect the reality of women's soccer in Asia. FIFPro Asia/Oceania, part of a worldwide organization representing 65,000 soccer players, compiled a report on the tournament in August based on 88 players who participated in the pilot Women's Club Championship.

It found that just 62% of players in the tournament identified as professional, less than half earned more than USD 10,000 from soccer per season and a quarter reported that the sport was not their primary income. FIFPro wants more co-operation between the AFC and other stakeholders. "Whilst the potential of the women's game in Asia is immense, we must ensure it is developed in a way that is responsive to the lived realities illustrated in this report," said Kathryn Gill, a FIFPro board member and former Australia international. "This can only occur through establishing a genuine partnership between the AFC, leagues, clubs and players, and not through unilaterally overlying regulations that are fit for men's competitions onto female competitions.



We were willing to get all out for 100: Rohit on India's boldplay in Kanpur Test

PTI ■ KANPUR

India were willing to take the risk of being bowled for 100-odd in its bold push for a result in the weather-hit second Test against Bangladesh, said Rohit Sharma after the hosts pulled off a dramatic win here on Tuesday.

India managed to win the game comfortably on day five despite two full days were lost due to wet outfield at the Green Park Stadium. Even on day one, only 35 overs possible. After bowling out Bangladesh for 233, India batted in T20 mode to smash 285 in 34.4 overs before declaring their first innings. Having lost two batters overnight, Bangladesh were bowled out in their second innings as stroke of lunch and India ended the game in the second session.

"Once we lost two and a half days, when we came on day 4 we wanted to get them out as quickly as possible and see what we can do with the bat. When they got bowled out for 230, it wasn't about the runs we



get but the overs we got at them," said Rohit at the post-match presentation.

"To make a game out of it on that pitch was a superb effort. It was a risk we were willing to take because when you're trying to bat like that, you can be bundled out for a low score. But we were ready for it even if we got bowled out for 100-120. It was India's record extending 18th series win in a row at home. Among the new players, Rohit was pleased by Akash

Deep's relentless effort. "He's been good (Akash Deep). Lot of domestic cricket he has played. When you come up through the ranks like that, there are a lot of overs in the legs. He has the quality and the skill. Good body as well - can bowl long spells. You have to make sure you prepare your bench strength," said the skipper. It was the first Test series under new head coach Gautam Gambhir who overtook the

responsibility from Rahul Dravid.

"We had a fantastic time (with Dravid) but life moves on. Gautam Gambhir, I've played with him and know what sort of mindset he comes in with," said Rohit.

Ashwin was named player of the series for his all-round show. He rated the improbable win was "massive" in the context of World Test Championship. "When we bowled them out

yesterday, it was little after lunch. Rohit was keen that we needed 80 overs to bowl at them.

"And the moment he came inside out and gave that talk where we're going to go after it even if we get out under 230. It's not only him saying it, he went out there and hit his first ball for six. He set the tone that way," said the premier spinner. Opposition skipper Najmul Hasan Shanto said that team's batting through the two Test series let them down.

"Both the Tests we didn't bat well. In these conditions we need to bat well. If you look at our batters - we played 30-40 balls and got out. It's important in a Test match, when batsmen get in, you should look to score big runs," said Shanto.

"The way Ashwin and Jaddu batted at that time (in Chennai after India were six down) - they batted really well. As a bowling unit we need to look at those moments - how we can get those wickets. That partnership cost us that game," added Shanto.

ASHWIN TIES MURALITHARAN MAN OF THE SERIES MARK

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has etched his name in the records book once again, equalling the most number of Player of the Series in Test cricket's history, with his stellar performances in Bangladesh series. Ashwin now stands with Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan.

They both now share the 11 Player of the Series accolades, Ashwin performance in the Bangladesh series conquered many records in history of cricket. Ashwin took 11 wickets and scored 114 runs in both the innings two Test matches.

Ashwin's performances throughout his test career gave many cherish moments for India. In first test match in Chennai his crucial knock of 113 runs gave team a fighting total and took 6 wickets in second innings for winning the Test match.

Ashwin awarded his 11th number of Player of the series. Back from his Test debut in 2011 he has only played in 42 series so far. On the other

hand Sri Lankan legend Muralitharan featured in a total of 61 series for Sri Lanka during his 18-year-long career and won the Player of the Series award on 11 occasions. In the list of most number of Player of the Series Ashwin alongside with muralitharan tops the list followed by Jacques kallis (South Africa)-9, Imran Khan (Pakistan)-8, Richard Hadlee (New Zealand)-8, Shane Warne (Australia)-8.

For India Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag are second in the list of India players with most Player of the Series awards in Tests five number of occasions they were rewarded. Virat Kohli has three Player of the Series awards to his name in Tests, whereas Kapil Dev, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, and Rahul Dravid in their careers with four Player of the Series awards each.

Ashwin who considered as an All-rounder batting at number eight scored six centuries allowed him to match New Zealander Daniel Vettori who scored five centuries batting at lower order for their team. The 38

year old spinner currently ranks number two in ICC Test All-rounder rankings.

Ashwin's heroic show in the second Test against Bangladesh has tossed him to the top of the wicket-takers list in the ongoing 2023-25 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle.

He has taken 53 wickets from 10 matches at an average of 21.18 and a strike rate of 37.30, surpassing Josh Hazlewood, who is second in the list of most wicket takers with 51 wickets.

It would be an epic battle to see in the upcoming Border Gavaskar Trophy later this year in Australia which might be his last Border Gavaskar feat in Australia currently he is second most wicket taker after Nathan Lyon in Border Gavaskar Trophy.

This achievement further highlights Ashwin's crucial role in India's Test cricket success marks as one of the greatest spinners of his generation. Ashwin's ability to adapt to different conditions and bowl effectively in all phases of the game and made him a nightmare for batsmen worldwide.

Whenever it comes to the team, I go and give my life out there: Rodrigues

PTI ■ DUBAI

Jemimah Rodrigues feels adaptability and maintaining a team-first mentality will be key for India to achieve their dream of claiming a maiden ICC title at the T20 World Cup beginning here on Thursday.

India, who reached the finals of the women's T20 World Cup in 2020, will start their campaign in the ninth edition of the tournament against New Zealand on October 4.

"For me, it's all about assessing the conditions and playing the situation. I just want to keep it simple and do whatever it takes to help the team win and whatever the team needs," Rodrigues, who hit a 52 in the first warm-up game against West Indies, told Star Sports.

"When I put things in that perspective, it gets the best out of me and motivates me. For me, whenever it comes to the team, I go and give my life out there. That gets me more passionate, energetic, and enthusiastic. I want Team India to win. We, as a unit, want Team India to win. For me, it's all about keeping it in that perspective."

The 24-year-old from Mumbai emphasised on the importance of playing to the situation irrespective of the bowler.

"For me, it's not about specific bowlers but about playing to the situation. Bowlers can have off days, and as a



batter, I need to assess which bowler to attack and when to hold back. The satisfaction comes from playing smart and doing what's best for the team." In other ICC events, India has reached the finals of ODI World Cups in 2005 and 2017 but never gone the distance. Harmanpreet Kaur and Co, meanwhile, made a good start by winning the first warm-up match against West Indies by 20 runs.

"For this team, it's a mix of absolute youngsters and some like me who have had experience. Richa (Ghosh) and Shafali (Verma) have also played World Cups before, so we are young but not inexperienced," Rodrigues said.

incredible, and since then, I've always admired her game. We've prepared well to bowl against her, and now it's just about executing our plans."

India will face Australia in a Group A clash in Sharjah on October 13, and Rodrigues stated that execution will be key against the former champions.

"I love playing against Australia because you have to bring your A-game. There's no other option if you want to win. The rivalry has been intense over the years, and it brings out the best in us.

"We've prepared well and put in the work. Now it's time to execute our plans."

Rodrigues lavished praise on senior colleagues - opener Mandhana and skipper Harmanpreet.

"What stands out about Smriti is her maturity. Even though she's young, she understands the game and her role so well. As the vice-captain, her inputs are invaluable, and she's developed a great understanding of players. She doesn't just tell you to do something her way; she puts herself in your shoes and offers advice that works for you."

"Harman di is a big-match player. We've seen it time and again - from her 171 in the World Cup to her performances in key matches. As a team, we know how much this World Cup means to her, and we want to win it for India and for her. If I see her lifting the trophy, I know I'll start crying."

Associate nations might abandon 'costly' red-ball cricket: Whatmore

PTI ■ SHARJAH

World Cup-winning coach Dav Whatmore voiced concerns about the sustainability of the ICC's multi-million dollar initiative to support Test cricket suggesting that several countries, especially associate nations, may abandon the "costly" red-ball format entirely.

The International Cricket Council is mulling a dedicated fund of at least USD 15 million for Test cricket that would increase the minimum match payment for Test players and cover the cost of sending teams on overseas tours.

"Saving Test cricket is one of the challenges. The ICC is very keen to maintain some sort of status in Test match cricket. They have created a pool of money to assist countries that are struggling. A step in the right direction, but I'm not sure how sustainable that is," Whatmore told PTI on the sidelines of the Cricket Predicta Conclave here.

"There are a number of countries, particularly the Associates, which may abandon the red ball and focus on the white ball," he added.

The dedicated fund would support national boards that struggle to compete with the wages offered in global T20 competitions.

"It is a very costly format of the game. A number of countries do it really well, and they're very successful at it, but there's also many who are struggling.

India, Australia, and England appear to be the only three countries prioritising Test cricket, with India



reaching the finals of the World Test Championship on both occasions. Whatmore attributes this success to the presence of a strong red-ball domestic calendar.

"It appears as though those three countries are very strong in their domestic red ball tournaments, and that reflects internationally," he said. "New Zealand played in the

championship not all that long ago. They're also keen to be active in that format, but they're struggling when they travel to the subcontinent. They'll be tested again when they come to India."

The 70-year-old, who coached Sri Lanka to the World Cup in 1996, lauded India for its robust domestic calendar while adding that the IPL

and the under-19 program contribute significantly to accelerating player development.

"Well, it's very robust. It's a very good, strong, healthy domestic calendar that throws up very good new cricketers that come along, and then you add IPL onto that. It really does accelerate development for a lot of youngsters."

"Add to that the Under-19 program, which is always successful. There's always been one or two boys that continue on with a very good form from every second year in the World Cup, and they've been successful in winning the World Cup too on many occasions. So all in all, it's a very good one."

While Bangladesh registered a historic Test series victory against Pakistan and host Sri Lanka defeated New Zealand, the two struggled against India and England respectively.

Whatmore, who has coached both the teams in the past, feels they need to be more consistent.

"Sri Lanka were reasonably competitive in England, and they come back to their own conditions, which they are very familiar with and having won some very important tosses in Galle, makes it very difficult for touring teams, particularly the Western countries.

"So they're doing well, and so is Bangladesh. They did well against Pakistan, but then they had a real tough time in Chennai in the first against India.

"So overall, they're very encouraging performances, but you've got to have consistency, and that's what will separate the teams," he added.



Sabalenka extends winning streak, Osaka to play Gauff at China Open

AP ■ BEIJING

Aryna Sabalenka's dominant hard-court season showed no signs of slowing down as she cruised to a 6-2, 6-2 win over Ashlyn Krueger at the China Open on Monday for her 14th consecutive victory.

The three-time Grand Slam winner started her streak with a title at Cincinnati in August and continued with a run to the championship at the U.S. Open earlier this month. She also won the Australian Open earlier in the year.

The second-ranked Sabalenka converted five of her seven breakpoint opportunities in a lopsided contest against Krueger and will next face Madison Keys, hoping to equal her career-best 15 consecutive victories set in 2020-21.

Keys had a 6-3, 6-3 win over Beatrice Haddad Maia of Brazil. Haddad Maia won the Korea Open last week but

struggled to combat the baseline power of Keys.

Former No. 1 Naomi Osaka continued her positive start with new coach Patrick Mouratoglou with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Katie Volynets, advancing to a round of 16 match against sixth-ranked Coco Gauff.

It will be the first meeting between the two Grand Slam champions in more than two years, with the head-to-head series tied at 2-2.

"It's going to be a really cool test for me," Osaka said. "She's played really well this year. I'm excited to play the match, and I know people are excited to watch the match."

Osaka, who returned from maternity leave at the start of this season and is No. 73 in the current rankings, fired five aces and produced three service breaks.

The four-time major winner joined Mouratoglou shortly

before the China Open after splitting with Wim Fissette. Her run here so far is the first time since May that Osaka has had three consecutive wins.

Also, No. 14-ranked Anna Kalinskaya was leading 3-6, 6-3, 3-1 when Peyton Sterns retired from their match. She will next play Yulia Starodubtseva of Ukraine.

Karolina Muchova beat Jaqueline Cristian 6-1, 6-3 and will play the winner of the match between Cristina Bucsa and 24th-seeded Elise Mertens in the fourth round.

In the men's draw, Andrey Rublev beat Alejandro Davidovich Fokina 6-4, 7-5 in a match that was carried over from Sunday because of a rain delay.

No. 6-ranked Rublev had six aces and 21 winners to extend his career record against Davidovich Fokina to 5-0. The fifth-seeded Russian will play local favorite No.

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