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OPINION 6

EDUCATION MUST FOR
AFGHAN GIRLS' FREEDOM

WORLD 9

SUNAK HOLDS FIRM AS BOOKIES'
FAVOURITE TO REPLACE LIZ AS UK PMAUS TO FACE NZ
IN T20 WORLD
CUP TODAY
11 SPORTAct against hate speech
or face contempt: SCApex court issues
notices to Delhi,
UP, UttarakhandPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday once again came down heavily on authorities for failing to take action against the growing menace of hate speech. Asserting that the Constitution of India envisages a secular nation, the apex court warned any delay on the part of the administration in taking action on this "very serious issue" will invite the court's contempt.

A bench of Justices KM Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy issued notices to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Governments on the petition filed by journalist Shaheen Abdullah and directed them to promptly register criminal cases against the culprits without waiting for a complaint to be filed.

"The Constitution of India envisages a secular nation and fraternity among citizens assuring the dignity of the individual... The unity and integrity of the nation is one of the guiding principles enshrined in the preamble. There cannot be fraternity unless the members of the community from different religions are able to live in harmony. The petitioner points out



despite various penal provisions, no action has been taken and there is a need to serve constitutional principles. We feel this court is charged with a duty to protect the fundamental rights and also protect and serve the constitution where the rule of law is maintained," the top court said.

The apex court said action must be taken against those making hate speeches irrespective of their religion to preserve the secular fabric of the nation. "Respondents 2-4 (the three States) will file a response as to what action has been taken for the speeches highlighted. They shall ensure that as and when any (hate) speech or action takes place, suo motu action is taken in such cases in future without waiting for complaints."

Noting that the complaint has said that the authorities are not taking action against hate

aged in the preamble is maintained," it said. Abdullah has moved the top court also seeking direction to the Centre and States to initiate independent, credible and impartial probe into the incidents of hate crimes and hate speeches across the country.

In his petition, Abdullah has also sought to invoke the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and other stringent provisions to curb hate crimes and hate speeches.

He has alleged the Muslim community is being "targeted and terrorised" by the participation of members of the ruling political party in delivering hate speeches.

"The spread of hate towards Muslims and other minorities gets accelerated and becomes all the more far-reaching in its impact as a result of the support, directly or indirectly, extended to radical miscreants, who engage in acts of hate crimes, physical violence as well as communally charged speeches by the ruling political party," he has said in the petition.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Abdullah, referred to a recent incident of hate speech in Delhi. When the top court asked if Muslims also make such hate speeches, Sibal said action should be taken against all who make hate speeches and they (Muslims) should also not be spared.

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Army chopper with
5 on board crashes2 bodies found,
search on for 3
in ArunachalPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

An Indian Army helicopter with five personnel, including two pilots on board crashed on Friday, in Arunachal Pradesh. Rescue teams have, so far, recovered two bodies from the crash site and efforts are on to find the others.

The Rudra helicopter crashed at 10.43 am.

The remote area is not connected by any roads. Local village folk are engaged in the rescue operation. Three IAF helicopters are engaged in the operation along with Army teams.

"A military helicopter crashed near Singing village, 25 kilometres away from the Tuting headquarters in the Upper Siang district today. Site of accident not connected by road, rescue team sent. Further details awaited," Defence officials said, adding the helicopter was on a routine sortie.

Upper Siang Superintendent of Police Jummur Basar said the crash site is a mountainous region, and it will take time for the search and rescue team to reach the spot.

This is the second incident



Smoke billows after an advanced light helicopter of the Indian Army crashed at Migging in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh on Friday

PTI

of an Army helicopter accident in the State this month. A Cheetah helicopter crashed in Tawang district on October 5, killing one of the two pilots onboard.

Another Cheetah chopper crashed in March near the Line of Control (LOC) in Jammu & Kashmir. The pilot died in this incident.

Rudra is a twin-engine attack helicopter manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Army. It is the Weapon System Integrated (WSI) Mk-IV variant of the Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).

Expressing shock over the

mishap, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said in a tweet, "Received very disturbing news about the Indian Army's Advanced Light Helicopter crash in Upper Siang District in Arunachal Pradesh. My deepest prayers."

Chief Minister Pema Khandu, reacting to the accident, wrote on Twitter, "Shocked to hear about the news of @adgpi. Advanced Light Combat Helicopter crash near Tuting area in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The State Government has rushed the rescue team to the accident site and providing all assistance."

The Indian Army's aviation wing has been deploying the Weapon System Integrated (WSI) variant of the Advanced Light Helicopter Rudra in the region adding more teeth to its tactical missions in view of the lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh.

The multi-role helicopter of 5.8 ton class is a multi-role, multi-mission new generation helicopter.

An ALH-WSI had crashed into the massive Ranjit Sagar reservoir near Pathankot on August 3 last year, killing two Army pilots.

In October 2019, a Dhruv helicopter of the Indian Army carrying the then Chief of the Northern Command Lt General Ranbir Singh and other senior officers had crash landed in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch.

Between March 2017 and December 2021, 31 people lost their lives in accidents involving 15 military helicopters that included four ALH, four Cheetah, two ALH (WSI), three Mi-17V5, an Mi-17 and a Chetak, according to official details.

The total number of deceased in the 15 accidents included 14 people killed in the December 8, 2021 crash near Coonoor. Then Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, his wife Madhulika and 12 Armed forces personnel were killed in the crash.

CAPSULE

GOOGLE: CCI FINE A JOLT,
WILL PLAN NEXT STEPS

New Delhi: Google on Friday said it will review Competition Commission's (CCI) decision to impose a ₹1,338 crore penalty for alleged anti-competitive practice, and termed the order a "major setback" for Indian consumers and businesses.

DENGUE OUTBREAK IN
NEPAL: 42K +VE, 51 DIED

Kathmandu: Over 50 people have died and more than 42,500 tested positive for the dengue virus in Nepal which has been experiencing a surge in cases since July when the first infections were reported.

GYANVAPI SURVEY: COURT
TO HEAR PLEA ON NOV 2

Varanasi: A district court here fixed November 2 for hearing plea for the survey of two Gyanvapi complex basements and imposed a penalty on the mosque committee for not filing an objection to it in time.

STRAY DOGS KILL 5-YR
OLD IN KHARGONE

Khargone: A five-year-old girl died after being mauled by stray dogs in at Bakawa village under Bedia police station in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district on Friday, police said.

Cross-border online jihad can't be
termed political problem, says ShahHM urges Interpol
to plan for next
50 years amid
transforming
mode of crimes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday exhorted the Interpol to formulate prospective plans for the next 50 years to cope with the changing modes of crimes. He also underscored the need for defining terms like "terrorism" and "terrorists" to better deal with terror threats.

He also emphasised that terrorism is the biggest violator of human rights and cross-border propagation of terrorist ideologies through online radicalisation cannot be considered "political problem".

The Minister was speaking at the valedictory of the four-day General Assembly of the Interpol.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah lays a wreath during the Police Commemoration Day at National Police Memorial in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

"When Interpol was established in 1923, crime and policing challenges at that time, and modes and methods of crime today are very different, a lot of changes have taken place, and it is quite natural that in the decades to come, even more changes will take place," he said.

He further said, "Criminal mindsets have not changed, but the means for crime are changing. In this regard, it is my sug-

gestion that based on its experience and achievements over the last 100 years, Interpol prepares a future plan for the next 50 years."

"Interpol can also set up a study group under its auspices, which can carry out detailed research on the challenges likely in the next 35-50 years, and solutions for them," he said.

Continued on Page 2

Neglect of religious places reflects
previous Govts' slave mentality: PMThey are now
being restored
to their lost
glory: Modi

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused previous governments of leaving centres of faith across the country in a state of neglect and claimed that these places are now being restored to their lost glory.

Citing examples of the Kashi Vishwanath temple, Ujjain and Ayodhya, where major reconstruction works have been carried out in recent years, Modi attributed the "years of neglect" to a "slave mentality".

The PM was addressing a public gathering in Mana village after offering prayers at Kedarnath and Badrinath on Friday. He also unveiled the foundation stones for develop-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi offers prayers at the Kedarnath temple in Rudrapur district on Friday

PTI

ment works worth more than ₹3,400 crore, including the Gaurikund-Kedarnath and Govindghat-Hemkund ropeway projects and widening of the NH-7 from Mana to Mana Pass and NH 107 B from Joshimath to Malari, both in the region bordering China.

Modi said, "Slave mentality has gripped people in such a way that they find every work of progress akin to a crime. Works related to culture are praised abroad but not in India. The slave mentality had brought our venerable centres of faith to a deteriorated condition. Our religious places were ignored for decades. Such centres of faith are not mere structures but carry the power of life for us; they are sources of power which keep us energised even in the most difficult of circumstances."

The PM spoke of the works being done in Badrinath, Kedarnath, Ayodhya— and from Pavagarh in Gujarat to Devi Vindhyaachal corridor— stating that these works are part of the nation's cultural revival.

Continued on Page 2

'No PUC, no fuel' order
in Capital put on hold

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to thousands of vehicle owners, the Delhi Government has put on hold the order making it mandatory to carry a valid pollution-under-check (PUC) certificate to buy fuel from October 25.

The Delhi Government will launch the "Red Light on Gaadi off" campaign again to curb vehicular pollution from October 28.

"The diesel and petrol dealers' association has given some suggestions regarding law and order... These will be discussed with the Chief Minister and a decision will be taken thereafter," Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Friday.

"For now, it is not being implemented from October 25," the Minister said.

Sources in the Government said the agencies, including petrol pump owners and the Delhi Police, advised deferring the move keeping in view the law and order situation.

The Government had earlier asked vehicle owners to compulsorily carry a valid PUC certificate for buying fuel at petrol pumps from October 25 to check air pollution caused by vehicles in the national capital.

Over 19.36 lakh vehicles in the national Capital do not have PUC certificate, according to the Delhi Transport Department.

Continued on Page 2

Pak taken off FATF's grey list
for honing anti-terror skills

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistan has been taken off from the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global watchdog on terror financing and money laundering, four years after the country was put in the infamous categorisation.

Significantly, for the first time, the FATF put Myanmar in the "high risk jurisdictions subject to a call for action", often referred to as the watchdog's black list.

In a statement, the FATF said it welcomes Pakistan's significant progress in improving its anti-money laundering, combating financial terrorism (AML/CFT) regime.

The decision was taken by



the FATF in its plenary held in Paris on October 20-21.

"Pakistan has strengthened the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime and addressed technical deficiencies to meet the commitments of its action plans regarding strategic deficiencies that the FATF identified in June 2018 and June 2021, the latter of which was completed in advance of

the deadlines, encompassing 34 action items in total.

"Pakistan is therefore no longer subject to the FATF's increased monitoring process. Pakistan will

continue to work with APG to further improve its AML/CFT system," the statement said.

With Pakistan's exit from the "grey list", Islamabad may now try to get financial aid from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Union to boost its cash-strapped economy.

Pak EC bars ex-PM
from holding office
for hiding proceeds
from sale of gifts

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

In a major setback to former Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan's top election body on Friday disqualified him from holding public office for five years in the Toshakhana case for hiding proceeds from the sale of gifts he received from foreign leaders.

After the consensus ruling by a four-member bench headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Imran's poll ban over gift
scam sparks huge protest

Supporters of Imran Khan's party throw stones toward police officers in protest against the election commission's decision, in Islamabad on Friday

AP

Insaf (PTI) chairman cannot become a member of the parliament for five years. The EC member from Punjab was not present for the announcement.

The ruling coalition government lawmakers had filed a case with the Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in August against seeking his disqualification for failing to reveal the proceeds from the sale of gifts that he purchased at a discounted price from the state repository "Toshakhana".
Continued on Page 2

NCRPULSE

KEJRIWAL PAYS TRIBUTE TO POLICE MARTYRS
New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday paid tribute to police martyrs and said he bowed to all brave policemen who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. On Police Commemoration Day, he took to Twitter to also say that his government ‘always takes care’ of the families of such policemen. “On ‘Police Memorial Day’, I bow to all the brave policemen who sacrificed their lives in the service of the public while performing their duty with full devotion. “Our government always takes care of the families of all such brave policemen,” Kejriwal tweeted.

GOVT LIGHTS 51,000 DIYAS AT CENTRAL PARK IN CP
New Delhi: The Delhi government on Friday lit 51,000 diyas at Central Park in Connaught Place here to mark the launch of its campaign for a pollution-free Diwali. The Delhi government in September re-imposed a complete ban on the production, sale and use of all types of firecrackers till January 1, a practice it has been following for the past two years.

NEW EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM COMMENDABLE: ABVP
New Delhi: The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Friday said that the new educational curriculum is ‘helpful in all-round development’ and discussion on it is an ‘important step’ towards ‘implementation of (the) National Education Policy (NEP)’.According to the statement released by the ABVP, terming the new National Curriculum Framework ‘commendable’, the RSS-affiliated organisation said the composition of the curriculum, in sync with the National Education Policy-2020, ‘ensures it is extremely useful’ to students.

AAP ALLEGES ILLEGALITY IN CONSTRUCTION OF OLD AGE HOME
New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party on Friday alleged illegality and irregularities in the construction of an old age home by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and took a swipe at the BJP. AAP MCD in-charge and MLA Durgesh Pathak said the civic body’s audit report reveals that the responsibility of building old age homes lies with the state government, but it got the building constructed illegally.

GOVT MAKES NEW SCERT BLOCK TO TRAIN TEACHERS
New Delhi: The Delhi government has established a new block with state-of-the-art facilities to train in-service teachers at the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), officials said on Friday. The block has five training halls, an auditorium, conference room, faculty office, inset room and a canteen.

EVENTS HELD ON 2ND DAY OF DEEPOTSAV PANCH PRAN
New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Ministry of Culture, GOI and Hindusthan Samachar, multilingual news agency held the events of the second day of ‘Deepotsav Panch Pran’ at IGNCA, Janpath building. “India cannot recognize its true potential unless it realizes that its true power lies in its mind,” Arif Mohamad Khan said at Deepotsav, ‘Panch Pran’ event.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

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Fax No.: 011-23384008, E-mail Address - cos@nr.railnet.gov.in
Tender Notice No. 56/2022-2023
Dated: 21.10.2022

INVITATION OF TENDERS THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM
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02	07220999	Thermoplastic Polyester Elastomer	42797 NOS	16.11.22
03	09222532A	Main Pull Rod	2466 NOS	18.11.22
04	09223032C	Enamel Synthetic, Exterior, Finishing, White	28964 LTR	18.11.22
05	08225054	RC Tender for 24 Core Signalling Cable	1032.50 Kilometre	18.11.22
06	09222114	Lock Drawing No. SK-62724	5572 NOS	14.12.22
07	09222310	Kit (4 Items) for Common Pipe Bracket	5995 Set	03.01.23
08	09222421	Spring Plank for BLC Wagon	194 Nos	05.01.23

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18.11.2022 तक आमंत्रित

दीपावली पर्व के शुभ अवसर पर बहुमंजिला आवासीय सह-व्यावसायिक योजना में दीनदयाल नगर ग्वालियर के मुख्य द्वार के सनीप एवं मुख्य मार्ग (180 फुट रोड) पर 2BHK एवं 3BHK फ्लैट क्रय करने हेतु सुहरा अवसर

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- प्रवेश द्वार - 02 नं. (प्रवेश-निर्गम)
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- सी.सी.टी.वी.



स. क्र.	प्रस्तावित भवनों का प्रकार	उपलब्ध संख्या	भवन का कॉरपेट क्षेत्रफल (वर्ग मी.)	भवन का अनुमानित मूल्य (रु. लाख में)	पंजीयन राशि (रु. लाख में)	आवेदन फार्म का मूल्य (GST सहित)
01.	2 BHK (फ्लैट)	20 फ्लैट अनु.जाति-02 नं. अनु. जनजाति-03 नं. पिछड़ा वर्ग-01 नं. मण्डल कर्मचारी-01 नं. स्वतंत्रता सेनानी-01 नं. सैनिक/भूतपूर्व सैनिक-01 नं. बुद्धिजीवी/श्रमजीवी/पत्रकार-01 नं. विकलांग-01 नं. सामान्य वर्ग-09 नं.	57.28 वर्ग मी.	27.80 लाख	2.50 लाख	रु. 590/-
02.	3 BHK (फ्लैट)	24 फ्लैट अनु.जाति-02 नं. अनु. जनजाति-04 नं. पिछड़ा वर्ग-01 नं. मण्डल कर्मचारी-01 नं. स्वतंत्रता सेनानी-01 नं. सैनिक/भूतपूर्व सैनिक-01 नं. बुद्धिजीवी/श्रमजीवी/पत्रकार-01 नं. विकलांग-01 नं. सांसद/विधायक-04 नं. सामान्य वर्ग-08 नं.	91.22 वर्ग मी.	40.31 लाख	3.63 लाख	रु. 590/-
(1) मण्डल एवं शासन की नियम व शर्त लागू तथा जी.एस.टी. एवं अन्य कर पृथक से देय होगा। (2) पंजीयन स्वीकृति उपरत नाम वापिस लेने पर पंजीयन राशि राजसात की जावेगी। (3) यह प्रक्रिया किसी भी समय निरस्त/स्थगित की जा सकती।						
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<div><div>ऑनलाइन भुगतान में बहुविधा होने पर WhatsApp Helpline Number 7974264023</div><div>पंजीकृत आर्बटी अव अपनी समस्त देय राशि का भुगतान मंडल के मोबाइल एप (MPHIDB_GEO जो Google Play Store पर उपलब्ध है) के माध्यम से भी कर सकते हैं। दिये गये QR-Code को स्कैन कर भी एप डाउनलोड कर सकते हैं।</div><div>Follow us on /mphidb /mphidb मंत्र. माध्यम/170005/2022</div></div>						

Shootouts rock Thane, two people injured

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde’s home turf of Thane reeled under panic on Friday, as Mumbai’s satellite city witnessed two shoot-outs --- within hours of each other --- leaving two persons injured. In the first shoot-out that took place at around 5 am on the Ghantalidevi temple road located in the heart of Thane, some miscreants opened three rounds of fire, in which one person was injured. The injured, identified as one Ashwin Gamle, a property dealer. Gamle was standing near a diwali light decoration material shop when the incident took place. He was rushed to the Chhatrapati Shivaji

Maharaj Hospital at Kalwa, while the Naupada Police are incident. While it is not known yet as to what triggered the firing, police prima facie believe that the incident might have been a fallout of some property dispute. In the second shoot-out that was reported from Lokmanya Pada locality bordering the picturesque Yeoor hill area at around 9 am, a gangster – identified as one Ganesh Jadhav alias Kalia – was injured when he was allegedly fired upon by a rival gangster. Ganesh Kalia sustained a bullet injury on Ganya’s chest. He was rushed to the Vedanta Hospital where his condition was described as ‘critical’. The Vartaknagar police are investigating the incident.

Neglect of religious places reflects previous Govts’ slave mentality...

From Page 1 The PM said taking pride in one’s heritage and making all possible effort for development are the two main pillars of a developed India in the 21st century. Referring to the Kedarnath and Hemkund ropeway projects, he recalled that he had also interacted with the labourers and engineers involved in these pro-

jects. On Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami’s reference to Mana as the first village instead of the last village of India, Modi said for him every village on the border is the first village of the nation. “We believe that the region which was earlier ignored as the edge of the nation’s borders is where the prosperity of the nation begins,” he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is publicly notified that Building / Flat No.-49, Block-C, Sector-15, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, whose original allottee is Mrs. Savita Rustagi W/o Mr. Ramesh Chandra Rustagi Resident-C-202, Block-C, Anand Vihar, Delhi, 1.Amita Rustagi D/o Shri Ramesh Chandra Rustagi R/o C-202, Block-C, Anand Vihar, Delhi has submitted an application for transfer of the above mentioned property in her favor and the original allottee Mrs. Savita Rustagi W/o Mr. Ramesh Chandra Rustagi resident above has died on 16/08/2022. Therefore, through this notice, all the concerned persons are informed that after the death of her mother, Application is being submitted for processing of transfer application / mutation of above said property in favour of Amita Rustagi D/o Shri Ramesh Chandra Rustagi resident of C-202, Block-C, Anand Vihar, Delhi. If any person has any kind of objection in this regard, he can kindly file his objection along with all the evidence in the building department of Noida Authority within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Nisha Rani W/o Gurnam Singh R/o H.No. 14, 100 Ft Road, Sector-55 Ballabgarh Distt. Faridabad Haryana. have change my name to Nisha Singh.

PD(90183)C

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This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.
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3) EICHR_VECV_1075_GOODS REG.NO.DL1LAA5804-YOM -2018
4) TATAMOTORS_TATAXENON REG.NO.HR38X6570-YOM -2018
5) TATAMOTORS_TACEMEGA REG.NO.HR38X6646-YOM -2017
6) ASHOK_LEY_AL 1211 REG. NO. HR38Y6436 -YOM -2018
7) ASHOK LEY_AL 1211- REG. NO. HR38Y1394 -YOM -2018
8) TATAMOTORSTACEMEGA REG. NO.RJ14GJ1210-YOM -2017
9) TATAMOTORST_XENON REG. NO. HR38X3096-YOM -2018
10) TATAMOTORS_TACEMEGA REG. NO.UP14GT3467-YOM -2017
11) EICHR_VECV_PRO1049 REG. NO.DL1LAB0499-YOM -2018
12) SML_SMLSARTAJ REG. NO. DL1LAC0910-YOM 2019
13) MAH_MAH_JAYO REG. NO. DL1LAC6124 -YOM -2019
14)TATAMOTORS_TLPT1109FB REG. NO.UP14KT9024-YOM -2022
15) FORCE_FORCETTFBP REG. NO. HR38Y3667-YOM -2018
16) EICHR_VECV_PRO_2095XP REG. NO.DL1MA9060-YOM -2022
17) EICHR_VECV_VE1075FBP REG. NO.UP37T8356-YOM -2017
18) TATAMOTORS_T ACE REG. NO. DL1LAB6744 -YOM -2018

UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS WITH IN 7 DAYS AT
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK 3RD FLOOR, PLOT NO. 7, SECTOR 125, NOIDA-201313 OR CONTACT : ABHINAV LAL KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT NO.7126685775 EMAIL - abhinav.lal@kotak.com

Following the two incidents, the Thane Police and Crime Branch formed multiple teams to investigate and track the miscreants behind both the shootouts. These two shoot-outs come on the heels of two similar shoot-outs that took place during the last two months on Ghodbunder Road. Though no one was injured in them, the two incidents had caused some anxiety among Thanekars. Friday’s two shoot-outs have raised serious questions about the law and order situation in Shinde’s home city of Thane. Though deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP holds the home portfolio, Shinde will have to contend with criticism from his political rivals in the coming days.

‘No PUC, no fuel’ order in Capital put on...

From Page 1 “Presently, there is no mechanism for checking whether the vehicles whose PUC have expired are plying or not. It can be checked at the time of re- fuelling of the vehicle or during the enforcement drives which are carried out by the transport department regularly, especially during the winter months,” said a transport department official who asked not to be named. According to Government estimates, the transport sector accounts for 28 per cent of the PM2.5 emissions in Delhi. Vehicular contribution also

Officials directed to ensure Yamuna isn’t polluted during Chhath: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said officials had been directed to ensure that the Yamuna was not polluted during Chhath. However, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has allocated Rs 40,000 per ward to augment street lighting at Chhath ghats. The funds will be allocated to two ghats per ward. “Chhath Puja will be celebrated like before on the ghats of the Yamuna. Orders have been given to all officers that all arrangements are made to ensure that the Yamuna is not polluted,” he said in a tweet in Hindi. Meanwhile, as per the statement released by the MCD, "the corporation has allocated an amount of Rs 40,000 per ward for augment-

ing street lighting at Chhath Puja ghats. These funds will be provided to two ghats per ward. The amount will be utilised for strengthening street lighting in and around Chhath ghats." The MCD’s electrical department will deploy its employees to complete the work at the earliest. The civic body will also look after the sanitation arrangements at the ghats so that people can celebrate in a

neat and clean environment, it said. The MCD will make arrangements for parking at the ghats to provide relief to the people coming there, it added. Chhath will be celebrated on October 30 and 31. It involves the offering of "arghya" to the Sun god by fasting women in knee-deep water. The festival is hugely popular among Purvanchalis living in Delhi.

Imran’s poll ban over gift scam...

From Page 1 The ECP after hearing the case had reserved its judgment on September 19 on the conclusion of the proceedings. The bench of the ECP on Friday unanimously ruled that Khan was involved in corrupt practices and was disqualified as a member of the parliament. It also announced that action would be taken against him under the corrupt practices laws. The ruling came days after Khan’s party on Monday swept the crucial by-elections, winning six out of eight National Assembly seats and two out of three provincial assembly seats. Khan, who contested seven National Assembly seats in the crucial by-elections held on Sunday, emerged victorious in six constituencies. Senior PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi told reporters after a party meeting chaired by Khan that the party has decided will challenge the Election Commission’s verdict in the Islamabad High Court. “Our lawyer will challenge it as soon as the detailed verdict is issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan,” he said. He said that the party discussed its strategy in the wake of the new development and another meeting was scheduled later in the evening for more discussion on the situation.

Reflecting on the constitutional role of the ECP during a press conference earlier on Friday, Qureshi said that “a minus one formula will not be acceptable.” “The ECP is a constitutional institution,” said Qureshi noting that “free, fair, and credible elections” was the responsibility of the watchdog. “In no way will a minus one formula be considered acceptable,” he added. Meanwhile, there were reports of protest in various cities against the decision including an incident of firing by a police guard of a lawmaker near the ECP building. Later, the guard as well as the lawmaker were arrested. Law Minister Azam Taran in his reaction termed the decision as “appropriate” and based on merit. “He (Khan) has been disqualified for five years and the ECP has also asked for his trial in a court of law for concealing assets,” he said. Khan, who came to power in 2018 apparently received expensive gifts from rich Arab rulers during official visits, which were deposited in the Toshakhana. Later, he bought the same at a discounted price as per the relevant laws and sold the same at hefty profits but failed to reveal the same to the ECP. Though morally apprehensive for rulers like Khan, who always takes a high moral ground and leaves no occasion to castigate his opponents as “corrupt”, the

purchase and sale were legally allowed. The former premier informed the ECP during the hearing that the sale of the gifts that he had procured from the state treasury after paying Rs 21.56 million fetched about Rs 58 million. The gifts, among others, included a Graff wristwatch, a pair of cufflinks, an expensive pen, a ring and four Rolex watches. According to his opponents, Khan failed to show the sales in the income tax returns, making him liable. The case filed with the ECP seeks his disqualification under Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution which suggests disqualification if someone is not truthful. Established in 1974, the Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and officials by heads of other governments and states and foreign dignitaries. Khan was ousted from power in April after losing a no-confidence vote in his leadership, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China and Afghanistan. The cricketer-turned-politician, who came to power in 2018, is the only Pakistani Prime Minister to be ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament.

Cross-border online jihad can’t be termed...

From Page 1 “It can also produce a report called World Policing between 2048 and 2073. And it will also be relevant to review this plan every 5 years,” he said. “I believe that this research will prove to be very useful for law enforcement agencies of member countries,” he said. Addressing the concluding session of the 90th Interpol General Assembly, he said, “We cannot fight terrorists and terrorism globally unless there is a common definition of both. Commitment to fight terrorism and differentiating good or bad terrorism or classifying terror attacks as big or small cannot go together.” Shah said there must be a consensus on the cross-border propagation of terrorist ideologies through online radicalisation. “We cannot consider this to be a political problem. We must all be committed to ensuring that an effective fight against terrorism should be long-term, comprehensive and sustainable,” he said. Interpol is the best platform to achieve “across border cooperation” which is must to

defeat “cross border terrorism”, he said. The Home Minister said in many countries Interpol nodal agency and counter terrorism agencies are different. “Given this situation, in order to fight terrorism, we will have to bring together all the counter-terrorism agencies of the world,” he said. Shah urged Interpol to develop a permanent communication channel between counter terror agencies of the countries where real time information and intelligence can be shared among countries. India is committed to work with Interpol to counter all forms of global terrorism providing its technical and human resources. On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of India’s Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put forward his vision of a drugs-free India, he said. There is a need to establish a platform for exchange of intelligence and information among countries to counter illicit narco-trade, he said. “There should be exchange of information, joint campaigns, regional maritime

cooperation, mutual legal assistance, effective mechanism to tackle money laundering to combat narco-terrorism and narco-smuggling,” he said underlining successes achieved by Narcotics Control Bureau recently. India is committed to assist Interpol in setting up a dedicated centre or convention and launching a dedicated communication network for counter-terrorism and anti-narcotics agencies around the world. The Interpol general assembly is being organised in New Delhi to coincide with the 75th anniversary year of India’s Independence. Shah said the current crime incidents are “borderless” and all the Interpol member countries will have to rise to meet this challenge and the global police organisation’s role in tackling these issues is “very important.” He said the Modi Government is trying its best to make police forces capable of dealing with all kinds of challenges. India is preparing a national database on terrorism and

narcotics so that police agencies can use information effectively. Citizens’ security is the first priority of any police force, he said. “The way criminal syndicates are using modern technology to work internationally, I do not see why countries across the globe should not cooperate or coordinate. It’s a dual challenge before our police and law enforcement agencies, on one side they have to implement law within sovereign boundaries of a country and on the other hand they have to handle the global nature of criminals operating across borders,” he said. The Union Home Minister said in the last four days, participants at the General Assembly in Delhi had an extensive discussion on ‘Global Crime Trend Report 2022’ and ‘Interpol Vision 2030’. The changes taking place in active policing, metaverse and cyber threat landscape are also being discussed. In addition, two major resolutions to increase the use of Interpol’s I-Familia and the International Child Sexual Abuse Database have also been passed.

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Printed and published by Narendra Kumar for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., No. 6, Behind Gulab Bhawan, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455, Communication Office: F-31, Sector 6, NOIDA, Gautam Budh Nagar-201301, U.P. Phone: 0120-4879800 & 4879900 and printed at Jagran Prakashan Ltd, D-210, 211 Sector-63, Noida (U.P.). Executive Editor: Navin Upadhyay. AIR SURCHARGE of ₹ 2.00 East: Calcutta, North: Leh West: Mumbai & Ahmedabad South: Bangalore & Chennai. Central : Khajuraho. Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226 016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445.

COVID CAUTION CAST AWAY AS DELHIITES THROG MARKETS



Massive crowds were witnessed at markets around the national Capital as people did last-minute shopping ahead of Diwali. The Delhi Government has requested people to wear masks in crowded places to avoid a resurgence of the Corona pandemic.



Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

AIIMS gets flak for VIP SOP, junks it Shopping rush chokes Delhi-G'gram e-way

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) administration on Friday withdrew a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) it had issued for the handling of MPs who visited the hospital for treatment. The SOPs, which included providing a nodal officer to coordinate and facilitate treatment for the MPs, had to be junked after facing flak from a section of doctors. In a recent letter to YM Kandpal, Joint Secretary at the Lok Sabha Secretariat, AIIMS Director M Srinivas listed the SOPs for outpatient department (OPD), emergency consultation and in-patient hospitalisation of members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. In his letter, Srinivas has said duty officers from the department of hospital administration will be available at the AIIMS control room round-the-clock to coordinate and facilitate arrangements. The move drew sharp criticism



from several associations of doctors who called out the "VIP culture" at the premier health institute. On Friday, the hospital administration withdrew the letter. "Letter dated October 17 on the 'medical arrangements for sitting Members of Parliament in AIIMS' may be treated as withdrawn with immediate effect," the latest letter signed by Chief Administrative Officer Deo Nath Sah said. Soon after this, the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) tweeted: "So, Special Privilege stands withdrawn. Proud of everyone who supported." In another tweet, it said, "A

voice of reason, rationale and resolve can make a big difference. We thank everyone for their support and stand against the VIP culture in healthcare. It's a shared success!" The Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) said, "We always stand against #VIP culture! We will never compromise with our stand! ... Director had to withdraw letter of Special treatment for #MPs (sic)!" The FORDA had on Thursday questioned the SOP, highlighting that the special privilege to MPs might come at the cost of ordinary patients. The AIIMS director had in his letter said MP's staff could call up the officer on duty. The officer, also a qualified medical professional, would in turn speak to the specialist or super-specialist doctor or the head of the department concerned to fix an appointment, it had mentioned. In case of any emergency, the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha secretariats or the MP's staff could contact the

duty officer, who would guide them to emergency services, the now-withdrawn letter had said. The Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) had also tweeted and shared a letter sent to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, appealing to him to take cognisance of the issue. FORDA had tweeted, "We condemn VIP culture. No patient should suffer at the cost of another's privileges. That being said, having a protocol to streamline things should not be viewed as derogatory, provided it doesn't hamper patient care." Similarly, FAIMA's president Rohan Krishnan tweeted saying, "Requesting @PMOIndia & @mansukhmandviya to take cognisance of the letter released by Director @aiims_nd and take appropriate action against him for promoting VIP culture. @FAIMA_INDIA condemns the move by #DrSrinivas as it promotes VIP culture, ignorance of general pts."

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing festive season, a massive traffic snarl stretching for about six kilometres on the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway was witnessed on Friday evening as thousands of commuters stepped out to shop for Diwali and Dhanteras. The streets and markets of Gurugram witnessed heavy traffic jams too. All of the roads nearby Sadar bazaar, Rajiv Chowk, the Old Railway Road, the New Railway Road and Sector 14 saw heavy traffic and commuters were stuck in traffic jams for hours. "There is heavy traffic volume on the roads, due to the festive season and the weekend. The traffic movement is slow on the roads but our cops are managing the traffic." At the Sirhaul border, Signature Tower and some internal streets are badly affected but we are managing the traffic," said Virender Singh Sangwan, DCP, traffic. The traffic snarl stretched IFFCO

chowk to Sirhaul border, Kherki Daula toll plaza to Hero Honda chowk and Rajiv chowk bringing traffic to a standstill. Commuters heading towards Delhi are stuck in

heavy traffic jams. The traffic was slow at the Signature tower, Sirhaul border, Rajiv chowk and many internal roads of the city till late evening. "I returning to my

home in Vasant Kunj from the office but caught in a jam for the last one hour at the Sirhaul border," said Praveen Kumar, manager of a Udyog Vihar-based private company.



16th, 17th annual Lokayukta reports to be tabled in House

New Delhi: Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has approved the laying of 16th and 17th Annual Consolidated Reports of the Lokayukta pertaining to the years 2017-18 and 2018-19 before the Delhi Assembly. Saxena also flagged that he has received reports from the Delhi Government after an "inordinate delay" and said being the custodian of public trust, it should display appropriate alertness. The Lieutenant Governor has written to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over the matter. Reacting to the issue, the Delhi Government in a statement said, "The L-G should stop behaving like a school headmaster." Sources at the Raj Niwas said that Saxena, while conveying his approval to the CM for laying the 16 and 17 reports of the Lokayukta, in the Assembly has specifically underlined his constraint in noting that, "These Annual Reports of 2017-18 and 2018-19, have been submitted after a lapse of three years", despite the fact that the "same were forwarded to the Government on October 23, 2019, officially."



be guided to dispose important matters of the public interest within reasonable period, so that the statutory purpose of laying it before the Legislative Assembly is not defeated and Delhi is not deprived of its wisdom, they said. Saxena said that for an individual (Arvind Kejriwal), who made an entire career out of agitations demanding an empowered Lokpal, and a political party (AAP), whose entire existence revolves around tomtoming accountability, probity and transparency in governance, this deliberate de-teething and emasculation of the Lokpal, yet again displays the politics of opportunism, anarchic subversion of the Constitution and Statutes and systematic annihilation of the systems of governance—traits that Arvind Kejriwal and the AAP have become masters of, sources said. "The LG has asked the CM to recall even on 'earlier occasion, such delays were brought to CM's notice and subsequently the matter was placed in the Assembly'. He has pointed out that 'being custodian of public trust, it is incumbent upon higher public functionaries to display appropriate alertness in such matters of public importance,' they said. Other concerns are 'Several hurdles and hindrances in smooth and efficient functioning of Lokayukta including financial autonomy, and independence of recruiting staff for office of Lokayukta, Non-availability of any machinery for conducting investigations, despite fact that several States have a DGP level officer to do so, they claimed. SR

Hyde Park residents clash over Noida society poll

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a shocking incident in the National Capital Region (NCR) which has caught massive attention, a spat between two groups of residents turned violent after they broke into fisticuffs and pulled each other's hair, as seen in a video which was shared and viewed widely. Two security guards have been taken into custody in connection with the incident. The video showed a woman running towards a female security guard and pulling her hair and hitting her. According to police, the incident took place at the upmarket Hyde Park Society in Sector 78, Noida, located within the



Sector 113 police station limits. Two groups, clashed on Thursday night, resulting in minor injuries to two women over a residents' body election. Within moments, it escalated after security guards were accused of manipulating the elections and helping one of the groups. The brawl ended when the police arrived "The clashes broke out between the residents over the post of president of the society's Apartment Owners' Association (AOA). The guards also got involved in the fight, leading to injuries to two women," a police official said. "Two guards have been detained following a complaint from the injured women and further investigation is underway," the police official said. Police said CCTV footage is being analysed to ascertain the sequence of events. Video clips purportedly of the clash are circulating on social media platforms. A woman resident is seen pulling a woman guard by her hair and slapping at least two other guards in videos that are being widely shared. Some guards were seen waving sticks and warning residents, but the clash continued, a video

showed. "The guards came all of a sudden and started beating us with sticks. We had gathered here for the general body meeting, but they switched off the lights to prevent us from holding the meeting. Then they took out rods from the fencing and attacked us," said a woman resident, showing her injured hand. Another woman was seen with a swollen hand as a resident couldn't be heard saying, "Won't allow gundagardi by guards in Hyde Park." Several apartment complexes in the cities neighbouring Delhi - Uttar Pradesh's Noida and Haryana's Gurugram - have made headlines lately for wrong reasons.

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SEC reserves 42 municipal wards for SCs, women

NEW DELHI: After notifying the municipal wards, the State Election Commission (SEC) has reserved 42 of the 250 municipal wards for women and persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Of the 42 wards, 21 have been reserved for women while the rest have been reserved for scheduled caste. The notification of reserved wards will pave the way for pre-election preparatory work as the viable candidates will start pushing for tickets from the three key political parties based on the

status of the wards. The 42 wards reserved for the Schedule caste (SC) category are Sangam Park, Inder Puri, Vishwas Nagar, Trilokpuri, Nang Nagri, Madipur, Gokal Pur, Madangir, Ram Nagar, Harsh Vihar, Kalyanpuri, Tigri, Nangloi, West Patel Nagar, Pushp Vihar, Dakshin Puri, Shakar Pur, Tigri, Shahbaad Dairy, Malka Ganj, Karol Bagh, Saboli, Joharipur, Madan Khadar East, Wazirpur, Badarpur, Delhi Gate, Kishan Ganj, Civil Lines, Gharoli, Mayur Vihar Phase 1, Raghuraj Nagar, Pul Pehladpur,

Sundar Nagri, Harkesh Nagar, Shahdara, Mangolpuri-A, Mangolpuri-B, Dev Nagar, Sultanpuri-A, Sultanpuri-B, and Jawalpur. The Ministry of Home Affairs on October 17 had issued the final gazette notification for redrawing of municipal wards in Delhi, as per which the number of wards in the city has been reduced to 250 from the previous figure of 272 as part of the delimitation exercise. According to the gazette notification issued by the Delhi government on

October 20, out of the 250 wards, 42 shall be reserved for persons belonging to the Scheduled Caste category in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). "And, whereas, section 3 of the said Act (Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957) provides that seats shall be reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes, from among the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, which shall not be less than one half of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes. SR

CSE: Extra rainy days helped to keep pollution low

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's PM2.5 pollution average for the July-August-September quarter this year stood at 37 microgram per cubic metre, only marginally higher than the five-year low of 36 microgram per cubic metre recorded during 2020, according to an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). <Pollution levels in the July-August-September quarter were preceded by one of the most polluted summers this year, unlike in 2020 when the trimester followed the cleanest ever summer (March-May) due to extraordinary conditions created because of hard pandemic lockdowns, the green think tank said. "Therefore, it is important to understand what aided in cleaning up the Delhi air. Looking at the rainfall data it becomes evident that distribution of rainfall has a relatively higher impact on seasonal air quality than the absolute quantity of rainfall," it said. There have been 45 rainy days in July, August and September this year as compared to just 39 rainy days in the quarter last year. "These six extra rainy days helped keep

the seasonal average low despite total rainfall this monsoon having been just one-third of the previous monsoon," the CSE said. These additional rainy days also pushed the regular start of bad air quality days further down the month of October, it said. The PM2.5 average for the quarter stood at 38 microgram per cubic metre in 2021, 41 microgram per cubic metre in 2019 and 43 microgram per cubic metre in 2018. The CSE had on Thursday said the average PM2.5 pollution in Delhi in the winter season has declined by about 20 per cent as compared to the pre-pandemic period. The PM2.5 concentration for winter (October 1 to February 28) used to hover around 180-190 microgram per cubic metre before the pandemic. It has come down to 150-160 microgram per cubic metre since then, it said. However, the seasonal average is still over 150 per cent above the 24-hour standard (60 microgram per cubic metre) and almost four times the annual standard (40 microgram per cubic metre) despite the improvement, the green think tank noted.

Leopard spotted in Maruti Suzuki's Manesar plant



Gurugram: Panic gripped the Maruti Suzuki plant in Manesar after a leopard was spotted on Wednesday, a senior forest official said on Friday. The big cat was first spotted in the factory at around 7.15 am by a worker who raised an alarm. Images of the animal was also captured in the CCTV cameras installed in the factory. A number of people, including workers, guards and transporters, were inside when the leopard was witnessed on the premises. Sources said, fearing an attack by the big cat the management immediately issued a safety advisory among the workers and others. The forest official said cops of the

concerned police station reached the plant and cordoned off the area. Officials from the forest department

rushed to the factory to rescue the animal after being informed at 7.30 AM. Inspector Subhash, Station House Officer

(SHO) of IMT Manesar police station said, "In the CCTV footage the leopard was coming inside the factory from a

cow shelter of Kasan village which is adjoining to the factory. "The police received the call around 7.25 AM on Wednesday we immediately alerted the forest officials but after a 2-3 hours long search operation we could not find the animal. Probably the leopard left the factory," the SHO said. He added that the factory production was not affected as the area where the animal was spotted was far away from the protection unit of the company. "A forest department team has inspected the area but could not find the leopard in the factory. It could be possible has left the factory and returned to the Aravali region. The area is under forest team

vigil. As precautions we have installed tranquillizers to control the animal," said M.S. Malik, the principal chief conservative officer of the Forest Department. A team member of the forest department keeps a vigilant eye on the entry and exit points of the plant for a few days so that they can make sure the leopard has vacated the plant. The plant is spread over 750 acres and is one of biggest Maruti Suzuki plants that manufacture a range of vehicles such as Swift, Swift Desire and Ertiga. Meanwhile, despite repeated phone calls Maruti Suzuki Management was not available for comments.

Patil’s ‘jehad in Gita’ barb stirs row

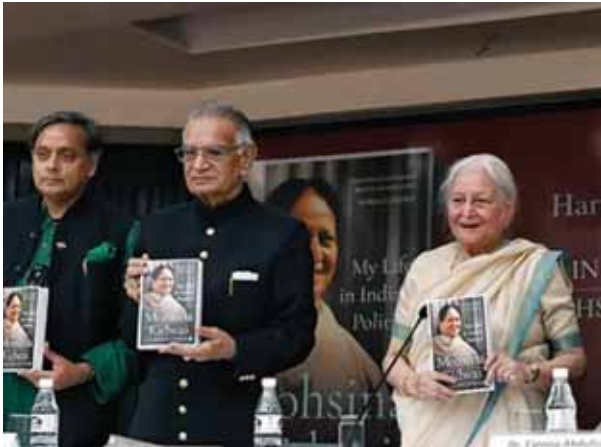
Cong distances itself from remarks of ex-Home Min as BJP accuses party of insulting Hindus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The offbeat interpretation of Lord Krishna’s sermons in ‘Bhagavad Gita’ by senior Congress leader and former Home Minister Shivraj Patil suggesting that Lord Krishna also taught lessons of ‘Jihad’ to Arjuna in Mahabharata and drawing a parallel to ‘Quran’s preaching prompted the BJP on Friday to put the Opposition party on the mat.

A sheepish Congress described Patil’s comments as ‘unacceptable’ and brought forth Jawaharlal Nehru’s views to clarify the party’s stand on the issue. Patil, for his part, sought to clarify which only turned out to be a confusion worse confounded.

Patil, who was union home minister from 2004 to 2008, took an ‘unconventional view’ of the time-honoured ‘Gyan’ of ‘Gita’ at a book launch of Congress veteran Mohsina Kidwai’s biography here on Thursday saying Lord Krishna also taught lessons of ‘jihad’ to Arjuna in Gita in the Mahabharata. ‘It’s said there is a lot of discussion on Jihad in Islam religion. Even after all



Former Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil and Shashi Tharoor at the launch of a biography written by Congress leader Mohsina Kidwai in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

efforts, if someone doesn’t understand clean ideas, then power can be used. It is not just in the Quran Sharif, but also in the Mahabharata of which Gita is a part,” Patil said about the book which speaks of universal oneness with no divide.

The BJP lost no opportunity to embarrass the opposition party latching on to the comments of Patil who was for long lying low, away from the

public view. BJP spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Sudhanshu Trivedi demanded that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge or its leader Sonia Gandhi should respond to Patil’s comments. “What Shivraj Patil said is a symbol of their party’s perverse & disgusting mindset”, he said.

Recalling views of pre-independence Congress stalwarts, Trivedi noted that

Mahatma Gandhi in his commentary on the Hindu epic had described it as a source of ‘Anasakti Yoga’ (selfless action) while Bal Gangadhar Tilak expounded his philosophy of ‘Karma Yoga’ through his study of Gita and added that Congress leaders now see ‘jihad’ in it.

BJP national spokesperson Prem Shukla alleged that the Congress has long been involved in the conspiracy to “insult Hindu, Hindutva and Hindustan” and Patil’s remarks are yet another chapter towards this.

Former Union ministers Sushilkumar Shinde and P Chidambaram had spoken about ‘saffron terror’, he said. Shukla accused Congress of playing vote bank politics and asserted its leaders in the past have drawn a parallel between Hindutva with terror organisations like Boko Haram and Taliban.

On the backfoot, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh took to Twitter to give the party’s official view and said, “The Congress’s stand is clear. Bhagavad Gita is a key foundational pillar of Indian

civilization. My senior colleague Shivraj Patil reportedly made some comments on Bhagavad Gita that’s unacceptable,” he said.

He shared on Twitter excerpts from Jawaharlal Nehru’s book ‘The Discovery of India’, wherein the first prime minister wrote: “The message of the Gita is not sectarian or addressed to any particular school of thought.

It is universal in its approach for everyone, Brahmin or outcaste. ‘All paths lead to me’, it says. It is because of this universality that it has found favour with all classes and schools.” Patil later sought to clarify. “Will you call Krishna’s lessons to Arjun jihad? No. That’s what I was saying,” Patil can be seen clarifying in a video released by news agency ANI, after scolding the reporters. “This jihad’s message is what you are saying,” he said and then stopped a journalist who asked a question.

He sought to explain what jihad is according to the Hindu religion and said killing Mahatma Gandhi will be considered jihad.

Made-in-India Agni Prime missile successfully test fired

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to its Defence capabilities, India on Friday successfully test-fired indigenously built Agni Prime missile off the Odisha coast in Balasore. The missile has a range between 1,000 km to 2,000 km and can carry nuclear warheads.

This weapon is a new generation missile built by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The sleek missile was test fired from a mobile launcher from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island around 9.45 am, officials here said.

The solid-fuelled canisterised missile met all mission parameters during the test. All its navigation was tracked and monitored by radars and telemetry equipment positioned along various points.

The last trial of the missile was conducted on December 18 last year from the same base, which was also successful, officials said adding all test objectives were met and said that the third consecutive (and successful) test of the ‘Agni Prime’ had ‘established the accuracy and reliability of the system’.

Performance was validated using data obtained by many tracking systems, including radar, telemetry and electro-optical systems, the officials said.

These systems were deployed at different locations along the flight path, including two down-range ships at the terminal point, and covered the entire trajectory, officials added. The first test was in

June last year, with the second six months later - in December. On both those occasions too the missile ‘followed textbook trajectory and met all mission objectives with a high level of accuracy’, officials said.

The two-stage missile weighs nearly 50 per cent less than the Agni 3 missile besides having new guidance and propulsion systems. It can be fired from rail or road.



Photo by PTI

ED attaches seven properties of Mukhtar Ansari in PMLA case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has attached seven immovable assets of Uttar Pradesh gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari in connection with an ongoing money laundering probe against him and his family.

The properties, provisionally attached under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) are worth Rs 1.48 crore (registry value) while their circle rate at the time of registration was Rs 3.42 crore, the ED said in a statement.

Ansari, a five-time former MLA, is currently lodged in a prison in Banda, Uttar Pradesh. The 59-year-old accused was questioned by the ED in this case last year.

In August, the agency also searched the official residence of his elder brother and BSP MP Afzal Ansari in Delhi and some locations in Ghazipur, Mohammadabad (in Ghazipur district), Mau and state capital Lucknow.

The money laundering case against Mukhtar Ansari stems from multiple FIRs lodged by the Uttar Pradesh Police apart from two more FIRs lodged against a company Vikas Constructions (a partnership firm) that was run by his wife, two brothers-in-law and others.

The agency has alleged that the company was used for constructing godowns on public and government land after “encroaching” on them.

“The godowns were constructed in Mau and Ghazipur districts of Uttar Pradesh. Vikas Construction was being run by Afshan Ansari (wife of Mukhtar Ansari) and her two brothers Atif Raza and Anwar Shahzad, a person identified as Ravindra Narayan Singh, and Zakir Hussain,” the agency said.

“Uttar Pradesh Police has filed a charge sheet in one of the FIRs registered at Mau in which all the partners of the firm (Vikas Construction) have been named as accused,” it said.

The probe found that rent of Rs 15 crore was collected by Vikas Construction from the Food Corporation of India by renting out godowns “illegally” constructed by encroaching public/government land at Mau and Ghazipur districts.

“This rent was further used to purchase immovable properties in the name of Vikas Construction and Afshan Ansari.

Further investigation to trace out the remaining process of crime is under progress,” the ED said.

Mukhtar Ansari is facing ED probes in connection with at least 49 criminal cases booked against him, including those on charges of land grabbing, murder and extortion.

He faces trials in Uttar Pradesh in several cases, including attempt to murder and murder.

The Ghazipur district



administration had seized two plots of land, measuring 1.901 hectares and valued at over Rs 6 crore, that were purchased using alleged illegal earnings of

Mukhtar Ansari, according to the police. In July, the Uttar Pradesh Police attached Afzal Ansari’s assets worth Rs 14.90 crore under the Gangster Act.

ED freezes ₹78 cr fresh deposits with Razorpay, banks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has frozen fresh deposits worth Rs 78 crore following raids on the premises of payment gateway Razorpay and some banks as part of an ongoing money laundering probe against the alleged illegal operations of loan apps “controlled” by Chinese nationals.

The searches were carried out at five premises in Bengaluru on October 19, the ED said.

The money laundering case stems from 18 FIRs filed by the cyber crime police station of Bengaluru police against numerous entities/persons for their involvement in extortion and harassment of the public who had availed small amounts of loans through the mobile apps being run by them.

“These entities are controlled/operated by Chinese nationals. The modus operandi of these entities is to use forged documents of Indians and make them dummy directors and generate proceeds of crime.

It has come to notice that the said entities were doing their suspected/illegal business through various merchant IDs/accounts held with payment gateways and banks,” the ED said in a statement.

These entities were generating “proceeds of crime” through various merchant IDs/accounts held with payment gateways and banks and they have submitted fake addresses in KYC documents. “An amount of Rs 78 crore has been seized in merchant IDs (held in payment gateways) and bank accounts of these Chinese persons-controlled entities. The total seizure in the case now stands at Rs 95 crore,” the agency said.

The agency had earlier seized deposits worth Rs 17 crore in the case. It said fresh searches were carried out at the

premises of Razorpay Pvt Ltd and compliance offices of some of the banks. These payment gateway firms have been in the ED’s crosshairs since 2020, soon after the Covid-19 outbreak started in the country.

The ED initiated a probe under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after a number of instances of gullible debtors ending their lives came to the fore from various States.

The victims, according to the police, were being coerced and harassed by these loan app (application) companies by publicising their personal details available in their phones and using high-handed methods to threaten them.

It was alleged that the companies sourced all personal data of the loan-takers at the time of downloading these apps on their phones, even as their interest rates were “usurious”.

The ED had said the alleged proceeds of crime in this case were routed through these payment gateways. Meanwhile, the ED has arrested Romen Agarwal in a separate case under PMLA in an ongoing investigation of Mobile Gaming Application, namely E-nuggets.

Agarwal is actively involved in inter/intra country transactions related with transfer of ill-gotten money within and outside the country received from criminals. He acts as a conduit for arrangement of parking/routing/transferring of funds generated from illegal activities, the agency said.

Agarwal has used his crypto-exchange accounts for parking of funds received from Aamir Khan, main accused in the E-nuggets App case. He was arrested by ED and produced before Special Court (PMLA), Kolkata that granted his custody to ED till October 28.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from the Centre and others, including the Medical Council of India, to petitions alleging rising assault on doctors and seeking framing of guidelines for their protection across the country.

A bench of Chief Justice Uday Umesh Lalit and Justice Bela M Trivedi also issued notice to the Rajasthan government as the petitions filed by the Delhi Doctors Forum, Indian Medical Association (Dwarka) and Suneet Kumar Upadhyay sought a CBI probe into the alleged suicide of a gynaecologist in Dausa in the state.

Upadhyay’s wife Archana Sharma, a gynaecologist, had ended her life by suicide in Rajasthan after being harassed by a mob following the death of a woman patient during the delivery on account of excessive bleeding. “Issue notice on the petitions returnable on November 23. Dasti in addition,” the bench said. In legal parlance, ‘Dasti’ means delivery of a notice by hand.

Lawyer Shashank Deo Sudhi, appearing for Medical

Association (Dwarka), said doctors are being attacked across the country even if a patient dies on account of health reasons which are beyond the control of medical professionals.

“There are no medical cells in police stations either. The police officers do not understand medical terminology,” he said, adding there was a need for framing comprehensive guidelines to protect doctors. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the husband of the deceased doctor, said the child was delivered healthy and the mother had pre-conditions which led to the death. Still the gynaecologist was hounded.

The petitioners pleaded for the Centre and other stakeholders to take remedial steps.

“Issue a direction in nature of mandamus or any other appropriate writ, order/directions for constituting a CBI enquiry into the circumstances which led to unfortunate death of young gynecologist doctor by committing suicide under the mysterious conditions in order to find out the actual perpetrators of the entire incident and bring them to justice to deter other



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami during his visit to the Badrinath Temple in Chamoli district on Friday

PTI Photo

SC seeks Centre’s reply on pleas against rising assaults on doctors

Bilkis case: SC agrees to hear fresh plea challenging remission granted to convicts

New Delhi: The Supreme Court agreed on Friday to hear a fresh plea moved by a women’s organisation, challenging the remission of sentence and the release of convicts in the 2002 Bilkis Bano gang-rape case, which also involves the killing of seven of her family members during the Gujarat riots.

A bench of justices Ajay Rastogi and C T Ravikumar tagged the matter with the main petition and said it would be heard along with it. The top court was hearing a plea filed by the National Federation of Indian Women, challenging the remission of sentence and



the release of convicts in the case. The court had, on October 18, said the Gujarat government’s reply to petitions challenging the remission is very bulky, wherein a series of judgments have been quoted but factual statements are missing. It granted time to the petitioners to file their

response to the Gujarat government’s affidavit and said it will hear the matter on November 29.

Bilkis Bano was 21 years old and five-month pregnant when she was gang-raped while fleeing the riots that broke out after the Godhra train burning incident. Her three-year-old daughter was among the seven family members killed.

The 11 men convicted in case walked out of Godhra sub-jail on August 15 after Gujarat government allowed their release under its remission policy. They completed more than 15 years in jail.

SC junks ‘PIL’ on Taj Mahal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday junked a plea seeking a “fact-finding enquiry” into the history of the Taj Mahal and the “opening of 22 rooms” on the monument’s premises, terming it “publicity interest litigation”.

A bench of justices M R Shah and M M Sundresh refused to interfere with the Allahabad High Court order that had dismissed the plea. “The high court was not in error in dismissing the petition, which is more of a pub-

licity interest litigation. Dismissed,” the bench said. The high court had, on May 12, said petitioner Rajneesh Singh, who is the media in-charge of the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) Ayodhya unit, had failed to point out which of his legal or constitutional rights were being infringed.

It had also pulled up the petitioner’s lawyer for filing the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition in a “casual manner and said it could not pass an order under Article 226 of the Constitution in the matter.

IN SHORTS

DEFENCE DEPT HOLDS CLEANLINESS DRIVES

New Delhi: The Department of Defence has been conducting the Special Campaign 2.0 on Swachhnta across its offices located in New Delhi and in all field offices and local units, since October 2. Since the beginning of the Special campaign, Department of Defence has organised cleanliness drives in 4,569 sites across the country, Defence Ministry officials said here on Friday.

SC RESERVES VERDICT ON KENYAN CITIZEN

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday reserved its verdict on the punishment to be awarded to convicted contemnor Perry Kansagra, a Kenyan citizen of Indian origin, who had played a fraud upon it in a custody battle for his son with his estranged wife. Senior lawyer Sonia Mathur sought the severest punishment for convict Kansagra for disobeying various orders of the apex court.

30L GOVT OFFICERS TAUGHT AI: MINISTER

New Delhi: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Friday said over 30 lakh Central and State Government officials will be trained and exposed to emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and blockchain by 2023.

POLICE CRACKDOWN ON FASTING TET-CLEARED TEACHERS Opp protests against excesses on agitators

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

All hell broke loose in Kolkata and other parts of Bengal as Opposition parties BJP, Left and the Congress on Thursday took out rallies and jostled with the police hours after the men in uniform in a midnight operation forcibly removed TET-cleared teachers sitting on a hunger strike outside the Primary Education Board office demanding early recruitment.

Condemnation against the Chief Minister and his government was widespread with Left, BJP and Congress leadership hitting the streets against the “inhuman treatment meted out to the fasting candidates.”

A number of BJP and Left leaders were arrested and later released in Kolkata while the supporters of these two parties blockaded roads in districts from Siliguri, Raiganj and Balurghat in North Bengal to Hooghly, Midnapore, Bankura and Barasat in the southern part of the state.

A galaxy of civil society members including Aparna Sen, Kaushik Sen, Bibhas Chakrabarty condemned the midnight police action on “candidates who had been fasting without even a drop of water for the past four days.”

Senior BJP leader and MLA Agnimitra Paul said, “this is a devil of a Government that does not even weak and fasting protesters many of who were sitting in the dharna with their toddlers in their laps ... and Mamata Banerjee calls herself a people’s Chief Minister.”

CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chkrabarty said “this inhuman government is torturing the innocent teachers instead of going after the corrupt brass that sold away thousands of teaching and non-teaching posts and filled the coffers of the Trinamool Congress and its top leadership.”

Thousands of prospective teachers had cleared their Teachers’ Eligibility Test exams

in 2014 but they fell victims to an organised recruitment racket in which ineligible and failed candidates were given jobs for cash at the cost of wait-listed successful aspirants.

An inquiry conducted under a court order revealed how people got jobs after submitting blank OMR sheets and in order to delete evidence those OMR sheets were later destroyed.

The school-level recruitment scam — affecting prospective primary, secondary and higher secondary teachers, and Group C and D staff — continued gripped the education department till the year 2020 or even later until heads rolled with then Education Minister and number two in the Mamata Banerjee Government Partha Chatterjee was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate.

The recruitment scam also crores of cash and jewellery tumbling out of the cupboards of ministers’ close aide Arpita Mukherjee.

Subsequent to Chatterjee’s



arrest Primary School Board chairman and Trinamool Congress MLA Manik Bhattacharya too was arrested. Among other top functionaries who went to jail were a serving vice chancellor, a chairman of West bengal Board of Secondary Education, an advisor to the State School Service Commission along with a former SSC chairman and its secretary.

While the agitators from various categories had been sitting on dharnas for almost two years things reached a flash point when the WBBPE announced its decision to start an interview process for those who had cleared TET exams in 2014 and 2017.

The 2014 batch immediately complained that they had already appeared in two interviews and demanded merit

list of those two interviews published. They also that contended that since the syllabus and marking pattern of 2014 and 2017 were different their ultimate marks would vary. When the Board turned down their request to reconsider its decision the TET candidates went on an indefinite hunger strike leading the police to forcibly remove them on Thursday midnight.

A decked-up Ayodhya gears up for Deepotsav

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Recreating the ambience of the Ramayana period resembling the Tretayuga this Diwali, the divine and holy birthplace of Lord Rama is all decked up with ‘Ramayana gates’ and tableaux as the temple town prepares itself for the organisation of the Deepotsav with grandeur.

“To take the visitors down the history lane on the festival of light, the city has been beautified with hoardings and banners from the Ramayana period,” Bharatiya Janata Party state vice-president Vijay Bahadur Pathak said.

He said as Diwali was approaching, the preparations had been intensified.

From Ayodhya highway to Nayaghat, 30 different kinds of welcome gates with different names are being prepared for Deepotsav. Some welcome gates have been named ‘Ram



Setu Dwar’ and others as ‘Bharat Dwar’.

“These gates have been prepared in the name of every mythological character associated with Lord Ram, including Sita Dwar, Shabari Dwar, Ahilya Dwar, Jatayu Dwar, Hanuman Dwar, Lav-Kush Dwar. Besides, selfie points have been made near the statues of Lord Ram, Sita, Lakshman, Bharat, Shatrughan, Lord Hanuman on Ram Ki Paidi. Graphics depicting Lord Shri Ram’s return to Ayodhya from Lanka by Pushpak vimana are also being made. The gates will also serve to raise awareness of the younger generation,” Pathak said.

Mehbooba served notice to vacate guest house

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Peoples Democratic Party Chief and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has been served notice by the office of the Deputy Director Estates, Kashmir to vacate the Fair View Guest House, located on the Gupkar road in Srinagar.

Through the notice, dated October 15, 2022, the deputy Director Estates has also communicated to the former Chief Minister to confirm whether she requires an alternative accommodation or not. “Should you require an alternative accommodation the Government is willing to provide the same on your request, on security or any other ground(s)” the order copy served to the former Chief Minister read.

After demitting the office



of Chief Minister in June 2018 ,Mehbooba Mufti had vacated her official residence in Jammu and was staying in the Fair View Guest House, allocated to her Father Mufti Mohd Sayeed when he served the erstwhile state of J&K as Chief Minister.

The notice was issued under sub-section 1 of Section 4 of The Jammu and Kashmir Public Premises (Eviction of Un-authorized occupant) Act, 1988 read with amended Act,

2016. The Fairview Guest house, was previously an interrogation centre called PAPA-II and it served as an official guest house till 1989. Later, former Chief Secretary Ashok Jaitly moved into it in 1996 and used it as his residence. Between 1954-57 it was the residence of Former Major General Goverdhan Singh Jamwal who was ADC to Sadar E Riyasat of then Yuvraj Dr Karan Singh.

Vrindavan widows celebrate Diwali

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Breaking taboo and age old tradition of the society, a large number of widows living in ashrams of Mathura once again joined Diwali celebration on the bank of the river Yamuna in the holy town of Vrindavan on Friday.

In the age-old Hindu society, widows were treated as “inauspicious” and they were not allowed to take part in any auspicious functions and rituals. Till a few years ago, widows living in Varanasi and Vrindavan were keeping themselves away from Holi and Diwali celebrations.

This evening around hundred widows living in various shelter homes gathered at the historic KC ghat and lit colourful diyas and celebrated the festival of light with gaiety.

The widows decorated the ghat and lit hundreds of earthen lamps. They chanted



Krishna bhajans and danced in the presence of other devotees.

This programme was organised by Sulabh International under the mentorship of Dr Bindeshwar Pathak.

Thousands of widows, mostly from West Bengal, have been living in Vrindavan for decades and they were not allowed to take part in rituals till social organisation Sulabh International extended them a helping hand, said Dr Pathak.

“I am happy that our initiative has impacted the society in bigger ways and such bad traditions are vanishing rapidly,” Dr Pathak said in a statement.

Criminals no more free in UP, either in prison or killed: CM Yogi lauds State police for maintaining rule of law

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day, lauded the contribution of gallant policemen in maintaining the rule of law in the state, saying, “It is the result of UP’s zero tolerance towards crime and criminals and the contribution of brave policemen that no criminal is free in the state today; they are either in prison or have been killed.”

Saluting the courage, valour and dedication of brave police personnel, Yogi Adityanath said, “Maintenance of rule of law in the state is ensuring peaceful celebration of every festival and safer environment for women, weaker sections, traders and the common man.”

On the occasion, the chief minister announced an increase in Rs 200 cycle allowance given to police personnel by providing them with



a Rs 500 motorcycle allowance. He also dedicated the facility of the e-pension portal to the policemen.

The chief minister, who was present among the police personnel just before Diwali, also announced the approval of reimbursement of medical expenses of more than Rs 5,00,000 from the level of director general of police (DGP) for the convenience of policemen.

“Till now, this was being addressed at the government level, which caused an unnecessary delay, now there will be no delays,” the chief minister said.

During the event organised at Reserve Police Lines in

Lucknow, Yogi Adityanath said that taking great inspiration from Gita, the brave policemen had made the supreme sacrifice to maintain the external and internal security of the country and the state. He pointed out that in 2021-22, seven brave policemen of Uttar Pradesh were martyred.

Saluting the martyrs, the chief minister assured the dependents of the martyred policemen that the government would extend all possible help to them with utmost sensitivity.

The chief minister said that the police force served the state with dedication even in adverse circumstances. “In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the state police force presented a perfect example of humanity. During this, 45 policemen also succumbed to the novel coronavirus, and their families were given jobs and a sum of Rs 22.50 crore as per rules. Moreover, assistance

amounting to Rs 141.9 crore was given to the dependents of 581 martyrs of Uttar Pradesh origin serving in Central Para Military Forces, Indian Army, among others,” he said.

Lauding the efforts of the police in improving law and order in Uttar Pradesh, the chief minister said that while taking strict action against the criminals, assets worth Rs 44.59 billion had been confiscated or destroyed so far and schools for daughters and houses for the poor were being constructed on such properties.

The chief minister said that from March 30, 2017 to October 13, 2022, about 166 dreaded criminals were killed and 4,453 were injured across the state. He said action under the Gangsters Act was taken against 58,648 persons and under National Security Act against 807. He said the property of 50 dreaded mafias and their accomplices worth about Rs 2,268 crore was confiscated

or demolished and in this, one mafia and eight of his accomplices were also killed in an encounter.

While 39 were sentenced to life imprisonment due to effective prosecution, two were sentenced to death. In the same period, 13 policemen were also martyred.

In the period from September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022, 264 policemen in the country laid down their lives. These included seven policemen of Uttar Pradesh -- Sub-Inspector Virendra Nath Mishra, Sub-Inspector Kadir Khan, chief constable Munil Kumar Choubey, constable Sarvesh Kumar, constable Sumit Kumar, constable Lalit Kumar and constable Manish Kumar.

The chief minister said that the entire police force of the state was proud of the valour of these heroes who sacrificed their lives while giving their services.

Muslims will never vote for BJP, says SP MLA



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Attacking the Bharatiya Janata Party outreach programme towards Muslims, Samajwadi Party’s Sambhal MLA Iqbal Mehmood claimed that Muslims would never vote for the BJP as they could never trust people who worshipped Nathuram Godse, the man who shot Mahatma Gandhi dead.

Kerala Govt subverted ED probe: Gold smuggling scam accused

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M)-led Kerala Government reportedly subverted the Central Government’s investigation in the infamous gold smuggling case through the green channel at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport by influencing the Enforcement Directorate officer in charge of Kerala.

This was disclosed by Swapna Suresh, one of the prime accused in the gold smuggling scam that literally shook the Kerala Government during 2019-2021. Speaking to

a popular Malayalam satellite news channel on Friday, Swapna stated that three prominent CPI(M) leaders tried to sexually exploit her.

“The then minister Katakampalli Surendran, the then Speaker P Sreeramakrishnan and the then finance minister Thomas Issac had tried their best to sexually abuse me. Both Surendran and Sreeramakrishnan are dirty men who should never be allowed anywhere near our houses,” said Swapna who is in the news for her life story “The Padmaveeham of Traps.”

Swapna reiterated her

stance that the gold smuggling took place with the full connivance of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. “I had handed over the entire details to the Enforcement Directorate official and this found its way to the Chief Minister. They bought over the ED official and that was how the investigation came to a dead end,” said Swapna who also said that she was appointed as the liaison officer of the Kerala Government owned Space Park to facilitate the transfer of ill-gotten money from foreign investors to the Chief Minister’s family.

She was highly critical of

Katakampalli Surendran and P Sreeramakrishnan who behaved in a nasty way with her. “Surendran forced me to sleep with him and summoned me to his hotel room around midnight. I had to shout at him to stop fooling around me,” said Swapna. She recalled the moments Sreeramakrishnan spent hours in her house boozing and dining. “He behaved like a college student and in a shameless manner. Issac was not that direct and restricted himself to inviting me to accompany him to Munnar where he promised to show me some of the beautiful places,” said the lady.

Virtue of impatience

Liz Truss had to quit because she went with tax cuts without taking public finance into account

The race to succeed British Prime Minister Liz Truss is heating up in the United Kingdom, with the Indian-origin Rishi Sunak said to be leading the pack and her predecessor Boris Johnson reportedly contemplating a comeback. Some senior leaders like new Finance Minister Jeremy Hunt have decided not to run for the top office, but others, including Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, are non-committal. Any candidate wanting to get elected will need at least 100 nominations from the party MPs. Since there are 357 Conservative MPs, no more than three candidates can participate in the race. If there is only one candidate, he will become the new prime minister without any election. In any case, the country will have a new leader on October 28. The fall of Truss, who was in 10 Downing Street for just 45 days, suggests that impatience is a defining feature of British democracy. In our country, every elected government feels entitled to 'a honeymoon period'—that is, the span of time when neither the Opposition nor the media shows any harshness towards it. 'Abhi to aaye hain. Kuchh time to do inko'—this is the prevailing mood in the first 100 days, or even longer. And look at the poor Truss; she didn't get even half of that time. Even after over eight years in power, the Bharatiya Janata Party still accuses the previous 'Congress misrule' of everything that is wrong; and before the BJP, the Congress blamed the British for all the country's problems.



The fact is that impatience is a virtue of democracy; it keeps the political class on their toes—and on the ground. It also forces them to explain how they would keep their promises. Truss' mini-budget last month slashed taxes; her government, however, could never explain how the revenue shortfall would be met. People, public intellectuals, and politicians, including that of the ruling party, in the UK and other developed countries always ask 'how'; this is the reason that they are not as much fooled by election promises as we are. In India, all kinds of promises are made—doubling farmers' income, making India a developed country, etc.—but it is rarely, if ever, explained how these would be kept. Not so in the UK; Truss presented herself as an admirer of former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, but could not show the mettle the iron lady was famous for. For one, she was too hasty. Tax cuts are good, but they can't be carried out without taking other factors into consideration; they have to be in consonance with the fiscal situation; one can't go on a tax-cutting spree when public finance is strained. In cricketing analogy, she tried to begin her innings with a glory shot—and got out early, much before the nation could witness her skill and capabilities. Her successor would do well to remain grounded and on their toes. For the British public are not as forgiving as Indians are.



A woman shops for gold jewellery, ahead of the 'Dhanteras' festival

Let people breathe!

Banning firecrackers does not tantamount to banning Diwali celebrations

Even before Diwali fireworks of different types are out. An unnecessary controversy about firecrackers is raging in Delhi. While the Aam Aadmi Party has put a complete ban on the use of firecrackers in Delhi with stringent punishment for those violating the ban, the BJP is out to lift the ban and is taking on the AAP government for deliberately banning firecrackers on a Hindu festival of Diwali. They attacked AAP for its double standards and being anti-Hindu, citing videos of AAP workers burning fire crackers in the party celebrations. They argue that when AAP workers burn firecrackers does that not pollute the air, why do only the Hindus have to suffer due to such a ban? To challenge the ban the BJP Delhi leader Manoj Tiwari moved the Supreme Court for relief but did not get it. The Supreme Court had last week refused to hear the plea against the ban on firecrackers in the capital till January 1, 2023. Earlier in the month, the apex court had refused to stay the Delhi government's order banning the storage, sale, and use of all varieties of firecrackers till January 1. The court advised Tiwari to spend his money on sweets and let people breathe. The observation is apt as this time around the air pollution is at its peak in Delhi, blame it on stubble burning in the fields of Haryana and Punjab or the vehicular pollutionthe Delhi Air Quality is hovering around in 'unhealthy zone'. If you add a night of firecrackers it would become 'hazardous' to even breathe Delhi air.



Delhi environment ministry has put a complete ban on manufacturing, storing, and selling firecrackers in the national capital and made it a punishable offence, the violators would attract a fine of up to ₹5,000 and three years in jail. Unfortunately, almost everything is politicized even if it is about the health of the people. After all, every political party claims to work for the welfare of the people and so their health should be of paramount concern for them. To score brownie points and add to the political divide on religion one party is deliberately targeting another and branding it anti-Hindu even though there is no precedence of firecrackers in Ramayana. All that people did when Rama returned from the forest was to light diyas or the earthen lamps. Many things got associated with the popular festival of Diwali like gambling, and firecrackers but they are not part of Diwali. So let this be a bright and noise-free Diwali!

Education must for Afghan girls' freedom

The Taliban are out to debar women in Afghanistan from reaching college and want them to remain confined to the four walls of their home

The Taliban are out to debar women in Afghanistan from reaching college and want them to remain confined to the four walls of their home

While the attention of most countries remains riveted to the developments in Ukraine, the Taliban have scripted a new chapter in their continued assault on women's right to education. Girls appearing in the national university entrance examination this year found a number of subjects off-limits. According to a recent BBC report by Hafizullah Maroof titled 'Afghanistan: Taliban bar women from many university subjects,' faculties open to girls vary from university to university and in different zones in which the Taliban have divided Afghanistan. While they are allowed to take medicine, nursing, literature, and Islamic studies in all zones, they are generally barred from studying engineering, agriculture, economics, veterinary science, journalism and geology. Some courses in journalism are open to girls at Kabul University. Girls from other zones cannot access these.

Not surprisingly, there is despair and gloom among girls. Going by Maroof's report, there were 30,000 girls among the 100,000 who were expected to take the entrance examination this year. Their number, however, seems to be declining. To cite a straw in the wind, 182 of them sat for the exam in Laghman province this year against 1,200 in 2021. The number could be even lower next year if girls continue to be barred from secondary education with classes from seven to 12 shut to them. The Taliban, of course, have been trying to convince people that the imposition of these restrictions is not a part of their drive to whittle down women's rights to education and work that has been underway since the time they captured power in August last year. Thus, according to Maroof's report, Abdul Qadir Khamosh, who heads the examination division of the Taliban Government's ministry of higher education, has said girls could choose their favourite subjects, with the exception of just three or four. The report quotes him as saying, "We need to provide separate classes for women. In some areas, the number of female candidates is [sic] low. So, we are not allowing women to apply for certain courses."



Such explanations are hardly credible. The latest restrictions have to be seen in the background of girls continuing to be barred from attending classes seven to 12 in schools despite demonstrations by women in Afghanistan and condemnation worldwide. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, wrote on Twitter on September 18, 2022, the first anniversary of the school reopening without girls, "A year of lost knowledge and opportunity that they [girls] will never get back. Girls belong to the school. The Taliban must let them back in." On the same day, Markus Potzel, acting head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), stated, "The ongoing exclusion of girls from high school has no credible justification and has no parallel anywhere in the world....It is profoundly damaging to a generation of girls and to the future of Afghanistan."

NOT SURPRISINGLY, THERE IS DESPAIR AND GLOOM AMONG GIRLS. GOING BY MAROOF'S REPORT, THERE WERE 30,000 GIRLS AMONG THE 100,000 WHO WERE EXPECTED TO TAKE THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION THIS YEAR

There has also been criticism from within. Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, deputy minister for foreign affairs, told a Taliban gathering in Kabul on September 27, 2022, "It is very important that education must be provided to all, without any discrimination," He said, "Women must get education, there is no Islamic prohibition for girls' education.....Let's not provide opportunities for others to create a gap between the government and the people.....If there are technical issues, that needs to be resolved." Stanikzai himself, however, seems to have been marginalized. Once the head of the Taliban team in talks that led to the agreement with the US on February 29, 2020, in Qatar, which, in retrospect, led to the Taliban's ascent to power in August 2021, he should certainly have got a much higher position. His remarks mentioned above have clearly had no impact; nor, by the look of things, is it likely to have any. A significant indication of this has been the replacement of Noorullah Munir, who reportedly favoured girls' education

and was in charge when the Taliban Government announced the reopening of girls' schools in March 2022 (an announcement that has not been acted upon), on September 20 as education minister. His replacement, Habibullah Agha, who has reportedly had no formal education but is close to the Taliban's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, will implement whatever order the latter hands down. He told the AFP on September 21, "We can't make any plans on our own. We don't do that. Rather, I would act according to the instructions given by the supreme leader." The reclusive supreme leader, it is widely known, is opposed to girls' education. Clearly, women and girls in Afghanistan have a tough time ahead, particularly since the world is prepared to do little more than issue critical and/or condemnatory statements and the Taliban is making do without aid and its funds were frozen abroad. (The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LIZ TRUSS DEPARTS IGNOMINIOUSLY?
Sir — This refers to the "UK PM Liz Truss resigned" on Thursday after only 45 days in office. Her decision to step down comes after a tumultuous six-week term in which her policies triggered turmoil in financial markets and a rebellion in her party undermined her authority. She said, "I cannot deliver the mandate on which I was elected." Just a day earlier, Truss had vowed to stay in power, saying she was "a fighter and not a quitter." But Truss couldn't hold on any longer after a senior minister quit her government with a barrage of criticism and a vote in the House of Commons descended into chaos and acrimony just days after she was forced to abandon many of her economic policies. Her departure leaves a divided Conservative Party seeking a leader who can unify its warring factions. **Sadiksha Agrawal | Ujjain**

DOLLAR RUMBLES, RUPEE TUMBLES
Sir — The rupee was at 4.16 to a US dollar in 1947. Now, as of date, it is just over ₹83 — appreciation to an extent of about 79 in 75 years. That works out to just over a rupee every year, from that time. Gold was at ₹99 per 10 gm in 1947. The same is ₹47,620 approximately, today. Both these values tell us about the real India's extremely poor economic status. Where do we go from here, in the coming years? Making big noise about "Atmanirbhar", 100 Unicorns, 7.5% growth, and whatnot—have not even joke value. Rupee value reveals the poor state of the Indian Economy- The USD at ₹83 reveals the real story. Comparing current INR dollar values with the 1947 value may not be justified as we are an emerging nation with a lot to catch up on, while America was already a developed nation, (having got independence in 1776) leading the world. But the present slide is unpardonable. The Government must act. Let's hope the Government comes up with a plan to manage the rupee depreciation. The fall of rupee is just not bad for the economy but also has a demoralizing effect on people. It creates confusion

The new CJJ is different

Dhananjaya Yashwant Chandrachud will become the 50th Chief Justice of India when he takes the oath on Nov 9, 2022. His term would be the longest among all the Chief Justices in the last decade. It is interesting to note that his father Justice YV Chandrachud holds the record for serving the longest term as CJI from 1978 to 1985. I.e about 7 years. Justice Dhananjaya Chandrachud has been associated with a plethora of landmark pronouncements that greatly enriched the judicial landscape of India. He also chairs SC committees that oversee the e-courts project and other digital initiatives like virtual hearings and the more recent live streaming of court proceedings. By delivering justice for over six years in the apex court with his sound acumen, jurisprudence insight, and decision-making ability on contentious issues, he commands respect from the legal fraternity and the general public alike. With a good track record on judicial and administrative matters, it is hoped that he will walk the talk in the speedy disposal of cases in the footsteps of his predecessor Justice Lalit, who took pains to reform the listing of cases and admission matters in the Supreme Court. The judiciary is beset with many challenges like delays in filling judicial vacancies, outdated and poorly drafted laws, sedition laws, the pendency of cases for years and under trials, etc. But all the organs of the state must put their acts together for the better functioning of the system. In this respect, the role of the CJI can have far-reaching consequences for the health of the justice delivery system. **Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital**

and uncertainty in the minds of people who postpone their financial decisions fearing the worse. As our economy is going through a rough patch, we need to lift the people's morale by putting a break on rupee's slide and instill their confidence in the Indian rupee. **Gundu K Maniam | Ghaziabad**


POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY IS SHAMEFUL
Sir — Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim who is on parole has been holding online discourses, which have been attended by BJP leaders from Haryana. His parole has once again coincided with polls in the region, the third such instance in the current year. Haryana will be witnessing panchayat elections and the by-polls to the Adampur Assembly seat next month. The Dera chief, who is serving a 20-year jail for raping his two disciples, had earlier come out of prison on month-long parole in June,

ahead of the elections to 46 municipalities in Haryana. He was granted three weeks' furlough from February 7, barely two weeks before the Punjab Assembly elections. Haryana Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa was present in a big gathering of the sect's followers in Hissar to listen to an online discourse, during which he talked about his family's association with the Sirsa Dera. Karnal Mayor Renu Bala also joined an online "Satsang" along with some other BJP leaders. The Dera chief was last year also convicted along with four others for hatching a conspiracy to kill Ranjit Singh, a Dera manager. The Dera chief and three others were convicted in 2019 for the murder of a journalist 16 years ago. **Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai**


Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

As the nation has entered into 5G technology, it will bring major changes in the education sector.




Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi




Tormy MP
—Charles Walker

I worked in KGF and now I am working with director Prem in *KD - The Devil*. I am really looking forward to it and I wish the team all the best. I also feel that I am going to work more in south Indian films.




Actor
—Sanjay Dutt



India cannot dictate on how Pakistan play their cricket. I am an ex-cricketer, I don't know what's happening on the political front. But people-to-people contact is very important.

Former Pakistan cricketer
—Wasim Akram

I bow to all the brave policemen who sacrificed their lives in the service of public while performing their duty with full devotion.



Delhi CM
—Arvind Kejriwal

FIRST COLUMN

GIVE UP ‘MY’ AND ‘MINE’ TO BE FREE

The essence of perfection lies in selflessness




BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Many of us have read or come across the “Essence Of Gita (Gita Saar)” that says “whatever happened in the past, it happened for the good; Whatever is happening, is happening for the good; whatever shall happen in the future, shall happen for the good only. Do not weep for the past, do not worry for the future, concentrate on your present life”.

There is no doubt about the fact that the whole of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita is full of wisdom. But one misses its real meaning if one does not know whom the word, Bhagwan, in the Gita, refers to. The collection of divine orations says it in very clear terms that these are the utterances of God Himself (Bhagavan uvachya — these are the words). No one else, delivering a discourse, has ever said that he, the speaker, is God and none else but God. The essence of The Gita is contained in the words ‘Manmana Bhava’. ‘Dedicate your mind to Me; do things for Me alone; let your actions be offered to Me in reverence.’

These verses occur in The Gita twice and they end with a firm assurance from God, saying that one who stabilises his mind in HIM and fully surrenders himself to the Supreme Almighty will certainly get liberated from body-consciousness and the bondages that arise from it. The reason for such an exhortation and assurance is evident because man's miseries are mainly due to his attachments viz attachment to own body, to bodily relatives and to other things, like possessions, his country, language, etc. So, if a man yokes his mind to the remembrance of the Supreme Almighty and surrenders ego and attachments, implied by the words ‘My’, and ‘Mine’, he will truly be free from these entanglements.



Supreme Almighty - the Gita sermonizer -- advises us to follow His Shrimat — the holy principles enunciated by God. These principles signify the will of God. When the devout pray to God, they say: ‘Lord, thy will be done’, or ‘Let that happen what is the wish of God’. Now! If we really act according to His will, wish, advice or Shrimat, our will would become strong and effective. In short, if we identify our will with God's i.e., if we act as He wills, all our inner conflict will have ended. This will wipe off our pride and attachments and will increase capacity and efficiency.

An important consequence of it will be the ability to adjust ourselves easily and quickly. Having been freed from other psychological memories, except that of God and duty, our energy potential will find no resistance for full performance.

Man with all what he has will be pressed into action, for he will consider it as a sacrosanct act. It should, therefore, be remembered that, by surrendering to God, we don't become subservient. On the contrary, we become free agents — free from mental attachments which act as bondages. And, as free agents, we act as self-contained individuals.

Having dedicated our mind, intellect and emotions to Him, we feel ours as an integrated personality and can work with a wonderful cohesion of our mental abilities. Our personality, in totality, gets purified and sets to the work in a unified way and with joy and the result is excellence. Thus, the wise counsel of ‘Surrender to God’ is the gospel of inspired action which leads from progress to higher progress.

(The author is a spiritual educator)

Powerful and fearless girls of Uttar Pradesh



CHETNA VERMA

The girls in Uttar Pradesh are coming out of the closet and claiming their life in the patriarchal society. They are fearless and bold, and speak their mind

Tell us about yourself," asked a group of adolescent girls sitting in a room in a remote village in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya (erstwhile Faizabad) district. "What do you want to know?" I usually expect a question about my age or marital status. To my pleasant surprise, and for the first time in my field experience of over 10 years, I was asked about the challenges I had to face when I was their age. It took me a couple of seconds to process the question.

These girls — all in the age group between 11-20, mostly from low economic backgrounds belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Scheduled Castes (SC), are well aware of their rights. All of them are enrolled in schools and colleges. Some are taking coaching for different sports. Some are trained drivers. They fight for their right with village heads and call out discriminatory behavior against girls. They understand violence and how girls and women are subjected to different forms of violence. They are aware of their sexual and reproductive health and sing songs on "Mahvari" (menstrual cycle) together. Along with this knowledge by their side, these young girls have fire written all over their faces. They are fearless, powerful but how? In a country like ours where adolescent girls face numerous levels of bias based on their age and gender, and owing to intersecting identities - such as caste, class, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, their vulnerabilities are further amplified, what makes these girls stand out?

Adolescent girls, everywhere in India and more so in rural areas, continue to face discrimination and violence at home and are no less vulnerable outside. Their health, education, aspirations and life have no value in a society that still prefers a male child (The latest figures as per National Family Health Survey revealed that nearly 80% of those surveyed said they wanted at least one son). They are not 'allowed' to study and are made to choose household chores over attending school. According to a 2018 report by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, 39.4% girls aged 15-18 years drop out of education institutes across India. 64.8% of these do so because they are "forced to take on household chores or are engaged in begging".

Four years later, NFHS-5 reports that "early marriages and chores at home" are the main cause behind girls dropping out of schools. 21,800 girls who had dropped out of school before the 2019-20 school year, just over 13% girls did as they were required for housework and almost 7% did so as they were married off. The urban and rural break-up shows that of the total girls, 17,786 were from rural areas and 4,065 from urban areas.

"My family always supported my brother's education. Whatever little resources we had, were reserved for him. I had to constantly fight with them to let me complete my next level of education



THESE GIRLS HAVE LEARNT TO TAKE A STAND NOT ONLY FOR THEIR BASIC RIGHTS BUT FOR THEIR PASSION AS WELL

The writer is a development worker from New Delhi. Share your feedback on connect@charkha.org (Charkha Features)

and somehow managed to complete Class 12. They just did not see any point in my or my sister's education," said Priya* (name changed), a resident of Katauna, Block Tarun. What made Priya reject the idea that was being fed to her since her birth - the idea that girls only job is to learn household chores, marry, procreate, and take care of their families? What instilled in her the courage to question her parents and fight for her education?

Today, she is teaching in a private school and takes extra classes, earning to pursue her education and follow not just her dreams but support her family as well (apparently her brother is unable to find a job!). All the girls in this group also ensure that no girl in and around their village is forced by their families to drop out of school. They come together to intervene and make their parents understand the importance of education.

"There are several reasons why parents want their daughters to drop out from the schools. Cases of early child marriage are the most difficult ones that come our way. We come together to plan a strategy to intervene. It usually involves us speaking to the

girl as at times even girls do not want to go against their parents, if that doesn't work, we speak to their mothers first and when that fails, we make our parents speak to their parents. If nothing goes as per the plan, we dial the child helpline number and file complaint," shared Sapna* whom I had met in Dhamhar village in the same block.

These girls have learnt to take a stand not only for their basic rights but for their passion as well. They are entering territories which have been kept sacred for boys for decades. Sports, for example, is one field that girls are always discouraged to follow. "Ab tum ladko wale khelkhelogi?" is the question my parents had asked four years ago when I had told them I wanted to play cricket," said Naina*, a girl from the third group I had met in the same block. "My sister supported me to convince them and with several pre-conditions, I was allowed to play cricket," she added explaining how girls in different villages convinced, fought persistently with the village heads to provide them playgrounds where they could practice without any interference. "They would often threaten us that they would inform our parents about our unnecessary demands and that we should not be crossing the line. To be honest, we did feel scared, but we knew that it was only the beginning of our long struggle and if we had backed off then, we wouldn't have reached here," shared the girls explaining what struggles they had to face in the last six years of their journey. In India, where only 29% women engage in sport, these adolescent girls fighting to play sports in these villages where there is no proper infrastructure - education, healthcare, road connectivity, transport etc. is a BIG BIG DEAL!

Today, 120 girls from different villages in the block practice the game early morning or late afternoon wearing proper sports jerseys. Many participate in district and state level Cricket, Athletics and Kabaddi competitions working hard to make it to national teams.

"Today, if someone asks us what good we will do by playing cricket, we show them Mithali Raj's picture," said one of the girls from the group. "What do people say then?"

I asked, "Nothing, many still laugh at us while some support us and tell us to get the world cup for our country one day," she replied adding that although they have come a long way, there is a long journey ahead. How do they know what they want and already fighting for it?

These girls are breaking stereotypes. To ensure that they are financially independent, these amazing girls are learning professional driving (at 33, I don't even know to ride a bicycle!). According to the Road Transport Yearbook 2015-2016, only 11% of those behind the wheel are women and even those are made fun of. They are taking up Welder and Diesel Mechanics vocational training courses at Industrial Training Institutes. What's unconventional here? Between 2014-19, only 17% women were enrolled at ITIs of which only 4.3% of enrollments were in engineering trades vs 54.7% in non-engineering trades. For decades, young girls, have been restricted to traditional fields such as beauty, garment and healthcare, which are considered to be "feminized" sectors. They have been almost completely excluded from high technology or more mechanized sectors. Today, in their own small yet strong ways, these girls are fighting for their rightful spaces in these sectors. Since 2019, from this block, 40 girls have successfully completed the Welder Course while 60 have graduated as Diesel Mechanics. Many of these girls have left the village to work in other states.

"Do they continue working after they get married," I asked. "Girls who are working in companies in other states usually find someone in their field. All of them are saying yes to marriage only on one condition that they'll continue working wherever they are," informed didi - a social worker working with the organization that had been working with these girls for the last six years, with a sense of pride.

The answer to all the whys and hows and whats in this article is the fact that one group of committed social workers believed so strongly in working with these adolescent girls that they have changed their realities today. They supported them, organized them, informed and educated them to fight the prejudices their past generations were subjected to - not only to change the status quo for the present generation but to improve situation for our future generations. This journey of six long years they have taken with these girls is not only inspiring but stands testimony to the fact that all the statistics where adolescent girls and young women are lagging behind in this male-dominated society requires such dedicated, planned, long-term interventions that follow the feminist principles and rights-based approaches. And this is going to take a lot more organized, collective and sustained efforts from our social development sector. As I started to leave, one of the girls looked at me and said, "Aap aana next time, aapko kam se kam cycle chalana toh sikha denge (We will teach you how to ride a bicycle at least the next time you meet us)."

POINT COUNTERPOINT

IF WE HINDUS BURN CRACKERS ON DIWALI, IT WILL CAUSE POLLUTION; IF YOUR WORKERS BURN CRACKERS, THEN IT IS OKAY. —BJP DELHI SPOKESPERSON HARISH KHURANA



A COMPLETE BAN ON THE SALE OF FIRECRACKERS WILL CONTINUE. —DELHI'S ENVIRONMENT MINISTER GOPAL RAI



Govt must start a broadbased anti-smoking policy

Gains from the anti-smoking policy are limited and there is a need for a relook into it for better results

The strategy adopted when it comes to addressing the tobacco menace is either quit or die. There are more than 100 million people in India who use tobacco regularly. India has the world's most diverse range of tobacco options, which vary from dangerous to very dangerous and two in three smokers die of tobacco related illness.

With such a large number of people using tobacco, it is high time to move from “quit or die policy” alone to “harm reduction” policy as well. All tobacco products have been viewed throughout the past 50 years as ‘Deadly in Any Form or Disguise’, as a 2006 WHO campaign phrased it. The WHO’s Framework Convention on Tobacco



ANU ANNA JO

(The author is a Senior Associate at the Centre for Public Policy Research, Kochi)

Control urges its 150+ Parties, including India, to adopt measures to reduce the demand for tobacco products (e.g., warning labels, public health campaigns, tax increases) and reduce the supply of tobacco products, including encouraging tobacco growers to shift to alternative crops.

Although touted as a success, smoking rates have only modestly declined over the Treaty's first 10 years – around 2% in total, according to a 2017 study published in *The Lancet*. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is the first international public health treaty focusing on global public health issue of tobacco control. Its objective is to devise means of tobacco control based on current, relevant,

scientific, technical and economic considerations. India ratified the WHO FCTC in 2004. The Treaty also includes the concept of tobacco harm reduction – encouraging tobacco users to switch to less harmful alternatives. The FCTC defines tobacco control as “a range of supply, demand and harm reduction strategies to improve the health of a population by eliminating or reducing their consumption of tobacco products and exposure to tobacco smoke” but little focus has been given to the harm reduction strategies.

Tobacco harm reduction is based on the principle of reducing harm from cigarettes through devices that reduce the harms associated with smoking by providing nicotine (cleaner form of

nicotine intake) to people who cannot or do not want to quit (by themselves or with currently-approved methods).

Over the last 15 years, technological and scientific innovations have led to the development of a wide variety of tobacco and nicotine products that are significantly safer than cigarettes; over a relatively short period of time, millions of smokers worldwide have switched to these products. Products like snus, e-cigarettes, and heated tobacco products have gained popularity as tobacco harm reduction products in many countries including Sweden, UK, USA, Japan, New Zealand. These products are classified under the broad category of novel tobacco and nicotine products.

Novel tobacco and nicotine products are alternative nicotine delivery systems with significantly less harmful emissions than smoke from the combustion of tobacco leaves and could be an option for those who are unable to achieve smoking abstinence using other available means.

Taking a cue from the tobacco “epidemic”, the Indian government imposed a blanket ban on electronic cigarettes with the passing of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act, 2019.

The ban was imposed without exploring the possibilities and scientific evidence of e-cigarette as a product that can aid in tobacco

cessation. Imposing a ban on e-cigarette or less harmful alternatives takes away the right of smokers from shifting to a better alternative.

The direct health expenditure on treating tobacco-related diseases alone accounts for 5.3 per cent of total health spending in India in a year (WHO). It has been found that treatment of tobacco-related diseases and the loss of productivity caused therein cost the country almost Rs 13,500 crore annually. The Government should identify better alternatives and encourage innovation that can eventually lead to the betterment of public health. It is essential for the government to take on a multidimensional and unprejudiced stance in adopting harm reduction alternatives for the betterment of its citizens.

The prohibition should be relooked in a way that this wide range of innovative products has the potential to dramatically reduce premature deaths and diseases. While tobacco control strategies driven by regulation, taxation, counselling and therapeutic nicotine replacement techniques for smokers are the need of the hour, these strategies can be complemented by allowing well-regulated, scientifically substantiated, less harmful alternatives made available for smokers who are unable to quit by any means. Reduced harm products, regulated by law, can help create an impact on the current smoking population.

Ukraine piles pressure on Russian-held Kherson

AP ■ KYIV, UKRAINE

Ukrainian forces continued to pile on the pressure on Russian positions in occupied Kherson Friday, targeting resupply routes across the Dnieper river as Kyiv inched closer to a full-scale assault to retake the strategic southern port city. As many as 2,000 Russian draftees have poured into the Kherson region "to replenish losses and strengthen units on the front line," according to Ukraine's Army General Staff. The Antonivskiy Bridge that is on a main route from Crimea to Russian-held territories in southern Ukraine was struck late Thursday, said Natalia Humeniuk, a spokesperson for Ukraine's southern operational command, but but only after the 10 p.m. local curfew, to avoid civilian casualties. "We do not attack civilians and settlements," Humeniuk

told Ukrainian television after Kirill Stremousov, the Moscow-installed deputy chief of the regional administration claimed that at least four civilians were killed as a result of Ukrainian strikes. Stremousov said the attack occurred some 40 minutes after the curfew's start. A further 13 people suffered wounds, Kherson's top health official Vadim Ilmiyev said. Among the dead and wounded were journalists from the Russia-created TV channel "Tamvria," according to Stremousov. Earlier Ukrainian strikes had made the Antonivskiy Bridge inoperable, prompting Russian authorities to set up ferry crossings and pontoon bridges to ferry supplies to Russian troops in Kherson, which sits on the Dnieper's western bank. Those crossings have been regularly targeted by Ukrainian rockets. Russian-installed officials



have urged residents to evacuate from Kherson city for their safety and to allow the military to build fortifications. Ukraine's military reported Friday that bank employees, medical workers and teachers have started to be evacuated as the city's infrastructure also began to wind down. At least 15,000 residents of an expected 60,000 have already been relocated from the city and surrounding areas. Kherson city, with a pre-war population of about 284,000, was one of the first urban areas Russia captured when it invaded Ukraine, and it remains the largest city it holds. It is a prime target for both sides because of its key industries and major river port. The region of Kherson, along with Luhansk, Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia, were illegally annexed by Russian President Vladimir Putin even though not all the territory is

Russian-held. He then imposed martial law earlier this week in an attempt to assert Russian authority amid a string of military setbacks and strong international criticism. In the Donetsk region, two people were killed in the past 24 hours after Russian forces shelled the city of Bakhmut, Regional Governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said. Russian troops have been unable to advance toward the city for over a month now. Some nine people were wounded in two Russian attacks in the eastern city of Kharkiv, according to regional governor Oleh Syniehubov. Amid the fighting, the Kremlin insisted Friday that Putin has been open to negotiations "from the very beginning," and "nothing has changed" in that respect. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Putin "tried to initiate

talks with both NATO and the United States even before the special military operation" — the Russian term for its war in Ukraine. Peskov was speaking following earlier remarks by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who said Putin appeared to be "much softer and more open to negotiations" with Ukraine than in the past. Meanwhile, Russia's deployment of aircraft and troops to air bases in Belarus raised the specter of another front on Ukraine's northern border, although officials said such a move was unlikely. The Ukrainian army's general staff reported a heightened chance that such an attack could aim to cut supply routes of Western weapons and equipment. The build-up could also aim to divert Ukrainian resources and weaken any counteroffensive in the south.

Russian threats revive old nuke fears in central Europe

AP ■ WARSAW (POLAND)

Two stories beneath a modern steel production plant on Warsaw's northern edge lies an untouched Cold War relic: a shelter containing gas masks, stretchers, first aid kits and other items meant to help civil defense leaders survive and guide rescue operations in case of nuclear attack or other disasters. A map of Europe on a wall still shows the Soviet Union — and no independent Ukraine. Old boots and jackets give off a musty odour. A military field switchboard warns: "Attention, your enemy is listening."



Until now, nobody had seriously considered that the rooms built in the 1950s — and now maintained as a "historical curiosity" by the ArcelorMittal Warszawa plant, according to spokeswoman Ewa Karpinska — might one day be used as a shelter again. But as Russia pounds Ukraine, with shelling around a nuclear power plant and repeated Russian threats to use a nuclear weapon, the Polish government ordered an inventory this month of the 62,000 air raid shelters in the country. The war has triggered fears across Europe, and these are especially felt in countries like Poland and Romania that border Ukraine and would be highly vulnerable in case of a radiological disaster. After the Polish government order, firefighters visited the steel plant's shelter last

week and listed it in their registry. Warsaw's leaders said the city's subway and other underground shelters could hold all its 1.8 million residents and more in the case of an attack with conventional weapons. The ArcelorMittal Warszawa plant's Karpinska is suddenly receiving inquiries about the shelter. Following Russian President Vladimir Putin's threats to carry out a tactical nuclear attack, "everyone is worried," she said. "I believe that he will not (stage a nuclear attack), that it would be completely crazy, but nobody really believed he would start this war." Amid fighting around Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, Poland also drew up a plan to give potassium iodide tablets to local fire stations, which would distribute them to the population if needed.

While some countries still maintain their Cold War underground shelters, after the collapse of the Soviet Union some were transformed into museums — relics of an earlier age of nuclear fears that would offer no real protection today. Bomb shelters were a key element in the former Yugoslavia's preparedness doctrine against a nuclear attack. The most famous of all, in a mountainous area 60 kilometers (35 miles) from Sarajevo in Bosnia, is a vast underground fortress built to protect military and political leaders. Known then only to the Yugoslav president, four generals and a handful of soldiers who guarded it, the Konjic site was turned in 2010 into a modern art gallery. "From the military-political and geopolitical standpoint, the global environment right now is unfortunately very similar to what it was like (during the Cold War), burdened by a very heavy sense of a looming war," said Selma Hadzhihuseinovic, the representative of a government agency that manages the site. She said the bunker could be returned to service in a new war, but with nuclear weapons having become far more powerful it would not be "as useful as it was meant to be when it was built". In Romania, an enormous former salt mine, Salina Turda, now a tourist attraction, is on a government list of potential shelters.



Protesters hold signs and chant during a demonstration outside of an EU summit in Brussels, on Friday. European Union leaders are gathered to take stock of their support for Ukraine after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Russia is trying to spark a refugee exodus by destroying his war-ravaged country's energy infrastructure (AP Photo)

EU leaders avoid deep rift on gas price cap at energy summit

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The general carrying out President Vladimir Putin's new military strategy in Ukraine has a reputation for brutality - for bombing civilians in Russia's campaign in Syria. He also played a role in the deaths of three protesters in Moscow during the failed coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991 that hastened the demise of the Soviet Union. Bald and fierce-looking, Gen. Sergei Surovkin was put in charge of Russian forces in Ukraine on October 8 after what has so far been a faltering invasion that has seen a number of chaotic retreats and other setbacks over the nearly eight months of war. Putin put the 56-year-old career military man in command following an apparent truck bombing of the strategic bridge to the Crimean Peninsula that embarrassed the Kremlin and created logistical problems for the Russian forces. Russia responded with a barrage of strikes across Ukraine, which Putin said were aimed at knocking down energy infrastructure and Ukrainian military command centers. Such attacks have continued on a daily basis, pummeling power plants and other facilities with cruise mis-

General who led Syrian bombing new face of Russian war

AP ■ WASHINGTON



siles and waves of Iranian-made drones. Surovkin also retains his job of air force chief, a position that could help coordinate the airstrikes with other operations. During the most recent bombardments, some Russian war bloggers carried a statement attributed to Surovkin that signalled his intention to pursue the attacks with unrelenting vigor in an attempt to pound the Kyiv government into submission. "I don't want to sacrifice Russian soldiers' lives in a guerrilla war against hordes of fanatics armed by NATO," the bloggers quoted his statement as saying. "We have enough technical means to force Ukraine to surrender." While the veracity of the statement couldn't be confirmed, it appears to reflect the same heavy-handed approach that Surovkin took in Syria where he

oversaw the destruction of entire cities to flush out rebel resistance without paying much attention to the civilian population. That indiscriminate bombing drew condemnation from international human rights groups, and some media reports have dubbed him "General Armageddon." Putin awarded Surovkin the Hero of Russia medal, the country's highest award, in 2017 and promoted him to full general. Kremlin hawks lauded Surovkin's appointment in Ukraine. Yevgeny Prigozhin, a millionaire businessman dubbed "Putin's chef" who owns a prominent military contractor that plays a key role in the fighting in Ukraine, praised him as "the best commander in the Russian army." But even as hard-liners expected Surovkin to ramp up strikes on Ukraine, his first public statements after his appointment sounded more like a recognition of the Russian military's vulnerabilities than bluster threats. In remarks on Russian state television, Surovkin acknowledged that Russian forces in southern Ukraine were in a "quite difficult position" in the face of Ukrainian counteroffensive.

EU to boost Ukraine funds amid refugee exodus concerns

AP ■ BRUSSELS



European Union leaders on Friday gave the green light to a plan to provide Ukraine with 18 billion euros (dollars) in financial support over the next year, after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Russia is trying to spark a refugee exodus by destroying his country's energy infrastructure. The plan, endorsed at a summit of EU leaders in Brussels, would see the 27-nation bloc match US financial support for war-ravaged Ukraine in monthly installments. "Ukraine is telling us that they need approximately 3-4 billion euros per month to have enough resources for the basics," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. She said that figure would be met in equal part by the EU and the US, plus additional money from international financial institutions. "It is very important to Ukraine to have a predictable and stable flow of income," von der Leyen told reporters. She said the EU is looking to provide about 1.5 billion euros each month, describing it as a funding amount that would be "stable and reliable." The bloc's finance ministers have been tasked with coming up with a system for pulling

together the money, which would come on top of the 9 billion euros in macro-financing support that the EU is already sending. Von der Leyen also slammed Russia's "atrocious and deliberate" attacks on civilians and infrastructure. Nearly eight months into the war, Russia has increasingly targeted Ukraine's power stations, waterworks and other key infrastructure with missile and drone strikes. In a speech to the leaders via video link on Thursday, Zelenskyy said that "attacks by Russian cruise missiles and Iranian combat drones have destroyed more than a third of our energy infrastructure." The president added: "Russia also provokes a new wave of migration of Ukrainians to EU countries," by attacking electricity and heating sources "so that as many Ukrainians as possible move to your countries."

Putin inspects training of newly mobilised forces

IAN ■ MOSCOW



Russian President Vladimir Putin inspected the training of the newly drafted personnel who will participate in the special military operation in Ukraine, the Kremlin said in a statement. Military units and the newly mobilised forces were conducting joint combat training in preparation for missions during the special military operation, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the statement. Putin watched practical

exercises of the trainees to sharpen their tactical, firing, engineering and medical skills at the Western Military District training ground in the Ryazan region, the statement said.

'Iranian troops in Crimea backing Russian drone strikes'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Iranian-made drones against Ukraine. Members of a branch of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps were dispatched to assist Russian forces in using the drones, according to the British government. The revelation of the US intelligence finding comes as the Biden administration seeks to mount international pressure on Tehran to pull back from helping Russia as it bombards soft Ukrainian civilian targets with the help of Iranian-made drones. The Russians in recent days have increasingly turned to the Iranian-supplied drones, as well as Kalibr and Iskander cruise missiles, to carry out a barrage of attacks against Ukrainian



infrastructure and non-military targets. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said this week that Russian forces have destroyed 30 per cent of Ukraine's power stations since October 10. "The information we have is that the Iranians have put trainers and tech support in Crimea, but it's the Russians

who are doing the piloting," Kirby said. He added that the Biden administration was looking at imposing new sanctions on Tehran and would look for ways to make it harder for Iran to sell such weapons to Russia. The US first revealed this summer that Russia was purchasing Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles to launch against Ukraine. Iran has repeatedly denied providing drones to Russia, though the triangle-shaped Shahed-136s raining down on civilians in Kyiv and elsewhere in Ukraine have been used in the Mideast by Tehran in the past. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei this week even applauded the dead-

ly power of Iranian drones. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment. White House officials say that international sanctions, including export controls, have left the Russians in a bind as they try to restock ammunition and precision-guided munition stocks that have been depleted during the nearly eight-month-old war. As a result, Russia has been forced to turn to Iran as well as North Korea for weaponry. Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, told reporters that military officials "wouldn't be surprised" if the Russians sought more drones from Iran "given their situation." Zelenskyy said last week

that Russia had ordered 2,400 from Iran. US officials believe that Iran may have deployed military personnel to assist the Russians in part because of the Russians' lack of familiarity with the Iranian-made drones. Declassified US intelligence findings showed that Russians faced technical problems with the drones soon after taking delivery of them in August. "The systems themselves were suffering failures and not performing to the standards that apparently the customers expected," Kirby said. "So the Iranians decided to move in some trainers and some technical support to help the Russians use them with better lethality."

Yellen boosting Biden’s agenda in Virginia as mid-terms near



AP ■ WASHINGTON

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is promoting Biden administration policies as the key to advancing the nation’s “long-term economic well being” in the lead-up to the midterm elections.

The former Federal Reserve chair is visiting a Virginia research and development business park with Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine on Friday and talking up administration efforts to revitalise America’s manufacturing capacity, spur computer chip production and upgrade the country’s infrastructure. Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., also will attend.

Yellen’s visit is part of the Treasury leader’s ongoing tour of the US, as she and other administration officials try to quell the impact of persistent high inflation.

Voters have made clear that price increases are a top

concern. A June Associated Press-NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research poll showed that 40 per cent of US adults specifically named inflation in an open-ended question as one of up to five priorities for the government to work on in the next year.

Democrats want to retain their control in Congress and will need to convince voters they can wrangle inflation, which accelerated in September.

In Virginia, Yellen will talk about how a boost in domestic industrial manufacturing will be one of the solutions.

“Our government’s failure to invest in innovation has had wide-ranging impacts on our long-term economic well being,” Yellen said in prepared remarks. “At the most fundamental level, it impacted our productive capacity.”

She said that over the past year President Joe Biden’s administration “has begun to reverse that trend.”

Social media platforms brace for mid-term polls mayhem

AP ■ NEW YORK

A Facebook search for the words “election fraud” first delivers an article claiming that workers at a Pennsylvania children’s museum are brainwashing children so they’ll accept stolen elections.

Facebook’s second suggestion? A link to an article from a site called MAGA Underground that says Democrats are plotting to rig next month’s mid terms.

“You should still be mad as hell about the fraud that happened in 2020,” the article insists.

With less than three weeks before the polls close, misinformation about voting and elections abounds on social media despite promises by tech companies to address a problem blamed for increasing polarisation and distrust.

While platforms like Twitter, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube say they’ve expanded their work to detect and stop harmful claims that could suppress the vote or even lead to violent confrontations, a review of some of the sites shows they’re still playing catchup with 2020, when then-President Donald Trump’s lies about the election he lost to Joe Biden helped fuel an insurrection at the US Capitol.

“You would think that they would have learned by now,” said Heidi Beirich, founder of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism and a member of a group called the Real Facebook Oversight Board that has criticised the platform’s efforts.

“This isn’t their first election. This should have been addressed before Trump lost in 2020. The damage is pretty deep at this point.”

are focused on semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and other emerging technologies.

“Together, our efforts are raising our economy’s aggregate production capacity,” she said. “And in turn, we are raising America’s long-term economic outlook.”

Sunak holds firm as bookies’ favourite to replace Liz as UK PM

PTI ■ LONDON

A clear frontrunner to take over from Liz Truss as Conservative Party leader and British Prime Minister remains uncertain on Friday due to deep divisions among the Tories, but the bookies’ odds have rocketed in favour of British Indian former chancellor Rishi Sunak.

As the runner up of the leadership election which concluded last month, the former finance minister who had forecast much of the economic crisis unleashed by Truss’ mini-budget is seen as a safe pair of hands to take charge at 10 Downing Street.

The 42-year-old is holding a solid 55 per cent lead with the Oddschecker betting odds aggregator, followed by a 29 per cent chance of former prime minister Boris Johnson making a comeback. Third placed in what is emerging as a three-way contest is Leader of the Commons Penny Mordaunt, who had polled third in the first round of parliamentary votes to shortlist candidates for the last leadership race.

“I back Rishi Sunak to be our next PM. He has the plan and credibility to: restore financial stability, help get inflation down and deliver sustainable tax cuts over time; and unite the Conservatives by bringing the best talent into government to deliver for the British people,” tweeted former Cabinet minister Dominic Raab, among the first of nearly 50 MPs to openly declare support for Sunak.

Amid Opposition calls for an immediate general election, there is a frenzy among the governing Tories to find a successor for Truss, who now holds the ignominious title of being the shortest serving incumbent at 10 Downing Street after resigning on Thursday – just 44 days after being elected to office.

Under the rules set of this Tory leadership race, a candidate must have a minimum of 100 members of Parliament backing them to make the



shortlist by the Monday 2pm local time deadline. A comeback for partygate-hit Johnson is increasingly looking likely with reports that he has the support of around 140 MPs. The former prime minister, who was holidaying in the Caribbean, is believed to be on a flight back to get his leadership campaign going quickly.

“I’m backing Boris #BorisorBust,” tweeted UK Business Secretary Jacob Rees-Mogg, one of the head cheerleaders from the Johnson camp.

However, there are several others who have expressed their shock and dismay at the possibility, given that Johnson still faces a parliamentary inquiry over whether he misled the House of Commons on the parties held at Downing Street under his watch.

Polling suggests the former prime minister, who won a thumping majority in the 2019 general election, remains popular with the wider Tory membership. Johnson’s return would mark a dramatic comeback, having been dragged out of office by his Cabinet and MPs only 45 days ago.



Boris eyes comeback bid as UK Tories pick new leader

PTI ■ LONDON

Several British lawmakers, including former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, were trying to scoop up support on Friday ahead of a short, intense contest to replace Liz Truss as the nation’s leader.

Truss quit on Thursday after a turbulent 45-day term, conceding that she could not deliver on her tax-cutting economic plans.

The Conservative Party is holding a speeded-up race to replace her, which will see a new leader — who will also become prime minister — chosen within a week.

Former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak and House of Commons leader Penny Mordaunt are among the bookmakers’ favourites – along with Johnson, who was forced to resign by the party just over three months ago after becoming mired in scandals over his ethics and finances. His return would be a remarkable resurrection for a politician who is popular and polarizing in equal measure.

Johnson, who remained a lawmaker after stepping down as prime minister, has not said whether he will run, but his allies in Parliament are working to gather support.

Nominations for a new leader will close on Monday afternoon, and candidates need the signatures of 100 of the 357 Conservative lawmakers, meaning a maximum field of three. Lawmakers will vote to knock out one of those, and will hold an indicative vote on the final two. The party’s 172,000 members will then get to decide between the two finalists in an online vote. The new leader is due to be selected by Oct. 28.

Sunak, who came second to Truss in a summertime leadership contest, is favoured by some as a safe pair of hands who can steady the struggling economy. Mordaunt, who came third, is popular with the party grassroots.

But the wild card in the contest is Johnson, who is adored by some in the party as a proven vote-winner with a rare common touch, and reviled by others for the chaos and scandal that marred his three years in office.

Johnson ally Nadine Dorries said the party should pick him because “he is a known winner” who led the Conservatives to a big election victory in 2019.

Trump ally Bannon faces sentencing for contempt

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Steve Bannon, a longtime ally of former President Donald Trump, is scheduled to be sentenced Friday after being convicted of defying a subpoena from the House panel investigating the Jan 6 insurrection at the US Capitol.

Bannon was convicted in July of two counts of contempt of Congress: one for refusing to sit for a deposition and the other for refusing to provide documents.

Prosecutors have asked the judge in his case to impose a hefty sentence of six months in jail, while Bannon’s lawyers have argued their client deserves a sentence of probation. The statutes for contempt of Congress each carry a minimum sentence of 30 days behind bars, but Bannon’s lawyers argue the judge could just sentence him to probation and not send him to jail.

The House committee had sought Bannon’s testi-



mony over his involvement in Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election. Bannon has yet to testify or provide any documents to the committee, prosecutors wrote.

Prosecutors argued Bannon, 68, deserved the longer sentence because he had pursued a “bad faith strategy” and his public statements disparaging the committee itself made it clear he wanted to undermine their effort to get to the bottom of the violent attack and keep anything like it from happening again.

The defence, meanwhile, said he wasn’t acting in bad faith, but trying to avoid ruin-

ing a foul of executive privilege objections Trump had raised when Bannon was first served with a committee subpoena last year. The onetime presidential adviser said he wanted to a Trump lawyer in the room, but the committee wouldn’t allow it.

Many other former White House aides have testified with only their own counsel. Bannon had been fired from the White House in 2017 and was a private citizen when he was consulting with the then-president before the riot.

Bannon also pointed out that he had offered to testify after Trump waived executive privilege. But that was after the contempt charges were filed, and prosecutors say he would only agree to give the deposition if the case was dropped.

Prosecutors have pushed for the maximum fine, saying Bannon refused to answer routine questions about his income and insisted he could pay whatever the judge imposed.



Lankan Govt to pay SLR 10 mn to family of lawmaker lynched during stir

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government has decided to pay SLR 10 million as compensation to the family of a lawmaker who was lynched by an irate mob during the anti-government protests, a media report said on Friday.

Amarakeerthi Athukorala, 57, a lawmaker from former prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa-led Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) administration, was killed by a mob on May 9 in Nittambuwa in Western Sri Lanka.

The limit for compensating a government official was SLR 5 million. But after the cabinet meeting last week, it was decided to compensate Athukorala’s family with SLR 10 million, news portal Economy Next reported, quoting Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena.

Initially, police had claimed that Athukorala died by committing suicide.

However, the autopsy report stated that the lawmaker’s death was due to multiple injuries, fractures and internal bleeding, but he had no gunshot wounds.

Sri Lanka had witnessed massive street protests against the government earlier this year due to its mishandling of the economic crisis.

Top UN official decries global trampling of women’s rights

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The trampling of women’s rights and “deeply ingrained misogyny” are connected in many ways to today’s global challenges, from the proliferation of conflicts to increasing assaults on human rights, the UN deputy secretary-general said on Thursday.

Amina Mohammed told a UN Security Council meeting on women, peace and security that “despite decades of evidence that gender equality offers a path to sustainable peace and conflict prevention, we are moving in the opposite direction.”

“We cannot separate the perilous state of peace in our world from the destructive effects of patriarchy and the silencing of women’s voices,” she said.

Mohammed urged the world’s nations to call out “misogyny as it manifests itself in the abuse and discrimination that women confront on the street, at home, at work, as well as online.” They must challenge “the social, political, and economic structures and norms that sustain it,” she said.

The Security Council was assessing the state of a resolution it adopted on October 31, 2000, demanding equal participation for women in peace negotiations, a goal that remains as distant as gender equality.

Mohammed said that between 1995 and 2019, the percentage of peace agreements with gender equality provisions increased from 14 per cent to 22 per cent.

But, she said, women “constituted on average just 13 per cent of negotiators, 6 per cent of




mediators and 6 per cent of signatories in major peace processes.” She said 70 per cent of peace processes didn’t include any women.

“Women’s participation in peace processes, and influence over decisions that affect their lives, continue to lag far behind, creating a real barrier to inclusive, durable, and sustainable peace,” she said.

Mohammed said the UN is helping to push for women’s participation in peacemaking, pointing to a 40 per cent target for women in delegations to peace talks in Sudan and an increase of women in a committee monitoring Mali’s 2015 peace agreement from 3 per cent to 38 per cent. “We must build on these examples,” she said.

“We need full gender parity — including through special quotas to accelerate the inclusion of women — across election monitoring, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, and justice systems.”

UN Women executive director Sima Bahous, whose agency promotes gender equality, told the council that “a reversal of generational gains in women’s rights is taking place against surging threats to security.”



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R.O. No. 783

Tender Notice

Dt. 21.10.2022

Office of the Executive Engineer (Generation) Tiloth Power House, Uttarkashi invites sealed tender from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders is given below:
1. Tender No.: 06/EE(G)/TPH/2022-23 for Procurement of consumables for 33 KV switchyard.
2. Tender No.: 07/EE(G)/TPH/2022-23 for Annual General Cleaning of power house.
Estimated cost : Rs. 2.028 Lac + GST & 9.994 Lac + GST respectively.
Date of availability of bid document on website: 22.10.2022 at 11:00 hrs.
Last date for submission of bids: 14.11.2022 upto 15:00 hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvnl.com"
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity" **Executive Engineer (Generation)**

Japan PM heads to Australia to step up military, energy ties

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who is travelling to Australia for talks with his counterpart Anthony Albanese, said on Friday he wanted to bolster military and energy cooperation between the two countries amid their shared concerns about China.

Kishida said he hoped to update their 2007 bilateral security pact to factor in the progress they’ve made and further promote their partnership.

Australia’s liquefied natural gas and coal exports are key to a stable energy supply for resource-scarce Japan, and Kishida said he hoped to discuss the future of Japanese resources and energy stability with Albanese.

“For Japan, Australia is an important country that we share universal values with, such as freedom and democracy, as well as strategic benefits, and it is an important country also from the resource and energy point of view,” Kishida said before boarding his flight to Perth.

“Australia is our special strategic partner,” Kishida added, noting that Australia is a key member of the Quad dialogue that also includes the US and India, and was established to dis-



cuss regional security and economic issues as a counter to China’s growing influence.

Japan and Australia, both US allies, share a largely similar vision for regional security and Japan hopes to elevate its cooperation with Australia.

The leaders are planning to issue a possible new declaration on security cooperation that would reinforce the 2007 pact looking ahead to the next decade, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said on condition of anonymity, citing protocol.

The pact committed the countries to regional and global peace and stability as well as cooperation on counterterrorism and rebuilding Iraq after the 2003 war.



With eye on Turkey, Greece opens Israeli-built flight school

AP ■ KALAMATA

Greece on Friday launched operations at a new international pilot training center created in partnership with Israel, as it tries to build on its relative air power advantage over regional rival Turkey.

Israeli defense contractor Elbit, which finalized a \$1.65 billion deal with Greece’s government, assisted by Israel, last year, will help run the facility located on an air force base outside the southern Greek city of Kalamata.

Greece is undertaking an armed forces modernization program largely focused on its air force, as it hopes to outpace Turkey. Athens is acquiring advanced French-built Rafale jets, upgrading its aging fleet of F-16 fighter jets and wants to join the United States’ F-35 jet program.

Turkey was dropped from the F-35 program after its purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system.

JASCH INDUSTRIES LIMITED Regd. Off.: 502, NDM-II, NSP, Pitampura, Delhi - 110034 Website: www.jaschindustries.com, Email: accounts@jasch.biz									
Extract of Reviewed Ind AS Financial Results for the Quarter and Half Year Ended 30th September, 2022. (Standalone And Consolidated Financial Results under Regulation 47(1)(B) Of Listing Regulations)									
Sl No	Particulars	Standalone					Consolidated		
		Quarter Ended		Half Year Ended		Year Ended	Half Year Ended		Year Ended
		30.09.22	30.06.22	30.09.21	30.09.22	30.09.21	31.03.22	30.09.22	31.03.22
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations.	6102.40	6199.01	5285.33	12301.41	8989.53	21607.46	12301.41	21607.46
2	Profit before Interest, Depreciation & Taxes (EBITDA)	639.97	812.58	621.48	1452.54	1134.18	3073.63	1452.54	3073.63
3	Net Profit for the Period (before Tax & Exceptional Items)	545.37	720.85	535.88	1266.22	966.25	2728.18	1266.22	2728.18
4	Net Profit for the Period before Tax (after Exceptional Items)	540.21	720.85	535.88	1261.06	966.25	2728.18	1261.06	2728.18
5	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional Items)	409.11	533.24	407.36	942.35	717.73	2024.41	942.35	2024.41
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [(Comprising Profit) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	409.11	533.24	407.36	942.35	717.73	2024.41	942.35	2024.41
7	Equity Share Capital	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00	1133.00
8	Reserves	8785.60	8376.49	6536.57	8785.60	6536.57	7843.25	8785.60	7843.25
9	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each)	3.61	4.71	3.60	8.32	6.33	17.87	8.32	17.87
Basic & Diluted									
Notes:									
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly and half yearly financial results filed with BSE under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the aforesaid results is available on the website of the BSE i.e. www.bseindia.com and also on the website of the Company i.e. www.jaschindustries.com.									
2. The financial results of the Company have been prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS)									
3. Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period classification.									
Sonipat, 20th October 2022					sd/- (J. K. GARG) CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR				

CCI fine setback for biz, will plan steps: Google

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Google on Friday said it will review Competition Commission's (CCI) decision to impose a ₹1,338 crore penalty for alleged anti-competitive practice, and termed the order a "major setback" for Indian consumers and businesses.

In its first official response after the CCI order, Google said Android has created more choices for everyone and supports thousands of successful businesses in India and around the world.

"The CCI's decision is a major setback for Indian consumers and businesses, opening serious security risks for Indians who trust Android's security features, and raising the cost of mobile devices for Indians," a Google spokesperson said in an email statement.

Google said it will "review the decision to evaluate the next steps". The competition watchdog on Thursday slapped a steep penalty of ₹1,337.76 crore on Google for abusing its



dominant position in multiple markets in relation to Android mobile devices and ordered the internet major to cease and desist from various unfair business practices.

The regulator, which passed the order after ordering a detailed probe more than three years ago, has also directed Google to modify its conduct within a defined timeline.

Android is a popular open-

source, mobile operating system installed by original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) of smartphones and tablets.

CCI, which had started probing the case in April 2019, has directed that OEMs should not be restrained from choosing from among Google's proprietary applications to be pre-installed and also not be forced to pre-install a bouquet of applications on their smart devices.

Rupee slips 9 paise to close at 82.88 against US dollar



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slipped 9 paise to close at 82.88 against the US dollar on Friday amid a strong greenback overseas.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 82.89 and witnessed a high of 82.59 and a low of 82.91. It finally settled at 82.88 against the American currency, registering a drop of 9 paise over its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee had rebounded from its lifetime low to close 21 paise higher at 82.79.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the green-

back's strength against a basket of six currencies, advanced 0.47 per cent to 113.41.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures fell 0.11 per cent to USD 92.28 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 104.25 points or 0.18 per cent to end at 59,307.15, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 12.35 points or 0.07 per cent to 17,576.30.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets as they purchased shares worth ₹1,864.79 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Gold falls ₹372; silver declines ₹799

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price in the national capital fell ₹372 to ₹50,139 per 10 grams on Friday amid a decline in the yellow metal prices in the international market, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at ₹50,511 per 10 grams.

Silver also declined ₹799 to ₹56,089 per kilogram from ₹56,888 per kg.

In the international market gold was trading in red at USD 1,621.25 per ounce while silver was down at USD 18.41 per ounce.

"COMEX spot gold is headed for a second weekly decline, with prices nearing their lowest mark since April 2020 as the dollar stays strong and holdings in the ETF-extended decline," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.



Sensex extends gains for sixth day; Axis Bank zooms 9% post Q2 show

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty defied gravity for the sixth session on the trot on Friday as healthy corporate earnings and fresh foreign fund inflows offset negative cues from global markets.

Recovering after a sharp sell-off in later afternoon trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 104.25 points or 0.18 per cent higher at 59,307.15.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 12.35 points or 0.07 per cent to 17,576.30.

Axis Bank was the star performer among the Sensex constituents, soaring 8.96 per cent after the company on Thursday reported a 66.29 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit for the September quarter at ₹5,625.25 crore, driven by a substantial decrease in bad loan provisions and margin expansion.

The other major winners from the 30-share pack were ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Nestle India, Titan and UltraTech Cement.

However, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Asian Paints, ITC and Reliance Industries were among the laggards, shedding as much as 3.20 per cent.

"Selling emerged in the second half led by a weak start to the European markets due to fears of tight monetary policy. Domestic investors maintained their caution and began to



book profits in anticipation of the truncated week.

"Good start to Q2 FY23 results by banks, IT, and FMCG stocks maintained stability in the market but mid and small caps were heavily impacted," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

On a weekly basis, the Sensex climbed 1,387.18 points or 2.39 per cent, while the Nifty gained 390.60 points or 2.27 per cent.

"Markets have been showing resilience amid mixed cues, however the participation is largely restricted to select sectors and stocks. Besides, inconsistency on the global front is also keeping the momentum in check," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.75 per cent and smallcap index fell by 0.60 per cent on Friday.

Among the BSE sectoral indices, bankex jumped 2.07 per cent, financial services climbed 0.61 per cent and realty ended marginally higher by 0.10 per cent.

However, capital goods declined 1.12 per cent, industrials tumbled 1.07 per cent, commodities fell by 0.88 per cent, metal went lower by 0.89 per cent and power dipped 0.74 per cent.

In other Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended lower, while Shanghai closed with gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading lower in mid-session deals. Wall Street had ended lower on Thursday.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.37 per cent lower at USD 92.02 per barrel.

The rupee pared its initial losses and settled 4 paise higher at 82.75 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday.

Jio net profit up 28% to ₹4,518 cr for Sept quarter

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Jio Infocomm on Friday posted a 28 per cent year-on-year rise in its net profit for the September quarter at ₹4,518 crore.

Its net profit stood at ₹3528 crore in the same period previous fiscal, the telco said in a regulatory filing.

The revenue from operations jumped 20.2 per cent to ₹22,521 crore for the just ended quarter, from ₹18,735 crore in the year-ago period.

The Q2 scorecard comes amid large-scale network deployments across the country for 5G services, the much-talked about next-generation technology that promises to ring in a new era of turbocharged speeds, lag-free connectivity, and new-age applications in India, the world's second-biggest smartphone market after China.

CIL starts 17 more first-mile connectivity projects worth ₹11k crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Limited (CIL) on Friday said it has started 17 more first-mile connectivity projects worth ₹11,000 crore under the third phase.

First-mile connectivity (FMC) refers to the transportation of coal from pit-heads to dispatch points.

"At an estimated cost of ₹11,000 crore, these projects have been planned for a loading capacity of 317 million tonnes per annum (MTPA)," Coal India said in a statement.

The PSU is preparing a rollout plan to float tenders for the latest projects by FY 2025 and the projects would be commissioned by FY 2027.

These are in addition to the existing 44 such projects that CIL is actively pursuing under the two phases.

"Catalysed by positive results shown by a pilot study, in two of its OC mines, on



environmental and economic benefits of loading through FMC projects, CIL is pursuing this mode actively," the statement said.

There has been a considerable cut down in particulate matter, CO2 and other gaseous emissions through the transportation of coal via first-mile connectivity compared to despatch through rail sidings.

CIL accounts for over 80 per cent of the domestic coal output.

Adani, GMR, L&T bid for UP's ₹23K cr Smart Meter Project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After achieving the distinction of becoming the state with the highest number of smart meters (11.5 lakh), Uttar Pradesh is gearing-up to install another 2.85 crore smart meters. For the ambitious project, the state has floated four-tender documents with a cumulative estimated value of ₹23,000 crore.

The tender has attracted interest from large Indian corporates like the Adani Group, GMR, L&T, and IntelliSmart. While ADANI, GMR and L&T have submitted bids for the tenders of PVNL, MVNL, DNVL and PuVNL, IntelliSmart has done so for PVNL and MVNL.

The last date for its submission of the tender document was October 17, 2022. The meters are to be installed in 27 months. The project is being undertaken under the Centre's ambitious Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). Apart from installing smart meters, the project is also for setting up meter data management, cloud computing, billing and communication systems for the state's four distribution companies.

Of the ~2.8 crore smart meters being planned, DVNL's tender for installing 79.16 lakh smart meters at an estimated cost of ₹4576.11 crore is the biggest. This was followed by PuVNL's tender for installing

77.50 lakh smart meters at an estimated cost of ₹7452.67 crore. This is followed by tenders of PVNL and MVNL for 66.84 lakh (₹5517.77 crore) 61.73 lakh (₹5454.86 crore) smart meters respectively.

Twenty-five crore meters to be replaced under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme or RDSS. The RDSS aims to enhance the operational efficiency and financial health of all government owned Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) by FY 2025-26.

Apart from other objectives, the scheme aims at lowering of AT&C losses to 12-15% by 2024-25 nationally and Lowering of the ACS-ARR gap to zero by 2024-25.

HUL Q2 net profit rises 22.2% to ₹2,670 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd on Friday reported a 22.19 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹2,670 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, mainly helped by volume growth.

The company had posted a net profit of ₹2,185 crore in the July-September quarter of the previous fiscal. Its total income increased 16.44 per cent during the quarter under review to ₹15,253 crore. It was ₹13,099 crore in the year-ago period, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) said in a regulatory filing.

The company delivered an "underlying volume growth of

4 per cent" during the July-September quarter.

"Growth was significantly ahead of the market with more than 75 per cent of the business winning value and volume market share," said HUL in its earning statement.

Its total expenses rose 18.12 per cent to ₹11,965 crore compared to ₹10,129 crore in the second quarter of the last fiscal.

HUL CEO and Managing Director Sanjiv Mehta said: "Building on our strong momentum, we have delivered yet another quarter of solid all-round performance."

In H1 2022-23, we have added an incremental turnover of more than ₹4,000 crore.

IRB Infrastructure Developers' Q2 consolidated net profit rises 102% at ₹85 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IRB Infrastructure Developers on Friday reported a 101.65 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to ₹85.30 crore for the second quarter ended September 2022.

The company had clocked a consolidated net profit of ₹42.30 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal, it said in a statement.

Total income during the quarter under review declined to ₹1,438 crore as against ₹1,504 crore in the year-ago period.

The company, in a statement, said its toll revenue across IRB and Pvt InvIT entities together was up by 53 per cent Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y) for first half of the current fiscal.

It said that toll collections have witnessed pre-Covid-19 levels across almost all BOT

(Build-Operate-Transfer) assets, with a meaningful pick-up in economic activity across the country.

"We witnessed robust growth in toll collections Y-o-Y, even as monsoons kept the construction segment soft during the quarter," Virendra D Mhaikar, chairman and managing director of the company, said.

"With construction on Ganga Expressway project getting into full execution mode, we are now confident of achieving construction turnover of approximately ₹4,500 crore for FY23," he added.

IRB Infra said the company will be a project manager for Ganga Expressway Group 1 project and will receive an aggregate ₹10,459 crore for EPC and O&M in construction period and concession period.



BUSINESS BRIEF

COMMERCE MIN CLOSES 14,560 PENDING E-FILES
New Delhi: The commerce ministry on Friday said it has closed 14,560 files out of 64,249 electronic files during October 2-20 as part of a campaign for disposal of pending matters. The second part of the campaign is underway from October 2 to 31. The main focus areas include effective disposal of public grievances, references from the Members of Parliament, parliament assurances, cleanliness drive, disposal of scrap and weeding out of files. The first phase was undertaken during September 15 to 30.

VOLVO STARTS TRIAL OF LNG-POWERED TRUCK
New Delhi: Volvo Trucks India on Friday said it has commenced commercial trials of a Liquefied Natural Gas powered truck in the country, marking its shift towards alternate fuels. Aimed at offering alternate fuel solutions for long-distance haulage applications, the commercial trial of the FM 420 4X2 Tractor was flagged off from Nagpur. "This LNG powered Volvo FM 420 4X2 solution will help our customers to reduce vehicle emissions and improve fuel efficiency levels in their operations even further," EVP and Business Head - Volvo Trucks - VE Commercial Vehicles B Dinakar said in a statement.

AROMATHERAPY INCENSE STICKS IN MARKET
New Delhi: Diwali comes with the aura of colourful diyas and fairy lights, vibrant rangolis, mothers' special sweets, and the happy vibes with family. Adding to the list is aromatherapy range of incense sticks and reverse dhooop cones infused with organic herbs with the brand 'Iksha' and 'Backflow Dhooop Cones' by Zed Black Agarbatti, from the house of Mysore Deep Perfumery House. The latest series is in line with company's focus on accelerating innovation, said Ankit Agrawal, director, Mysore Deep Perfumery House & Zed Black.

RIL Q2 net profit at ₹13,656 cr as windfall tax hits oil business

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd on Friday posted flat growth in net profit in the September quarter after a newly introduced windfall profit tax and lower refining margins dented earnings in the mainstay oil business. The oil-to-retail-to-telecom conglomerate's consolidated net profit at ₹13,656 crore in July-September was almost unchanged from ₹13,680 crore net earnings in the same period last year, according to a company statement.

Sequentially, net profit fell 24 per cent from ₹17,955 crore in April-June.

This is primarily because the firm's mainstay oil-to-chemicals (O2C) business

earnings were hit by a new tax that the government imposed on the export of diesel, petrol and ATF from July 1.

The government slapped a tax on the export of fuel as well as crude oil produced domestically to take away gain accruing from the spurt in global energy prices following the war in Ukraine.

The day was saved by a record rise in consumer-facing telecom and retail businesses as well as earnings from natural gas production.

But for the windfall profit tax, the net profit would have been 20 per cent higher.

The windfall profit tax cost the company ₹4,039 crore in the quarter, lowering pre-tax earnings from the O2C business by almost 6 per cent to ₹11,968 crore.

Govt extends deadline for filing September GST return till Oct 21

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has extended the deadline for filing GST returns for the month of September by a day to October 21, the CBIC said on Friday.

On Thursday, taxpayers faced a slow functioning of the GST portal, which was the last date for filing monthly GST returns for some taxpayers. Following that, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) had said that an extension of the due date was being considered.

"The GST Implementation Committee of GST Council has approved extension of the due date of filing GSTR-3B return for the month of September 2022, for the monthly filers, from 20th October, 2022 to 21st October 2022," the CBIC tweeted on Friday.

Monthly return and tax payment form GSTR-3B is filed in staggered manner between the 20th, 22nd, and 24th of each month by taxpayers in different states.

Jindal Stainless, Yantra India ink pact to manufacture advance defence products

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As part of its growth plans, stainless steel player Jindal Stainless Limited (JSL) has signed an agreement with state-owned Yantra India Ltd for the development and manufacturing of defence products.

In a statement, JSL said its defence vertical Jindal Defence & Aerospace (Jindal Defence And Aerospace) has signed an MoU with the state-owned Yantra India Ltd for engineering, development and manufacturing of defence products



with their respective capabilities.

The move is in line with the government's push for the

public-private partnership to serve Indian armed forces, the company said on Friday.

"Jindal Defence & Aerospace is proud to make India Atmanirbhar in the area of advanced materials by presenting nickel-based alloys, armour steel glass fibre, and carbon fibre composites for next-gen defence applications."

"We are entering into integrated next-generation security and defence solutions for the nation's armed and paramilitary forces," its chief CP Agrawal said.

Forex reserves fall USD 4.5 bln to \$ 528.37 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 4.50 billion to USD 528.37 billion for the week ended October 14, the RBI said on Friday.

The overall reserves had increased by USD 204 million to USD 532 billion in the previous reporting week, which was the first weekly increase in the kitty since August this year.

In October 2021, the country's forex kitty had

reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion.

The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments.

Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, saw a drop of USD 2.828 billion to USD 468.668 billion during the week to October 14, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement

released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the FCAs include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves, whose value had risen by USD 1.35 billion in the previous reporting week, saw a decline of USD 1.502 billion in the value to USD 37.453 billion, it said.

WI out of T20 WC as Ireland, Zim progress

AP ■ HOBART

Ireland stunned the West Indies to power into the T20 World Cup Super 12 on Friday and send the two-time champions crashing out, with Zimbabwe joining them in the next round after edging past Scotland.

Sri Lanka and the Netherlands had already progressed from the other preliminary group to join the big guns including defending champions Australia, who open their tournament against New Zealand on Saturday.

Disciplined bowling from the Irish restricted the West Indies to 146-5 in Hobart, with Gareth Delany taking a career-best 3-16 before they romped to the target with nine wickets and 15 balls to spare.

Opener Paul Stirling, at his seventh World Cup, ended on an unbeaten 66 while Andy Balbirnie made 37.

It snapped a 13-year drought of failing to make round two, having reached it once previously in 2009.

Zimbabwe are in round two for the first time on their sixth attempt after they beat Scotland by five wickets with skipper Craig Ervine hitting a half-century and Tendai Chatara taking 2-14.

They limited the Scots to 132-6 with tidy bowling before rattling through the run chase with nine balls to spare.

"It means everything. We had a disappointing loss last year at the same stage," said Ireland skipper Balbirnie, who shared in a blistering 73-run opening stand with Stirling.

"Losing the first game and then coming back and beating a two-time champion in a must-win game... just couldn't be prouder. Pretty emotional finish to the game."

SPECIAL

But it was a disaster for the West



Indies, who won the tournament in 2012 and 2016 but came to Australia with a new-look team after the likes of Chris Gayle, Dwayne Bravo and Kieron Pollard retired, and Andre Russell was overlooked.

"This is a learning experience for us. We have disappointed our fans and ourselves. It's definitely hurting," said West Indies skipper Nicholas Pooran

After the West Indies won the toss and batted, the Irish bowlers sent down

nine dot balls among their first 15.

In frustration, Kyle Mayers launched at a delivery from Barry McCarthy and was caught for one.

The dangerous Johnson Charles slammed 4-4-6 off Curtis Campher but his luck soon ran out, gone for 24.

Brandon King crunched four boundaries to steer the West Indies to 67-2 at halfway.

Evin Lewis (13), Pooran (13) and Rovman Powell (6) didn't last as King (62

not out) pushed the scoreboard forward.

In reply, Ireland got off to a cracking start with Stirling and Balbirnie blazing 54 off the first five overs.

Balbirnie fell to the spin of Akeal Hosein, but Stirling, in his 177th international, kept going and with Lorcan Tucker (45 not out) saw them home.

In the later game, Scotland battled first but lost Michael Jones in the first over.

Opener George Munsey gave them hope with his ninth T20 half-century, but



their 132-6 was always reachable.

Zimbabwe started with a four but then lost two wickets in eight balls.

After smacking the boundary, Regis Chakabva was trapped lbw by Brad Wheal and then Madhevere departed without scoring.

Sean Williams put on 35 with Ervine, but the stand was broken when Michael Leask came into the attack and he was caught by Wheal for seven.

Ervine kept his focus to notch a ninth

T20 half-century, happy to play second fiddle to Sikandar Raza (40 off 23) who swung the bat before he was caught behind.

When Ervine was out they needed 14 off the last three overs, with Chris Greaves and Davey accomplishing the feat. "I don't think anyone could explain what it means. We've had the whole country behind us," said Ervine. "The cricket we've played coming into the tournament has been special, so credit to the boys."

Rain may lead to curtailed India-Pak T20 WC match

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

The much awaited marquee clash between India and Pakistan may have an anti-climactic end as 'rain gods' threaten to play spoilsport during the Super 12 clash of the T20 World Cup on Sunday.

According to local Met department, there is 80 to 90 per cent chance of rainfall, volume of which could be between 1mm to 5 mm. There is also prediction of thunderstorm, which is, however, a lowly 13 per cent.

On Friday evening, there was sharp spell of shower in Melbourne and something like this on Sunday could spell doom for the cricket fans.

However, the locals, who have a fair idea about change of weather, are confident that even if the heavens open up, there could still be a curtailed match.

The MCG is expected to be full house with at least 85 to 90 per cent Indian fans and a no-match situation will simply



break their hearts.

It is not the first time that an India versus Pakistan T20 World Cup match has been threatened by rain.

In 2016, the two neighbouring countries played at the Eden Gardens and a sharp spell of evening showers and puddles of water in the outfield was a massive concern. However, the revamped drainage system at the Eden did the trick.

If such a situation arises, the Victoria's state cricket body is well equipped with enough resources to handle the situation.

Since the advertisement revenue generated for this game surpasses all other games, the broadcasters incur losses if an India-Pakistan match is not held. In such a scenario, Victoria state cricket body might have to refund full price of tickets as per terms and conditions.

Pakistan batter Masood 'normal' after blow to head

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Pakistan top-order batter Shan Masood, who was hit on the head during a practice session at the Melbourne Cricket Ground here ahead of their T20 World Cup opener against India on Sunday, is "normal" and his CT scan revealed superficial bruising.

The latest update from the PCB team in Australia is that Masood's neurological observations are normal.

"The CT scan revealed a superficial bruising in the area where he was struck, but he is currently asymptomatic. The batter will undergo a concussion re-test on Saturday," the PCB said in a statement on Friday.

In a freak incident, the left-hander suffered the blow on the right side of his head from a stray shot off the bat of Mohammad Nawaz while playing against a spinner.

The 33-year-old was wearing pads but not the helmet as



he was waiting for his turn to bat. Masood fell on the ground and looked in pain. He was soon attended by the team doctor and then rushed to the hospital.

It remains to be seen whether Masood will be fit for Pakistan's T20 World Cup opener. They have another left-handed batter Fakhar Zaman in the squad to replace him.

Masood, who made his T20I debut in their home series against England in September this year, has played all seven T20Is and slammed two half-centuries. But he struggled in the recent tri-series against New Zealand and Bangladesh.

Toss-up between Ashwin and Axar for second spinner's slot

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Axar Patel enjoyed an intense net session under watchful eyes of coach Rahul Dravid but his spot is still not certain in India's playing XI since Pakistan are likely to have three left-handers in their line-up in the much-awaited T20 World Cup contest, here on Sunday.

Indian team hasn't had a settled XI in the last one year, either due to workload management or because of injuries to players that affected the balance of the side.

Friday's practice session couldn't be a definitive indicator as to what will be the final playing eleven as most of the senior players opted to rest on the day.

But skipper Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Virat Kohli, Surya Kumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya are certainties and Dinesh Karthik on current form is ahead of Rishabh Pant.



Karthik, after his batting session, did keeping drills for a considerable period of time.

But to be fair to Pant, he is the only left-handed specialist batting option in top six and if both Karthik and Pant are

accommodated in the playing XI, then Rohit will be forced to play Pandya as the fifth bowling option, which could backfire on occasions.

Similarly, Axar is the most consistent spinner on view but Pakistan top order has south-paws Fakhar Zaman, Mohammed Nawaz and Khushdil Shah and playing a left-arm spinner against them may not be a good option.

Ravichandran Ashwin's experience can't be overlooked because of the variations he brings to the table.

Yuzvendra Chahal, as of now, looks to be the first choice spinner and on bigger Australian grounds with huge side boundaries, wrist spinners are a must.

The pace troika looks settled with Mohammed Shami hitting the straps alongside Arshdeep Singh and Bhuvneshwar Kumar as Harshal Patel on current form can't be selected.

Pro League winners to get direct berths in WC



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The winners of FIH Pro League from 2023-24 season in both men's and women's categories will directly qualify for 2026 World Cups and 2028 Olympic Games, said hockey world body's CEO Thierry Weil on Friday.

"From season 5 and season 6, the winners of the men's and women's Pro League will directly qualify for 2026 World Cup. The winners of seasons 7 and 8 will get direct entry into 2028 Olympics," International Hockey Federation (FIH) CEO Weil said in a virtual interaction.

The FIH CEO ruled out fears that direct qualifications given to Pro League winners will have an impact on continental

competitions.

"The direct berth to the continental events winners will stay as will the direct berth to the World Cup and Olympic Games host country. Two berths in each section will go to Pro League winners and the rest will be awarded through a tournament," said Weil. Besides, the FIH has also planned major changes in the Pro League as from the fourth edition -- 2022-23 season -- the world body will introduce relegation and promotion system.

The last-placed team at the end of the season in both men's and women's competitions will be relegated to the Nations Cup, while the winners of the Nations Cup will be promoted to the Pro League.

Selecting Green is a risk: Finch

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Defending champions Australia have taken a risk by picking all-rounder Cameron Green instead of a back-up keeper for their Twenty20 World Cup campaign, skipper Aaron Finch said on Friday.

Green on Thursday replaced injured reserve wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis in Australia's T20 squad.

"We've taken the risk and not gone with the extra keeper, which obviously had a degree of risk to it, but we feel as though Cam (Green) gives us a little bit better balance to the squad," Finch said in the pre-match press conference.

He, however, said that Green has been roped in as a cover and won't be playing the opening match against New Zealand on Saturday.

Asked about the reasons behind the decision, Finch said: "We went through some numbers, and I think it's 0.5 of a percent chance that something's happened in the past in T20 cricket to a keeper that's ruled him out on the day of the game.

"We feel as though, if something was to happen pre-game and it ruled him out for the tournament, like at training or something, then there would still be enough time. That's the reason.

"It's definitely a risk, no doubt about that, but it's probably one we're prepared to take more so than covering a fast bowler, a batter, and an all-rounder. We feel that's a really crucial skill set."



Finch also said in case Matthew Wade gets injured then David Warner is likely to don the keeping gloves.

"Probably Davey Warner, I would think. He did a little bit of practise yesterday. Myself, maybe I could do it. Maybe captaining and keeping when you haven't done it before is a little bit tougher," he said.

"Maybe Mitchell Starc can bowl a few up front, take the

gloves through the middle, and then bowl again at the end. It's a good question.

"Probably Davey, to be honest. And like I said, that's a risk that we're prepared to take at the moment."

An opening batter, Finch has struggled of late against left-arm pacers and he admitted it will be an interesting battle against Trent Boult on Saturday.

"Trent is an unbelievable bowler. He has been for 10 or 12 years now. So when you open the batting, you've got to get out to someone eventually. He probably has my number, no doubt.

"I still feel as though I've still got a really solid game plan. I think there's some technical things that I can do to a left-armer that can help that," he said.

"I think at times I've probably been a little bit more negative towards left-armed bowlers. You almost bat trying not to get out as opposed to being really proactive. So there's all that to consider and take into tomorrow."

Australia have a good record against New Zealand at home but Finch said past performances hardly have any significance.

"Their World Cup record over the last five or six World Cups has been unbelievable. They're a great side with a great mix of experience, youth as well. They're led unbelievably well. They've got world class players all throughout their 11 -- or throughout their 15," Finch said.

"You can never ever take any team lightly, and we're seeing how close all teams are in this competition, even through the qualifiers. The teams are so close, and the margins in T20 cricket are so fine that any person on their day can take the game away from the opposition.

"You just have to be really mindful of that and hope you're on the right side of it each time."



Moody backs 'big player' Shami in match vs Pakistan

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Mohammed Shami may be short on game time leading up to the T20 World Cup but former Australia allrounder Tom Moody feels he's a big player and his expertise would be crucial in India's high voltage opening match against Pakistan here on Sunday.

Shami, who was down with COVID-19, was a late inclusion to the squad after Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was ruled out for an indefinite period following the recurrence of his back stress.

The veteran pacer was pressed into action in final over of their warm-up match against Australia at the Gabba on October 17 as he grabbed 3 for 4 to hand India a six-run win.

"He (Shami) may be short with some volume in his bowling, but that one over he bowled against Australia would have gone a long way with regards to not so much the

physical side of things, but definitely the mental side of things," Moody said at Star Sports show 'Game Plan'.

Down with COVID-19, Shami could not feature in India's build-up home series against Australia and flew straight to Brisbane after being picked on October 14.

Shami had last played a T20I during the T20 World Cup in UAE-Oman in 2021, while his last international appearance was in an ODI in the England series in July this year.

The 57-year-old Aussie, however, was firm in backing Shami and said he would make a formidable pace trio with Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Arshdeep Singh.

"I'd be going with Shami. I'd just go with his experience. Obviously, Bhuv and Arshdeep are the first two. I just think that in big tournaments, you back big players. And he's a big player with a lot of experience."



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आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव



प्रधानमंत्री
आवास योजना-ग्रामीण
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin



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2024 तक सबको आवास

धनतेरस के शुभ अवसर पर

प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना-ग्रामीण

के अन्तर्गत

4 लाख 51 हजार लाभार्थियों का

गृह-प्रवेशम्



शिवराज सिंह चौहान, मुख्यमंत्री

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मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

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