





# PM should've appealed for peace in Manipur: CM

BJP MLAs objected to debate on Manipur, even though UP Assembly discussed it, says Pathak



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal speaks during a session of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, in New Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "remained silent" on the ethnic violence in Manipur, and asserted that the least he could have done is "issue an appeal for peace". Speaking in the Delhi Assembly, Kejriwal said Prime Minister Modi "remains silent" whenever a crisis hits the nation.

"The Prime Minister is like a father figure. He turned his back on the daughters of Manipur. You kept sitting in your room. The entire country is asking the reason for the PM's silence. It is not the first time that he is silent. Whenever there has been a crisis in the

last nine years, the Prime Minister has remained silent," Kejriwal alleged.

Talking about the recent protest by women wrestlers against former WFI chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the Chief Minister said the champion grapplers alleged sexual harassment by Singh, but Modi remained silent.

"When they won medals at the Olympics, Modi was the first one to click pictures with them. He had told them 'you are my daughter'. But when they were protesting, he remained silent. At least he could have said, 'I am there. I will get it inquired into and get people punished,'" said Kejriwal.

The women wrestlers had to go to the Supreme Court to get an FIR reg-

istered, he said. "In the case of Manipur, he could have at least issued an appeal for peace."

Earlier AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak began a short duration discussion over the violence in the northeastern State prompting a protest from the BJP MLAs who got up from their seats, and said issues related to Delhi should be debated in the House.

Lakhs of people from Manipur live in Delhi and it was "our right and duty to discuss the issue in the House", he said.

Pathak said it was unfortunate the BJP objected to a discussion over the Manipur issue in the Delhi Assembly even though the matter was debated by the Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

Led by Pathak, AAP legislators raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Pathak alleged women were facing atrocities in BJP-ruled Manipur. "Nothing could be more unfortunate that people were forced to escape from Manipur to Myanmar due to the violence in the State," he said.

Manipur was burning due to the policies of the BJP, he said, adding people in the State were unsafe. "While Manipur was burning, the Prime Minister was touring foreign countries," he alleged. Delhi Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai said everyone knows that Manipur has been burning for 100 days.

"In 1905, the British had instigated Hindus and Muslims against each other and divided Bengal. Similar things are happening in Manipur with Kukis and Meiteis being made to fight with each other," he said.

Deputy Speaker Rakhi Birla questioned the BJP legislators over their protest saying, "Do they feel that Manipur is not an issue to be discussed in the Assembly? The UP Assembly also discussed the Manipur issue."

## 5 BJP MLAs marshalled out

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Five BJP MLAs were marshalled out of Delhi Assembly during its proceedings on Thursday after they objected to a discussion on Manipur saying it was outside the jurisdiction of the Assembly, following which the party's other members staged a walk-out.

As BJP MLAs continued their protest, four of them — Abhay Verma, Jitender Mahajan, Ajay Mahawar and OP Sharma — were marshalled out of the House.

Later, Mohan Singh Bisht was also marshalled out, following which other BJP members including Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and Vijendra Gupta also walked out in protest. The BJP has eight legislators in the 70-member Assembly. The BJP MLAs later staged a protest outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's



BJP MLAs protest in Delhi Assembly.

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

office in the Assembly, alleging corruption in the AAP Government.

Wearing black T-shirts, caps and carrying placards, they raised slogans against Kejriwal. Their T-shirts were printed with a list of alleged scams in the Government which mentioned the excise policy, revamp of the Chief Minister's residence, installation of panic buttons in buses and classroom construction among oth-

## All is well, says AAP after Cong denied Lamba's statement

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Bidhuri hit out at the Delhi Government saying that the AAP Government does not want to talk about issues of Delhi.

"This is not the Lok Sabha. The Manipur issue was discussed in Manipur Assembly and Lok Sabha. In Delhi Assembly, there is no logic to discuss the issue as it has already been dealt with. BJP MLAs had issued a formal notice to discuss the corruption scandals worth billions of rupees within the Kejriwal Government. These scandals include the liquor scam, panic button scam, Shishamahal scam, DJB scam, electricity scam, DTC scam, classroom scam, hospital scam, hawala scam, and espionage scam. Instead of addressing these issues, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly decided to hold a discussion on Manipur," Bidhuri said.

A day after differences surfaced between INDIA bloc allies the AAP and the Congress over contesting the Lok Sabha polls in Delhi, the AAP on Thursday said the Congress has now clarified its stand and the "matter is over". Senior AAP leader and Delhi Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj said on Thursday the Congress has "denied its own statement".

The row had erupted on Wednesday following the remarks of Congress leader Alka Lamba that they (Congress leaders) have been directed by the party leadership to work hard for all seven seats ahead of the 2024 polls. "It's fine. The matter is over. The Congress has given a clarification and everything is clear now. The spokesperson cannot decide on seat sharing. All parties sit together with their calculations and then such things are decided. Spokespersons make statements," he said.

AAP Delhi State convener and Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai advised patience in the current circumstances. "The Congress party specified that statements of some of its leaders were individual remarks. I think, some patience is required at present and there will be a way forward by the next meeting (of the INDIA alliance) to be held in Mumbai," he said.

Congress leaders from Delhi on Wednesday held a meeting with the party's top leadership to review its preparedness for the Lok Sabha elections and discussed ways to strengthen the organisation.

After the meeting, Lamba had said, "No decision has been taken on whether to have an alliance, but we have been asked to prepare ourselves on all seven seats. We will go to the people after preparing ourselves properly in all seven seats."

## BJP, AAP spar over Petitions Committee report

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A war of words erupted between the AAP and BJP MLAs over the Petitions Committee Report on Thursday — the second day of the Delhi Assembly session.

Speaking in the Delhi Assembly, BJP MLA Vijender Gupta said the committee's recommendations were like "self-goals" made with an intention to render the administrative system "handicapped". He demanded that the Petitions Committee be discontinued in the Assembly. On the other hand, the AAP MLAs demanded an inquiry

against Gupta by the Privileges Committee over allegedly presenting distorted facts from the Petitions Committee's report.

Gupta voiced concerns over the committee's recommendation to initiate privilege proceedings against officials, including the Secretary of the Health Department and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the Finance Department. He pointed out the glaring absence of Opposition representation in the committee and highlighted the AAP MLAs' dominance, naming AAP MLAs Rajesh Gupta, Akhlesh Pati Tripathi, Dilip Kumar

Pandey, Jai Bhagwan, Kartar Singh, Tanwar, Kuldeep Kumar, Raj Kumar Dhillon, Somnath Bharti. Gupta vehemently criticised the committee's overreach, especially in issuing directives to the President of India. "Their audacity is both shocking and amusing," he remarked.

Gupta was cautioned by Deputy Speaker Rakhi Birla to not present distorted facts in front of the Assembly after the AAP leaders, including Health Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj, expressed objections. AAP MLA Rajesh Gupta said that the BJP legislator was reading an old report.

## Delhi FSL to use blockchain technology for tamper-proof evidence recording

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Forensic Science Laboratory's (FSL) system is being integrated with blockchain technology to ensure that samples submitted from the crime scene for analysis and reporting remain free of human or any other interface. With the introduction of the technology, the Delhi FSL has become the "first institution of its kind in the country" to use blockchain technology for transparent and tamper-

proof digital recording of evidence.

The integration was inaugurated by Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena on Thursday, Raj Niwas officials said. On the occasion, Saxena asked probationary IAS officers to use technology for speedy redressals for the good of citizens.

"The blockchain technology integrated with the e-forensic app of the Delhi FSL will ensure that evidence (material samples) submitted from the scene of crime to the FSL for analysis



and reporting, remain free of human interface or interference. Available only to authorised individuals in four separate blocks, representing four differ-

ent stages of analysis, the data thus generated will be free of any tampering," a Raj Niwas official said. Blockchain is a distributed database or ledger shared among a computer network's nodes.

The official said the storing of evidence on a blockchain will bring transparency, accountability, greater trust and greater security, as well as increased efficiency and speed. "Blockchain technology will also help automate the entire forensic workflow

starting from the police to the FSL, and the data entered by an Investigating Officer at the police station level to the FSL, without disclosing the details such as FIR, name of parties, etc, which will ensure confidentiality," the official said.

Ever since Saxena took over as the L-G in May last year, he has been insisting upon the integration of the e-forensic application of the DFSL with a blockchain, officials said. He has been underlining the importance of

transparent, tamper-free and speedy disposal of cases submitted to the FSL by the Delhi Police in the course of criminal investigation and subsequent judicial trials. Saxena has been personally monitoring the progress and implementation of this initiative, they said. The launch event held at the Raj Niwas, was attended by the Delhi Chief Secretary, the Commissioner of Police and several senior officers, including 14 probationary IAS officers of the AGMUT cadre.

## HEALTH AND FITNESS TAKE CENTRE STAGE

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Sector 17, Dwarka

by

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Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Delhi

Guest of Honour

### Shri Parvesh Sahib Singh

Hon'ble MP, West Delhi

August Presence

### Shri Subhasish Panda

Vice Chairman, DDA

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Aug, 2023 | Time : 11:30 am

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# UGC to grant foreign degree equivalence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

REGULATING BODY ISSUES NORMS, BANS ONLINE, DISTANCE LEARNING



Institutions) Regulations, 2023, has covered internationally relevant curricula, academic and research collaboration with foreign universities and credit recognition under twinning arrangements. "Qualification obtained from a foreign higher educational institution shall be recognised and granted

minimum duration of the programme in India and the foreign country; minimum credit requirements and evaluation processes." Credits in different categories of courses may be examined and similarity established (such as basic background courses, disciplinary core courses, disciplinary elective courses, cross-disciplinary courses, laboratory courses etc), so that the equivalence also reflects the similarity in 'flavour' of the offerings in India and abroad," it said. While the guidelines state that the minimum duration of the programme should be similar to that of a corresponding programme in India, in case the duration varies, the UGC will consider minimum credit requirements that should be the same in both institutions. "In considering this, the commission will examine and grant equivalence to the definition of credit (number of contact hours per week, number of self-study hours, the quantum of experiential learning, etc)

first, before the equivalence between the programmes is established. Up to 10 per cent variation of total normalised credit requirements may be given equivalence," the guidelines said. In order to facilitate the mobility of students in a seamless manner, the UGC will maintain a dedicated online portal to receive applications to grant equivalence to qualifications obtained from foreign educational institutions. This equivalence certificate will certify the "parity of a qualification" between a foreign qualification and the qualification awarded by an Indian Board or university at the same level. According to the UGC regulations, the equivalence certificate will also be accepted by the universities in India for the purposes of admission or employment. Currently, the evaluation division of the All India Universities (AIU) — an apex inter-university organisation — issues an "equivalence certificate" to students with foreign

qualifications to facilitate their admission in Indian Universities. With the guidelines coming into effect, the UGC will also assume the responsibility of granting equivalence to foreign degrees. Qualification obtained from off-shore campuses, according to the UGC, under dual degree or joint degree programmes will only be recognised if the academic programmes satisfy the accreditation requirements in the country where the offshore campus is located and in the country of origin. "Qualification obtained in the offshore campus of a foreign higher educational institution shall be recognised provided the campus is duly approved by the competent authorities in India as well as in the country of origin. The academic programmes of the campus must also satisfy the accreditation requirements in the country where the offshore campus is located, as well as any such requirements in the country of origin. "Qualification obtained

through a franchise arrangement shall not be considered for recognition and grant of equivalence," it said. For qualifications obtained at the school level from schools affiliated to foreign boards and offering a foreign system of education in foreign countries shall be recognised and granted equivalence provided that the school education has been pursued through regular mode only. The other conditions are: a minimum 12 years of regular schooling has been prescribed by the concerned foreign system of education; the school from which the applicant has pursued education should be affiliated with a board that has been approved and recognised in the concerned foreign country; the school leaving certificate of applicant should be issued by board that has been approved, recognised or accredited in foreign country concerned. The commission has sought suggestions from stakeholders on draft UGC guidelines till September 16.

## 'Mining can be harmful in border areas of Rajaji Park

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI



Uttrakhand. Based on the WII experts' reports to be submitted within the next two months, the central wildlife panel will decide the fate of the proposals submitted before it by the stone crushers for sand and minor minerals extraction in the region. In fact, the Standing Committee in its meeting held on March 25, last year had decided that the WII shall prepare a holistic plan for critical passage of wild animals for the landscape around 10 km from the Rajaji Tiger Reserve to identify zones for sand and boulder mining within two months. It was therefore decided to defer the proposal. However, the panel in a meeting on December 29 last year noted that the WII report had not mentioned any impact caused due to the activities happening in the area of Uttar Pradesh that bordered

## US applauds India's efforts to meet food crisis in world

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Commending India's progress over the years, a top US diplomat has said India has come a long way from receiving US help to meet its food security needs to now becoming an exporter. She also said the country is extending insights from its remarkable development progress to countries well beyond its borders. Underlining these developments in her address to the US Indo-Pacific Command Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) Conference in Fiji late Wednesday, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Samantha Power said investments in one country can often yield benefits in other nations. She applauded India's efforts to help other countries. "Investments we make in one country can often yield benefits in others. Take food security. In India, starting in the 1960s, we worked with scientists and local farmers to develop and distribute high-yield, resilient seeds. "Over the next two decades, those seeds

helped to increase rice production in India by 50 per cent and wheat production by 230 per cent, ending a cycle of recurring famine and helping kick off a Green Revolution that boosted agricultural yields in other parts of the world," she said. India has come a long way from receiving help from the US to meet its food security needs to now exporting it to others, she said. "Now, India is expanding efforts to extend insights from its remarkable development progress to countries well beyond its borders," Power said. India, the world's biggest rice exporter, accounted for nearly 40 per cent of global rice trade in 2022, exporting 22 million tonnes worth USD 9.66 billion to 140 countries. The Indian government on July 20 banned the export of non-basmati white rice to boost domestic supply and keep retail prices under check during the upcoming festive season. This type of rice constitutes about 25 per cent of total rice exported from the country. Power also said the US has deepened its commitment to

security in the strategic Indo-Pacific and is expanding its investments. The Indo-Pacific is a biogeographic region, comprising the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea. The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military manoeuvring in the region, vital to global trade. China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. The US is investing in building disaster warning capabilities and training more first responders throughout the Indo-Pacific region, Power said. She said the first responders in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, after receiving USAID training, stepped up to support nations in need, for example helping Turkey respond to the devastating earthquake.

## US Senator meets Tushar Gandhi, a group from Manipur

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Underlining his commitment to pluralism, visiting US Congressman Ro Khanna said on Thursday he stands strongly for his values. He made these remarks after meeting with Mahatma Gandhi's great grandson Tushar Gandhi, a group from Manipur and from violence-hit Haryana besides defence analyst Abhijeet Iyer-Mitra. Khanna led a bipartisan US Congressional delegation which met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar here on Wednesday. The delegation also attended Prime Minister Modi's address to the nation on the occasion of Independence Day from the ramparts of Red Fort on Tuesday. "I am happy that elected members of the US Congress are present here today on the occasion of our celebration," Modi said in his Independence Day address. "Glad to receive a Congressional delegation from the US, including co-chairs of India Caucus in the

House of Representatives, Rep. Ro Khanna and Rep Michael Waltz," Modi wrote on X after his meeting with the Congressional delegation. Modi said strong bipartisan support from the US Congress was instrumental in further elevating India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. Defending his interactions with a cross-section of people in India, Democrat Congressman Khanna said he stands for pluralism and the human rights of the minority, including Muslims. He said this after meeting Mitra and Indian American Muslim Council reportedly criticising him for interacting with him. The Council said Iyer-Mitra promotes hate and labels Muslim-American politicians like Ilhan Omar as 'terrorists'. "I unequivocally stand for pluralism and the human rights of minority populations, including Muslims, whether in India or America. My positions are well known. And I firmly stand by my values no matter who I meet with and am proud to convey them," he said.

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## Coast guard rescues Chinese national

New Delhi: The Indian Coast Guard has successfully evacuated a Chinese national, who suffered a cardiac arrest mid sea in his boat off Mumbai, on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

Giving details here, Coast Guard officials said the Chinese national identified as Yin Weiyang was airlifted from the vessel which was en route from China to the United Arab Emirates and provided necessary telemedicine advice. "Considering best feasible options for speedy evacuation and subsequent medical management, the patient was airlifted by an Advanced Light Helicopter MK-III, and was administered with first aid. "The Indian Coast Guard has successfully conducted medical evacuation of a Chinese national from a Panama flagged research vessel, MV Dong Fang Kan Tan No 2, around 200 km in Arabian sea off Mumbai on the intervening night of August 16-17," the Coast Guard said. The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Mumbai received information that one of the crew, named Yin Weiyang, onboard the research vessel suffered a cardiac attack and required urgent medical attention. The communication was established immediately with the vessel which was en route from China to the United Arab Emirates and provided necessary telemedicine advice. "Considering best feasible options for speedy evacuation and subsequent medical management, the patient was airlifted by an Advanced Light Helicopter MK-III, and was administered with first aid.

## Made-in-India software can avert attack in 5G networks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new indigenous software technology solution that can proactively detect and prevent zero-day vulnerabilities in the 5G networks, thereby reducing the network downtime has been developed by the software experts from IIT-M Pravatkar Technologies Foundation at IIT Madras, a Technology Innovation Hub for Sensors, Networking, Actuators and Control Systems (SNACS), supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DST). This can help smoothen countrywide communication as 5G networks become its life-

line in the near future, said a statement from the DST under the Union Science and Technology Ministry. Around ninety percent of the 5G technology is implemented into the software by integrating several latest technologies (NFV, SDN, control plane/user plane segregation) which enable testing the technology easily. But attack surface area is increased manifold in this process and is impossible to manage manually. Automating the whole testing process and continuous monitoring is the only sustainable solution, said the statement. Currently majority of the run time zero-day vulnerabilities are identified post attack,

thereby creating damage to the brand as well as increasing the cost of recovery. This technology solution can automatically identify zero-day vulnerabilities in the network in advance by using techniques such as fuzzing and test oracles. Since it can help avoid the attacks in advance, it protects organisations against loss and saving the credibility of the brands.

## NIA registers case against extradited gold smuggler

New Delhi: The CBI coordinated with the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to bring back an alleged gold smuggler, who was facing an Interpol red notice, from Saudi Arabia.

In a statement, the agency said its Global Operations Centre, through Interpol channels, has facilitated the return of Mohabbat Ali, a Red Notice Subject, in coordination with the National Investigation Agency and Interpol National Central Bureau-Riyadh. "He was brought to India from Saudi Arabia on 17.08.2023. The said Red Notice Subject was wanted by the NIA," the CBI said. The Interpol red notice was issued on September 13, 2021 based on a request by the NIA. "A case for conspiring for illegal smuggling of gold bars from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia into India was registered against Ali by the NIA," it added. PNS

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
Covid-19 may be on the wane but it continue to evince interest among the scientists who have now found that muscular fatigue in long Covid patients has been linked to depletion of ACE2 receptors, which act as doorways to induce fatigue and diminished mobility, in the absence of the Covid-causing virus. "Our research clearly shows that depletion of ACE2 is central to the neuromuscular complications experienced by a significant percentage of Covid-19 patients," said Ruben Cauchi, corresponding author of the study published against the human itself), with the immune system attacking the body as it does in Multiple Sclerosis," said Paul Herrera, a study author. Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic progressive nervous disorder in which the immune system attacks the layer protecting nerves and causes communication problems between the brain and the rest of the body. They said that various pathways are thought to work together in bringing down ACE2 levels or dampen its function in humans following Covid infection. Even as long Covid is increasingly becoming a global burden affecting everyday functioning, its cause remains elusive.

## 'Depletion of ACE2 is central to neuromuscular complications'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Shedding light on the lasting impact of Covid-19, the research paved the way for therapeutic approaches to treat individuals not completely recovered from the infection, it said. Upon analysing the fruit flies with reduced levels of ACE2 receptors, several key molecules required by nerves to send messages to muscles were found to have been compromised, the scientists observed. This, they said, resulted in a breakdown in communication between nerves and muscles. "In addition to being hijacked by the virus, the ACE2 receptor on the cell's surface can also be targeted by autoantibodies (antibody acting



University of Malta found that curtailing ACE2 receptor levels in fruit flies was enough to induce fatigue and diminished mobility, in the absence of the Covid-causing virus. "Our research clearly shows that depletion of ACE2 is central to the neuromuscular complications experienced by a significant percentage of Covid-19 patients," said Ruben Cauchi, corresponding author of the study published





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Take charge

### India has a pivotal role in shaping the future of humanity through BRICS

As the BRICS summit in South Africa approaches, the world's attention turns to this gathering of leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This annual event, being organised from August 22 to 24, holds immense significance as it aims to transform the loose coalition of nations, accounting for a substantial quarter of the global economy, into a formidable geopolitical force capable of challenging the dominance of western powers in global affairs. Amid discussions ranging from economic cooperation to multilateral influence, India's pivotal role within BRICS cannot be understated. While Russian President Vladimir Putin would be absent due to the ongoing Ukraine war, leaders such as China's Xi Jinping, Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are likely to be in attendance. As the host nation, South Africa sets the stage for a summit with a theme that resonates deeply: "BRICS and Africa." This thematic choice underscores the alliance's aspirations to extend

its reach, build ties and engage in collaborative efforts with an African continent that is increasingly becoming a theater of global power competition.

Of all the BRICS nations, India's significance in this endeavour shines brightly. Its economic prowess, strategic location and diplomatic finesse position it as a linchpin in the alliance's quest for a more multipolar world order. The unity within BRICS might stem from shared scepticism about a global order that often caters to the interests of western powers. The call for expansion is poised to dominate the discussions. Around 40 nations have expressed their interest in joining BRICS, a fact emphasised by South Africa. China, in



its pursuit to bolster its global influence, is advocating for swift enlargement, while Brazil harbours concerns that expansion could dilute the group's effectiveness. India's stance, perhaps, will play a critical role in mediating this debate. As a strong advocate for multipolarity and inclusive international systems, India's voice can contribute to finding a balanced approach to expansion, ensuring the alliance's cohesion while welcoming like-minded partners. The central challenge facing BRICS is the transformation of lofty ideals into practical action. The bloc's New Development Bank (NDB) seeks to reshape global finance, providing an alternative to traditional institutions. Yet, its progress has been modest, with sanctions on Russia hampering its operations. India, with its vast financial expertise and developmental experience, could play a pivotal role in driving the NDB's ambitions forward. Climate change also demands the alliance's attention. Here, India's involvement is crucial, given its sizeable population and growing carbon footprint. The BRICS nations collectively contribute a significant share of greenhouse gas emissions, and India's proactive engagement in finding sustainable solutions could catalyse meaningful progress. The summit is an opportunity for India to showcase its global vision, collaborative spirit and dedication to crafting a more equitable world order.

### PICTALK



Bihar Pradeshik Agarwal Mahila Sammelan during celebrations of the upcoming Janmashtami festival, in Patna

## Who will be the face of the Opposition in 2024?

### The gloves are off for the battle of 2024. While NDA has the charisma of Narendra Modi to bank upon, the Opposition is still indecisive

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort on the 77th Independence Day has set the tone for the election season that commences later this year and culminates with the Lok Sabha polls in April-May 2024. It is going to be a tough fight between the ruling BJP and the Congress-led Opposition parties as the country is gearing up for the mother of all battles. The Prime minister fired the first salvo by declaring that he would hoist the national tricolour from the Red Fort on 15th August 2024.



There are no leaders who have an all-India outlook other than Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Vadra. They are household names across the country and are capable of getting elected from States of their choice. No other leaders enjoy this kind of camaraderie with people.

Mamta Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav, Lalu Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Stalin may be influential in their home turfs. They should accept the reality that they do not enjoy the kind of love and affection enjoyed by the Gandhi household. The Opposition should not forget the spirit of 2004. When the chips were down and all were forecasting that the NDA would score an impressive win in the 2004

Lok Sabha polls, Sonia Gandhi stepped in and that became the game changer in national politics. Gandhi went the extra mile and shook hands with minions like Sitaram Yechury, D Raja, A B Bardhan and even M Karunanidhi. It produced unbelievable results. The UPA led by Sonia Gandhi swept the election and Manmohan Singh was sworn in as Prime Minister. The same story was repeated in 2009.

The Opposition should accept the ground reality and give elbow space to Sonia Gandhi because she is the lone person in their camp who is capable of producing a pleasant surprise like the magician pulling out "live" rabbits from an empty hat. Rahul Gandhi, with his Bharat Jodo walkathon, has set the tone for the Congress to stage a comeback. For those who scoff at the idea of Rahul Gandhi as Prime Minister should bear in mind that this is the country that elevated H D Deve Gowda as Prime Minister. Rahul Gandhi is held in high esteem by people in Tamil Nadu, Kerala

and Karnataka. The Congress victory in Karnataka is mainly due to the charisma of Rahul Gandhi who has a "cool customer" aura around him. Since the defeat of the Congress in 2014, Rahul Gandhi has been touring the length and breadth of the country and has established himself as a potential Prime Ministerial candidate. Are there any leaders in Congress and the Opposition who can match him in style and substance? If the Opposition is serious about secularism, pluralism, tolerance and diversity, it should accept Rahul Gandhi as the Prime Ministerial candidate so that the nation can watch a battle royale in the coming months. For that to happen, Sonia Gandhi should take the initiative and revive and renew old friendships. There is no more time to lose discussing the nitty-gritty of ground-level politics. Secularism should be the catchword for 2024.

(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer. Views expressed are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

### PEACE IN MANIPUR

Sir — The reality and the fact of the matter is that there cannot be peace in Manipur until the 6,000 sophisticated arms and 6 lakh rounds of ammunition that were looted from the security forces are recovered. These weapons will be used against the common people of the state, which has been witnessing violence since May 3. So, how can there be peace and normalcy when there is no talk of reconciliation between the two sides? Both Meiteis and Kukis are unhappy with the performance of Chief Minister N Biren Singh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured peace while addressing the nation from the Red Fort, as there can be no peace without reconciliation and rehabilitation of the 60,000 people still living in relief camps, and until the 6,000 weapons are recovered. With this, the topmost priority of the Government is to recover the weapons to end ethnic violence and take very serious initiatives to talk to both communities.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### UNCLE NEPHEW MEET

Sir — The now-exposed Saturday's secret meeting between NCP chief Sharad Pawar and his disgruntled nephew, Deputy CM of Maharashtra, Ajit Pawar, has become the talk of the town in national political circles these days. Even as clarifications from both sides seem inadequate to dissipate fears cropping up in the ruling MVA and the newly formed INDIA camps, as these could take a toll on either of them. Irked Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut even questioned the locus standi of the workers from both the Pawar camps fighting over ideology. Moreover, Maharashtra State Congress President Nana Patole and Sena (UBT) Chief Udhav Thackeray also discussed the confusion stemming from the meeting in question at Matoshree on Sunday.

Equating the scenario with Mahabharat, Mr. Raut also said, "We cannot care about those who are in opposition, be it our family or relatives. This is a fight for Maharashtra and the country's exist-

# Will there be a Dexit on the lines of Brexit?

### Will Germany pull out of the EU as the UK did? Going by the latest developments, this may not be a figment of imagination



PRAFULL GORADIA

There has been a news item in an esteemed journal recently, stating that the Alternative für Deutschland (AFD or Alternative for Germany), a right-wing German political party gaining prominence, has declared that the European Union is a failed project. The AFD has castigated the EU as a failure in all areas of governance like imagination policy, climate change and security. The party is both right and wrong. They are right about the EU's failure, but incorrect about the reasons for it. One recalls that Britain joined the EU but kept the pound sterling from being amalgamated into the Euro. The then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had doubts about the workability of the European Union from the beginning. She was no ideologue, but had immense common sense of a successful politician, and quoted many examples of successful and unsuccessful national experiments. The successful nations are mostly those whose citizens' souls throb as one.

The European Union too has souls that throb, but not in unison; rather in more than 25 ways. The reasons quoted by the AFD, namely immigration, climate change and security, are important, but curable. Germany has been a comparatively new country even before it entered into the EU. There were twenty-odd principalities until the Chancellor of Prussia, Otto von Bismarck, finally united them as late as 1870. Bismarck put the final seal of unification while arresting Emperor Napoleon III of France on the battlefield of Sedan. Though France and Germany became the first two promoters and today's leaders of the European Union, their souls don't throb in unison.

While on a visit to Greece, a local taxi driver predicted dark days when he told me that Germany's assets lay in technology, while those of Greece are in history. He said the Greeks live by inviting tourists while the Germans flourish by exporting machinery. He asked me how could these two coexist in the same house.

A look into history would show that the continent of Europe



was ambling along medieval potentials. Much of the continent had two seasons, summer for work and winter for hibernation. Mediterranean countries like Spain and Italy are gifted with longer summers and shorter winters, and experienced the Renaissance with the advent of the Reformation, i.e., the split between the state and the Church in the 17th century; religion began to move to the back seat. Less money had to be remitted to the Vatican and more wealth stayed at home in various parts of Europe.

The vacuum religion left behind began being filled by nationalism. Hitherto, the hearts of the people would beat for their monarch. With the advent of nationalism, more and more people became conscious of nationality, whereby their hearts within a nation began to beat in unison.

The invention of the steam engine came next, heralding the Industrial Revolution. Nationalism took the high seat of an ideology, which in turn, drove the Europeans into a race for prosperity.

Communism made every attempt to disrupt the flowering of nationalism but did not succeed. No ideology has come on the European horizon since and hence the reluctance of the Europeans to embrace the

THE UNFORTUNATE EXPLOITS OF ADOLF HITLER, ESPECIALLY HIS ANTI-SEMITISM, DROVE THE GERMANS INTO A SHELL OF EMBARRASSMENT AND GUILT

European Union with any ardour. When the push and urge of nationalism could not be satisfied in Europe, it overflowed into imperialism, with the discovery of South America and Asia.

Prussia, whose capital was Berlin, was the largest of the German-speaking principalities. Bismarck, the Chancellor in the latter part of the 19th century, enlisted by diplomacy or the force of arms the various Germanic principalities into the fuller Deutschland. The Chancellor, however, did not consider it wise to include Austria in Deutschland. Incidentally, Sudetenland, one of the constituents of later Czechoslovakia, was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the successor to the Holy Roman Empire. This was the replacement of the Roman Empire based in Rome, which by then became unable to keep off the barbarians of the north like the Vandals, Visigoths and Goths.

The holy origins of Austria kept Bismarck away from incorporating its empire. The unfortunate exploits of Adolf Hitler, especially his anti-Semitism, drove the Germans into a shell of embarrassment and guilt. History moulded Germany into a continental entity. The European Union was a peaceful, friendly substi-

tute for the domination of Europe. Nationalism provides a thrilling urge that the EU cannot satisfy. The proud sentiment personified by the German national anthem "Deutschland Über Alles" (Germany above all) is a distant pole from what the EU can provide. Germany's Angela Merkel represented the cooperative spirit, which she probably imbibed under the communist East German regime, under which she grew up.

A medicine that may satisfy even a hero when prostrate with illness or defeat, cannot be food for his life. Once Merkel had stepped down from power, Germans began to feel deprived and hungry. They would like to unshackle themselves from the cooperative framework they had brought on themselves. More so, when the waves of Syrian refugees kept arriving and being welcomed by Merkel. The Christians and Muslims are both Abrahamic religions of the Book. But when it comes to co-existing in the same country, the Protestant stallion cannot live with the pony beholder to Allah the Merciful.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Bindeshwari Pathak is no more



It is very sad that Bindeshwar Pathak, the founder of Sulabh International and popularly known as the 'Toilet Man of India', passed away on the day when the nation was celebrating its 77th Independence Day. Mr. Pathak, who was pivotal to the advent of the Swachh

Bharat Mission, laid the foundation for Sulabh International, which would go on to become one of the most influential social organizations in the world. The most groundbreaking initiative under Sulabh's banner was the introduction of 'Sulabh Shauchalaya' (Sulabh Toilets) that were technologically friendly, socio-culturally acceptable, and economically affordable. These toilets not only provided a hygienic alternative to the then-prevalent unsanitary practices but also played a pivotal role in putting an end to the demeaning practice of manual scavenging. For his pioneering work, Mr. Pathak was conferred the Padma Bhushan award.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

tence. Hence, any move creating confusion and suspicion in the minds of people should be averted, and further, it is not expected from Bhisma Pitamaha, at least—apparently referring to veteran Sharad Pawar. Additionally, Mr. Raut remembered his good relations with CM Eknath Shinde and Raj Thackeray alike but, in the same breath, urged that there should be no confusion in the minds of the workers.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

### PM MODI'S SPEECH

Sir — Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation from the Red Fort on the country's 77th Independence Day enumerated his government's accomplishments and outlined future aspirations. This was the Prime Minister's final speech from the Red Fort during his current tenure. Who will deliver the next address will be decided by the people of the country in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. However, PM Modi's expertise was evident in that he did not allow the shadow of uncertainty to fall anywhere in his entire address. Significantly, the general elections are scheduled for 2024, and perhaps keeping this in mind, he assured to share the country's achievements from the Red Fort next

year as well. Counting corruption, nepotism, and appeasement as the 'three evils' can also be seen as a preparation to face political challenges.

The Prime Minister unveiled numerous new programs and underscored the benefits of well-implemented old schemes in a nearly 90-minute address. In the last few years, the level of continuous efforts made for a positive image of India at the global level is now well known. His unveiling of the Vishwakarma Yojana, which provides financial support to the urban poor to build houses and trains women to make drones, drew a lot of attention. In reference to Manipur, the Prime Minister stated that while the incidents occurred in a state in the Northeast, their impact was felt throughout the country. He promised that the central and state Govts are fully committed to restoring normalcy in the region.

The Prime Minister exhorted the people to prepare for 2047, when the country will celebrate 100 years of independence, in his speech at the Red Fort. Until then, he asked for a guarantee to help India become a developed country.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### TRYING TO BECOME BIG? GOOD LUCK

We are all small and will remain so. Only God is big and will eternally be so



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Most of us wish and actively try to become big. We want to get attention as someone special. What about all the competitions? The idea is to be known as someone superior, not ordinary. There is nothing wrong with having such a feeling. How else does someone motivate themselves to try to excel, become better, etc? Do we succeed in becoming big? Let us take some examples. There is a sports person, who lives a very disciplined life and succeeds in winning many competitions and ultimately is ranked number one in the world. What next? He or she maintains the status for some time and then begins to lose the superiority because age catches up and someone younger beats him or her. Did he or she become big? Yes, for a brief period but not permanently. Another example is of a film star. She is glamorous. Many of her films have become hits. But over some time, she does not seem so great, some others have appeared on the scene, who are younger and prettier. So, the bigness was temporary.

This is the reality of life. We are all small without any exceptions and will remain so eternally. Only God is big and will eternally be so. Karmaphalas control us, which we have accumulated in our past. We are always doing karmas with our bodies, minds and words. These generate karmaphalas. We carry them till they come to fruition either as rewards or punishments. They are of two kinds: material and spiritual. The material kinds are under the jurisdiction of the divine authority, which works under the superintendence of God. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 9.10) God oversees the spiritual kinds, which are acts done about God such as praying and meditating. Spiritual acts put us in a higher category and bring 'saubhagya' (good fortune). Overall, God is the final arbiter of our lives; He controls everything.



But we remain in denial. We want to become big and control things, and pay a heavy price for it. If we become big in our eyes, others must become smaller. That is what we would like to think. What do others feel about such bigness? Bigness in the material sense evokes mixed reactions. Mostly, it is envy, which distances us from others. Then, we want to become enjoyers rather than serve others, which is what we should be doing to gain the favour of others, especially God. What does God expect from us? That we will become mediums of God for bringing good karmaphalas to other souls. Unless we do so, surely, we will distance ourselves from God. And if we try to exploit others under the false feeling of bigness/greatness, we bring punishment to ourselves. Let us examine whether we can become big. How about bad karmaphalas appearing in our lives and hurting us? If this wasn't bad enough death comes and takes us away and all our bigness/greatness is left behind. We are relocated as determined by the divine authority. Even during our lives, there is no peace, no 'sukha' and no sense of security. So, what should we ideally do? The answer is to become a 'sevaka', i.e. one who serves others. Why? Because this earth planet has been fashioned this way. We are supposed to serve others and they are supposed to do likewise. A few examples will clarify. We go and see a doctor. He examines us and writes a prescription. You may not realize that he is serving you and we pay him for his services. Then, comes the next step of becoming spiritually inclined, which may inspire us to become social workers. That is commended very highly in the Geeta. (6.40) Some persons make good progress and take shelter from God and use all their resources in the service of mankind like Adi Shankaracharya. That is how they become big 'sevaks', yes big. This feeling of bigness is perfect because it is based on the reality of the creation. Such persons please everyone, most importantly, God - the only real big, it counts the most; we get all kinds of 'saubhagya.' Trying to become big is fine if done properly. Otherwise, all materially big persons are made to look small, as has been seen in the recent past.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher)

# Disaster resilience must for growth of tourism



V V SUNDAR

The tourism sector is a powerhouse but it is fragile and must be protected against the vagaries of weather for its sustained growth



For the tourism industry in Europe, the last few weeks have been termed the "summer of hell", because of the extreme heat, catastrophic storms, wildfires, and the numerous tourists who died from heat stroke and other climatic disasters across the continent. This is a major setback for the travel and tourism industry. Even while the memories of the pandemic haven't completely faded, it is debating how to handle the new climate-related set of challenges. Natural disasters are becoming more severe. The tourism industry is highly susceptible, vulnerable, and sensitive to climatic variables.

Similarly, during the same period, India witnessed its share of natural calamities. Half the country appeared inundated with water, cutting off vast areas of land, leaving tourists stranded and isolating populations from the rest of the country. The local economies came to a halt, resulting in severe damages, including lost properties, lives, livelihoods, and the destruction of precious civic and tourism infrastructure painstakingly built over the decades.

The massive loss caused by landslides and intense flooding in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and elsewhere serves to highlight a point. Simply building additional hotels, roads, airports, and infrastructure for tourism is insufficient. The tourism industry must examine its ecological footprint on a local level and keep disaster resilience at the core of its planning and execution and operation processes. To ensure that the valuable resources invested in construction and growth do not evaporate and dissolve before our eyes in just a few hours of flash flooding, as we have unfortunately witnessed this destruction recently.

Therefore, limiting disruptions is vital, as is avoiding economic losses and accelerated recovery. The tourism industry requires a roadmap on how to handle climate-related natural disasters and shield itself from their adverse impacts through



ON A LIGHTER NOTE, YOU KNOW YOU'RE TRULY INDIAN WHEN YOU LISTEN TO THE WEATHERMAN'S PREDICTION AND CONFIDENTLY PLACE YOUR BETS ON THE COMPLETELY OPPOSITE OUTCOME

(The writer is a media and communications consultant based in New Delhi with experience in diverse sectors including aviation and tourism)

robust, long-term planning. This calls for immediate attention.

By investing in integrated and comprehensive planning, early warning systems and building disaster resilient infrastructure and through retrofitting and improvements, we can enhance our ability to effectively respond to and recover from these events in the future. The country requires comprehensive vulnerability mapping and climate impact projections for the tourism sector over the next 5-10 years. This involves gathering data on changing weather patterns, existing infrastructure, population density, environment, socio-economic factors, tourism patterns etc. This data can help evaluate how susceptible different tourist areas are to changing climate patterns and consequent natural hazards. It can guide strategies for reducing and managing disaster risks.

On a lighter note, you know you're truly Indian when you listen to the weatherman's prediction and confidently place your bets on the complete opposite outcome - it's our version of weather roulette! The era of "revenge travel" seems to have turned us all into daredevils, willing to put life, limbs, and common sense on the line just to get to that tourist hotspot. It's like we're on a mission to prove that we can survive both the wild weather and outwit the weather extremes. This is what we repeatedly see when serpentine lines of cars blockade the state and national highways just to reach the hilly mountainous hotspots up north over the weekend and extend long holidays with complete irreverence to the climate and weather conditions. This madness must stop.

Incorporating reliable weather

updates/warnings via mobile notifications should become part of our national routine. This shift would empower the common citizen to make informed decisions, act responsibly, ensure personal safety and mitigate urban chaos caused by weather surprises. This will foster resilience and planning skills within the population. This practice would not only keep climate change discussions alive in daily life, reaching beyond experts and activists' circles but also build trust and ease among tourists who receive valuable forecasts/warnings for instance via their mobiles through the telecom operators for better preparedness.

Remarkably, the tourism industry's entire value chain, encompassing airlines, hotels, and transportation, hinges on weather conditions and seasonality. Yet, despite this dependency, many overlook integrating the evolving scenarios and changing weather insights into their day-to-day operations and they carry on with traditional practices and business as usual while operating their trade. The tourism industry will need to wise up to better plan, prepare and adapt their business to newer disruptions and seasonal patterns, especially in vulnerable regions and geographies.

Climate disasters that we are witnessing are set to overhaul tourist behaviours and demographics in the coming days. Many may sidestep the peak seasons, especially young and old people, prioritizing their health and safety, factoring in weather and climate considerations. This trend will amplify in upcoming years, leading tourists to steer clear of certain places during peak seasons. Consequently, the industry faces the formidable chal-

lenge of adapting to climate and disaster patterns. Adjustments in timing and destination choices are on the horizon.

A drizzle and a sprinkle are enough to declare an apocalypse in our major towns and cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bangalore. The situation is so dire that these metro cities, which host gateway airports to the country for tourists, can't even pass the basic stress test for urban infrastructure. It would be unimaginable if climate change-related events in the future led to these cities going belly up. The tourism sector has a lot riding on these cities and therefore de-risking and building resilience to them in a systematic manner should be a priority.

We haven't even touched upon the aftereffects of natural disasters on heritage and monuments and safeguarding them as they stand exposed to these changes. The tourism sector needs to brace itself up to address these newer preservation and conservation challenges which will fundamentally test and reshape our planning principles and protocols.

India's travel and tourism sector are a powerhouse. It contributes an estimated US\$ 178 billion to the country's GDP, making it the third largest foreign exchange earner. This sector generates millions of jobs and is essential to India's economic growth. However, this growth is fragile and can be easily disrupted by widespread natural disasters with cascading effects and long recovery periods. The government and industry need to invest in disaster resilience measures to protect this vital sector and ensure its long-term sustainability.

# Launch a new freedom movement for gender justice!

We need a nationwide movement to celebrate girl power and ensure that they have access to education, livelihood, and property

As long as I have life, as long as blood flows through this arm of mine, I shall not leave the cause of freedom." - Sarojini Naidu. The 77th year of our independence is another occasion to remember and celebrate the vital contributions of women in our freedom struggle. Women played an instrumental role in the freedom struggle, fighting with spirit and courage while facing severe torture, exploitation and hardships. Women took to the streets, led processions and held demonstrations in their pursuit of the common cause - an independent India free from colonisation. Many well-known names come to mind in the resistance to British colonial rule, including



SHALINI PERUMAL

(The writer is Communications Officer at ActionAid Association)

Bhima Bai Holkar, Rani Lakshimbai of Jhansi, Rani Channamma of Kittur, Rani Begam Hazrat Mahal of Avadh, Anasuyaben Sarabahi, Aruna Asaf Ali, Avantikabai Gokhale, Begum Hasrat Mohani, Durgabai Deshmukh, Faizi sisters, Kamla Nehru, Kasturba Gandhi and many others. Along with these names, let us also not forget the millions of courageous unsung 'sheroes' that are not as well-known or remain unknown, whose brave and dauntless stories of contribution to the Indian liberation movement remain largely untold.

The principles of gender equality and justice enshrined in the Indian Constitution reflect the aspirations of these women, and

all democratic women and men. While we celebrate our freedom fighters, it is also important to note the significance role of civil society in advancing gender justice. Over the years, much has been achieved in securing and advancing women's rights through the initiatives of civil society, non-profit organizations and government bodies. We must recognize that assertions of women's organizations and democratic movements have led to the establishment of a robust legal framework protecting women against discrimination and violence. Several non-profits and community-based organizations have addressed ongoing violence against women, women's property

rights, women's livelihood concerns, and the recognition of women in the world of work. However, a lot more needs to be done to make this structure responsive to the needs of women, especially those from vulnerable and marginalized communities. Despite the numerous strides that women have made in all walks of life, and despite universal promises made at the highest levels of government and civil society, we must recognize that the promise of gender equality in India remains largely unfulfilled.

The greatest indicator of this is the adverse sex ratio in India, which emerges from the prevalence of son preference or daughter aversion. The 2011 census revealed that the sex ratio had declined to 918 girls, against the 2001 census figure of 927 girls for every 1,000 boys. While we await the latest census data for more accurate information, there are mixed signals from the data being generated. In July 2023, the Minister of Women and Child Development shared in Parliament that the sex ratio at birth has improved by 15 points between 2014-15 to 2022-23, which is encouraging news but there still is a long way for us to go to normalize sex ratios in our country.

Other indices corroborate the vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) shows that

more than 30% of married Indian women have suffered spousal violence, while nearly 4% have experienced violence during pregnancy. Furthermore, according to UNICEF, India is home to the largest number of child brides, with 223 million girls below 18 years of age getting married, negatively impacting their mental, physical and reproductive health.

We need a nationwide movement to celebrate girls and women and ensure they have access to education, livelihood, property, and access to gender-responsive public services. We realize that this calls for a social campaign to recognize women's work in the continuum of care work at home, unpaid and poorly-paid

work, and work and public spaces that are not safe or conducive to their physical and mental well-being. The social campaign should call on boys and men to share care work at home, and for governments and local administrations to provide care services that fall disproportionately on women - which could include community kitchens, longer day care services, and palliative and geriatric care at the community level. These services could be linked with rural and urban employment guarantee schemes serving multiple purposes. In all this, we need to ensure the agency of girls and women, especially those from vulnerable and marginalized communities.





# 135 arrested, probe ordered in attacks on churches in Pak

PTI | LAHORE

Pakistani authorities have arrested 135 people in connection with the unprecedented mob attack on 21 churches in Punjab province even as the government on Thursday ordered a high-level probe into the riots and promised to "restore" all the damaged churches and homes of the minority Christian community. An enraged mob ransacked and torched 21 churches and several houses of Christians on Wednesday over blasphemy allegations in Jaranwala town of Faisalabad district, 130 km from Punjab's provincial capital Lahore. A Christian cemetery and the office of the local assistant commissioner were also vandalised.

A Punjab police spokesman said that 135 miscreants have been arrested for attacks on churches and houses of the minority community in Jaranwala. The members of the radical group Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) were

among those arrested. "A case has been registered against 600 suspects under terrorism and blasphemy charges," Punjab caretaker information minister Amir Mir said.

Mir said peace has been restored in the area and a heavy contingent of police and Rangers has been deployed outside churches and homes of the minority Christian community. He said police foiled many attempts aimed at damaging various buildings.

"The chief minister has ordered a high-level investigation into the matter and those involved in this heinous crime will not escape justice," he said.

Army Chief General Asim Munir on Thursday termed the incident "extremely tragic and totally intolerable" and pledged that perpetrators involved in the attacks will be brought to justice. "There is no space for such incidents of intolerance and extreme behaviour by any segment of the society against anyone, particularly against minorities," he was quoted as

saying by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the army.

Addressing an event, Gen Munir emphasised that no one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands and those culpable of committing such crimes will be brought before the court of justice.

Meanwhile, Punjab's Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi promised to "restore" within three to four days all the churches and the homes of the minority Christian community which were attacked and torched by the mob. Addressing a meeting attended by religious leaders of the Christian community on Thursday, Naqvi condemned the mob violence and said such actions are against the teachings of Islam and those of the Holy Prophet.

He said the mob attack was a "planned conspiracy" to "light a fire in the country and sabotage its peace." He vowed to prevent any such "conspiracy" in the future. "For the future, we should sit with our minorities and chalk out a plan to prevent such incidents," he said.

The district administration has imposed section 144 for seven days, prohibiting all kinds of assembly, except for events organised by the government in Jaranwala.

All educational institutions, markets and business establishments remained closed in Jaranwala on Thursday. Christian community leaders in Faisalabad on Thursday



assessed the damage to their holy places and houses in Jaranwala.

A total of 21 churches have either been torched or vandalised over false accusations of blasphemy, they said, adding that copies of hundreds of Bibles were set on fire.

"Twenty-one churches and 35 houses of Christians including a pastor's residence were either burnt down completely or ransacked by the mob on Wednesday," Pakistan Centre

for Law and Justice Napoleon Qayyum told PTI. He said although peace has been restored in the area due to the heavy deployment of police, Christians fear that Islamists might strike again.

More than 3,000 policemen and two companies of Pakistan Rangers have been deployed in Jaranwala following Wednesday's riots.

"Most of the Christians left the area on Wednesday to save their lives and they will return only once action is taken against those who are involved in attacks on churches and Christian houses," Qayyum said.

He said since Shaukat Masih, a Christian, was the Assistant Commissioner (AC) of Jaranwala, some local Muslims had an issue with it. "On the pretext of blasphemy, they first moved to the AC's office to attack him. Mr Masih was lucky to escape," he said.

"Had the authorities in Pakistan brought those involved in attacks on

Christians and their holy places to justice in the past, the Jaranwala incident might have been averted," Qayyum said, demanding the government rein in radical TLP members who are on the forefront to target minorities in Pakistan.

The Christian families who fled their homes spent the night in the open fields to save themselves. "On reports that an enraged mob is heading towards our houses in Isa Nagri, my neighbours and I left and took refuge in open fields far from our area and spent the night over there," a member of the Christian family told PTI.

"We can't take our chances to return to our homes till the government provides us security and arrests those who attack our houses and holy places," he said. The incident sparked nationwide outrage from all political parties, civil society and the media.

"We are deeply concerned that churches and homes were targeted in response to reported Quran desecration in

Pakistan," US State Department spokesman Vedant Patel told reporters.

He said that while the US backed free expression, "violence or the threat of violence is never an acceptable form of expression," Geo News reported. "We urge Pakistani authorities to conduct a full investigation into these allegations and call for calm," he said.

The Islamabad police on Thursday formed a "Minority Protection Unit" comprising 70 policemen for the "protection of minority places of worship and communities."

The move came after Christian leaders strongly condemned what they called police inaction during the whole episode. They claimed that police played the role of silent spectators when Christian families were crying for help, and delayed their response until the residents were forced to abandon their houses, leaving them at the mercy of the attackers, the Dawn newspaper reported.

# Pak interim PM Kakar's Cabinet takes oath

PTI | LONDON

An 18-member Cabinet of Pakistan's newly appointed caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar took oath on Thursday to run the cash-strapped country until the general elections and ensure a seamless transition of power.

President Arif Alvi administered an oath to the caretaker Cabinet, Radio Pakistan, the national public broadcaster for radio, reported.

Former foreign secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani has been appointed as Foreign Minister, Sarfaraz Bugti as Interior Minister, Shamsah Akhtar as Finance Minister, Lt Gen (retired) Anwar Ali Haider as Defence Minister and senior journalist Murtaza Solangi as Information Minister.

Khalid George took the oath as Minister for Minorities, industrialist Gohar Ijaz as Minister for Industries, academic Dr Umar Saif as Minister for Information Technology, Ahmad Irfan Aslam as Law Minister, renowned actor Jamal Shah as Minister for Culture and Anis Ahmad as Religious Affairs Minister.

Akhtar is the only woman



in the Cabinet. The oath-taking ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Quran at the President's House in Islamabad. The swearing-in of Cabinet ministers completed the process of government formation in the country, which is facing its worst economic crisis.

Under the Constitution, a caretaker government should be appointed to provide a neutral administration for holding the elections in a fair and

transparent manner. Pakistan's National Assembly was dissolved on August 9, ending the tenure of the government led by Shehbaz Sharif and paving the way for installing a caretaker setup.

The general elections in Pakistan are expected to be held within 90 days but the election commission may take more time if it organises delimitation on the basis of a new census.

# Women lose value if their faces are visible in public: Taliban

AP | KABUL

Women lose value if men can see their uncovered faces in public, a spokesman for a key ministry of Afghanistan's Taliban government said Thursday, adding that religious scholars in the country agree that a woman must keep her face covered when outside the home.

The Taliban, who took over the country in August of 2021, has cited the failure of women to observe the proper way to wear the hijab, or Islamic headscarf, as a reason for barring them from most public spaces, including parks, jobs and university. Molvi Mohammad Sadiq Akif, the spokesman for the Taliban's Ministry of Vice and Virtue, said in an interview Thursday with The Associated Press that

if women's faces are visible in public there is a possibility of fitna, or falling into sin.

"It is very bad to see women (without hijab) in some areas (big cities) and our scholars also agree that women's faces should be hidden," Akif said. "It's not that her face will be harmed or damaged. A woman has her own value and that value decreases by men looking at her. Allah gives respect to females in hijab and there is value in this."

The Taliban's restrictions on girls and women have caused global outrage. On Wednesday, UN special envoy Gordon Brown said the International Criminal Court should prosecute Taliban leaders for crimes against humanity for denying education and employment to Afghan girls and women. Akif, who is the

main spokesman for the Vice and Virtue Ministry, did not answer questions about the bans, including whether any of them could be lifted if there were to be universal adherence to hijab rules. He said there were other departments to deal with these issues. Akif said the ministry faced no obstacles in its work and that people supported its measures.

"People wanted to implement Sharia (Islamic law) here. Now we're carrying out the implementation of Sharia," all the decrees are Islamic rulings and the Taliban have added nothing to them, he said. "The orders of Sharia were issued 1,400 years ago and they are still there." He said that under the current administration men no longer harass or stare at women like they used to do in the time of the previous government.

# Haiti gang leader vows to fight any foreign armed force

AP | PORT-AU-PRINCE

A former police officer considered by many to be Haiti's most powerful gang leader said Wednesday he would welcome the deployment of an international armed force to the Caribbean country but vowed to fight if it committed any abuses.

Jimmy Chézier, best known as "Barbecue," also urged Haitians to mobilize against the government. "We are asking the population to rise up," he said at a news conference. Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who has led Haiti since the July 2021 assassination

of President Jovenel Moïse, has been pushing for the deployment of a foreign armed force since October to help fight powerful gangs that are estimated to now control 80% of the capital of Port-au-Prince. In late July, the African nation of Kenya offered to lead a multinational force, and the US said earlier this month that it would put forward a resolution in the UN Security Council to authorize a non-UN multinational mission.

Chézier said he would welcome a foreign force if it were to arrest the prime minister and police officers he described

as corrupt politicians and local police allegedly selling ammunition and guns in Haiti's slums. "If the foreign force comes to help and provide security for life to start over again, we will also applaud," he said. But he said that if any foreign force repeated the actions of previous U.N. peacekeepers, including committing sexual abuses and inadvertently introducing cholera into water sources, that Haitians would rise up. "We will fight against them until our last breath," he said. "It will be a fight of the Haitian people to save the dignity of our country."

investigation by the Economic Crime Command of the Metropolitan Police.

"We called in the police, imposed emergency measures to increase security, set up an independent review into what happened and lessons to learn, and used all the disciplinary powers available to us to deal with the individual we believe to be responsible," said George Osborne, Chair of the British Museum.

The former UK chancellor of the exchequer laid out the museum's priority as threefold: to recover the stolen items; to find out what could have been done to stop this; and to do "whatever it takes," with investment in security and collection records, to

# Israeli raid on Jenin kills 1

Tel Aviv (AP) - Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man in a raid on a militant stronghold in the northern occupied West Bank on Thursday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said, the latest violence in a city that has seen some of the worst bloodshed in the current round of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

Violence has gripped the region since last spring, when Israel launched near-nightly raids in response to a spate of deadly Palestinian attacks. The violence has escalated into the fiercest fighting in the West Bank in some two decades, and along with increased violence by radical Jewish settlers and settlement expansion by Israel's far-right government, has fueled tensions in the region.

The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the man killed as Mustafa al-Kastouni, 32. It was not immediately clear if the man was affiliated with a militant group. The Hamas militant group said its fighters engaged in a gun battle with Israeli troops in Jenin and lobbed explosives at the forces. The Israeli military had no immediate comment. Jenin, a city where Palestinian security forces have little presence, has long been a bastion of armed struggle against Israel. The city and an adjacent refugee camp have been the focus of Israel's monthlong operation, with an intense 2-day offensive last month the height of those efforts.

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# Public Notice

To be known to all that my client: SMT SAROJI W/O SHRI HANUJI KUMAR R/O HOUSE NO. 308, PANA HARINAD BARWALA, ASHOK VIHAR, DELHI, is the owner of PROPERTY BEARING PL/NO.375, BLOCK-C, POCKET-2, SECTOR-32, AREA MEASURING RESIDENTIAL 32.90 SQ. METRS. IN ROHINI N.O.41(35/05/LAB/ROHINI), DELHI. VIDE DDA FILE NO.F.1/35/05/LAB/ROHINI. The original documents i.e. Original POSSESSION LETTER, SITE POSSESSION SLIP, original documents i.e. Original PERPETUAL LEASE DEED AND OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS of the above said property have been lost or misplaced by my client and is not traceable inspite of his best efforts. An FIR,NDR to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi (LR No. 78997/2023 dated 16.08.2023). Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAB Rohini) or Director (LAB), Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate)  
Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, 16 Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi-54

# Public Notice

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Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate)  
Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, 16 Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi-54

# NAME CHANGE

I, Bhavna Bhargava W/O Mr. Suneel Dutt Bhargava D/o Late Mr. Matru Mal R/o 1/11010/03, Street No. 3K, West Gorakhpark, Shahdara, Delhi - 110032 have to inform that I am legal wedded wife of Mr. Suneel Dutt Bhargava and residing with him at 1/11760 - A&B, Plot No. 3, Panchsheel Garden, Navin Shahdara, Delhi - 110032. My date of birth is 05th September, 1969 instead of 25th June, 1969. Before marriage I was known as Anupama Bhargava and after my marriage I known as Bhavna Bhargava. I also obtained the Aadhar Card No. 403777070224 and Income Tax Permanent Account Number Card Bearing No. BFPVBP1253B. Due to clerical mistake the spelling of my father's name was wrongly started as Mathura Mal Bhargava instead of Matru Mal. Therefore my father's correct name is Matru Mal instead of Mathura Mal. My correct name is Bhavna Bhargava instead of Anupama Bhargava. Bhavna Bhargava and Anupama Bhargava are same and one person. My correct Particular are BHAVNA BHARGAVA D/O MATRU MAL W/O SUNEEL DUTT BHARGAVA R/O 1/11760-A&B, PLOT NO. 3, PANCHSHEEL GARDEN, NAVIN SHAHDARA, DELHI - 110032. DATE OF BIRTH - 05-09-1969

Bhavna Bhargava

# Public Notice

To be known to all that my client: SMT SAROJI W/O SHRI HANUJI KUMAR R/O HOUSE NO. 308, PANA HARINAD BARWALA, ASHOK VIHAR, DELHI, is the owner of PROPERTY BEARING PL/NO.375, BLOCK-C, POCKET-2, SECTOR-32, AREA MEASURING RESIDENTIAL 32.90 SQ. METRS. IN ROHINI N.O.41(35/05/LAB/ROHINI), DELHI. VIDE DDA FILE NO.F.1/35/05/LAB/ROHINI. The original documents i.e. Original POSSESSION LETTER, SITE POSSESSION SLIP, original documents i.e. Original PERPETUAL LEASE DEED AND OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS of the above said property have been lost or misplaced by my client and is not traceable inspite of his best efforts. An FIR,NDR to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi (LR No. 78997/2023 dated 16.08.2023). Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAB Rohini) or Director (LAB), Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate)  
Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, 16 Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi-54

# Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that 35th Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of Ramrup Fertilizers Limited ("the Company") will be held through video conferencing (VC) or other audio-visual means (OAVM) on September 22, 2023, Friday, at 1:00 P.M. (IST) to transact the business as set out in the Notice of AGM which will be sent in due course of time. The venue of the said meeting shall be deemed to be the Registered Office of the Company.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) vide Circular dated 28th December, 2022 read with General Circular 5th May 2020, respectively and SEBI has vide Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/PoD-2/P/CIR/2023/4 dated 5th January, 2023 (collectively referred to as Circulars) permitted holding of AGM without physical presence of the members at the venue and dispensation with the requirement of sending physical copies of Annual Report to the Members. In compliance with these Circulars, the 35th AGM of the Company will be held through VC/OAVM only without physical presence of the members at the venue. The Members can attend and participate in the AGM through VC/OAVM only. Detailed instructions for joining the AGM will be provided in the Notice of AGM which will be sent to the members in the due course of time.

Members may further note that in pursuance of above stated circulars, the Notice of AGM, and Integrated Annual Report for the financial year 2022-23, will be sent through electronic mode only to those members whose email addresses are registered with the Company/Depository Participant. As per the SEBI Circulars, no physical copies of the Notice of AGM and Integrated Annual Report will be sent to any Member. Members who have not yet registered their email addresses are requested to follow the process mentioned below for registering their email addresses to receive the Notice of AGM and Annual Report electronically and to receive User ID and password for e-voting.

Physical Holding: Please send ISRI, ISRD and SH-13 to RTA M&S Services Limited, T-34 2nd Floor Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi 110020. Form can be downloaded from RTA website i.e. www.masserv.com under download tab.

Demat Holding: Please contact your Depository Participant (DP) and register your email address as per the process advised by DP. Please also update your bank detail with your DP for dividend payment by NACH if declare by company.

The Notice of AGM and Annual Report for FY 2022-23 will also be available on Company's website www.rampurfertilizers.com and website of the Stock Exchange where the shares of the Company are listed, i.e. NSE Limited and BSE Limited and on the website of NSDL at www.evoting.nse.com in due course of time. Members attending the meeting through VC/OAVM shall be notified for the purpose of Quorum under Section 103 of the Companies Act, 2013.

For Ramrup Fertilizers Limited  
Place: Rampur  
Date: 16.08.2023  
Anshuman Khaitan  
(Managing Director)

# Public Notice

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client SBI Bank Ltd that Mrs. Kusum Lata Dogra & Mr. Sushil Kumar Dogra are the joint owners of Entire First Floor, without roof rights, 1st/1st Floor Gate on Property Bearing No. 27, area measuring 240 Sq. Yds., Situated in the layout plan of CWC Co. Op. House Building Society Ltd., Presently known as Engineers Institute, Panchsheel, Delhi, the said property, by virtue of Registration Deed dated 02.05.2007, Registration No. 6716, (In favour of Sushil Kumar Dogra), and relinquishment deed dated 09.12.2021, Registration No. 17979, (In favour of Mrs. Kusum Lata Dogra). All persons including other heirs if any are hereby informed that above mentioned owners want to sell the said floor, i.e. First floor, and someone want to purchase the same by taking home loan from our client. If anybody has any objection(s) relating to the said property, and its ownership in the said mortgage/registered title, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Solicitors) 200, Indr Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Mett Nagar, N. Delhi-15 Ph: 9114112327-28. legal@knaegal.com

# China assures Lanka help in addressing debt challenges

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka's largest bilateral creditor, China, has assured the island nation its help in effectively addressing the debt challenges as it has to finalise the external and domestic debt restructuring of a whopping USD 41 billion by September before the IMF's first review.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is set to conduct its first review of the USD 2.9 billion bailout granted to Sri Lanka in March this year from September 11-19. A release from the Prime Minister's Office on Wednesday said Wang Yi, the Foreign

Minister and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee who met SL PM Dinesh Gunawardena on the sidelines of the seventh China-South Asian Expo assured that it will help in effectively addressing the country's debt challenges. "China is always Sri Lanka's reliable strategic partner and appreciates that Sri Lanka has always been friendly to China and has stood by China on issues related to its core interests," Wang was quoted as saying.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is informed on behalf of my client Smt. Lalita, wife of Sh. Ravinder Prasad, P/O H.No. A-41-42, Christian Colony, Patel Chest, Delhi-110007, that he has been the absolute owner of the property bearing H.No. A-41-42, Christian Colony, Patel Chest, Delhi-110007. Except my client's nobody has any right, title or interest in the said property and some unscrupulous person wants to interfere in the ownership right possession of my client in the said property. In case any person enters into agreement pertaining to the said property of my client with any one, he/she shall also at his or her own risk and my client's shall not be liable and responsible for any loss and injury and shall liable for the legal consequences.

Sd/-  
R.P. Pandey, Advocate

### PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client: SMT SAROJI W/O SHRI HANUJI KUMAR R/O HOUSE NO. 308, PANA HARINAD BARWALA, ASHOK VIHAR, DELHI, is the owner of PROPERTY BEARING PL/NO.375, BLOCK-C, POCKET-2, SECTOR-32, AREA MEASURING RESIDENTIAL 32.90 SQ. METRS. IN ROHINI N.O.41(35/05/LAB/ROHINI), DELHI. VIDE DDA FILE NO.F.1/35/05/LAB/ROHINI. The original documents i.e. Original POSSESSION LETTER, SITE POSSESSION SLIP, original documents i.e. Original PERPETUAL LEASE DEED AND OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS of the above said property have been lost or misplaced by my client and is not traceable inspite of his best efforts. An FIR,NDR to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi (LR No. 78997/2023 dated 16.08.2023). Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAB Rohini) or Director (LAB), Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate)  
Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, 16 Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi-54

### PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that, Mr. Rajkumar Daswani, S/O Late Shri C. D. Daswani & C. Daswani alias Chain Daswani alias Chain R/O J/O-672, Sarita Vihar, New Delhi-110075, is owner and in physical possession of Flat No. 672 on Second and Third Floor (Duplex), SFS Category I/II, Pocket-C situated at Sarita Vihar, New Delhi-110076, alongwith Scooter Garage, which has been allotted by DDA vide File No. F.1284(23) 86/565/SV/III and applied for conversion from lease hold to free hold of said flat in D.D.A. The original Demand Letter and other related documents of said flat have been lost. An FIR, NDR to this effect has been lodged. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address/Phone No. 9312723159 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this flat can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAB Rohini) or Director (LAB) 3 Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

### ASHNOR TEXTILE MILLS LIMITED

Corporate Identity Number: L1722BHR198APLCO33384  
Regd. Office: Beharpur Road, Village Khandsa, District Gurgaon, Haryana-122001  
Phone: 0124 4809755; E-mail: atm\_dhli@yahoo.com; Web: ashnortext.com

### NOTICE OF 40th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

#### INFORMATION FOR REMOTE E-VOTING AND BOOK CLOSURE

Notice is hereby given that the 40th Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the members of the Company will be held through Video Conferencing ("VC") / Other Audio-Visual Means ("OAVM") on Monday, August 28, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. to transact the business as set forth in the notice of the AGM, in compliance with the regulatory provisions and circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) and Securities and Exchange Board of India permitted convening AGM through VC/OAVM, without the physical presence of the members at a common venue. In accordance with relevant circulars, the AGM of the Company through VC/OAVM shall be deemed to convene at the registered office of the Company. Members will be able to attend the AGM through VC/OAVM or view the live webcast at https://instameet.linkintime.co.in. All the members participating through VC/OAVM facility shall be counted for a quorum under section 103 of the Companies Act, 2013.

In compliance with relevant circulars notice of the AGM along with the Annual Report for the financial year 2022-2023 has been sent through electronic mode to those Members whose email addresses are registered with the RTAI/Company/Depositories. Members may note that the Notice and Annual Report for the financial year 2022-2023 are available on the Company's website www.ashnortext.com, the website of the Stock Exchange, i.e., BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com, and on the website of Company's Registrar and Transfer Agent, Link Intime India Private Limited at www.linkintime.co.in.

The Company is providing to its members the facility to exercise their right to vote on resolutions proposed to be passed at AGM by electronic means (e-voting) either remotely before the AGM or during the AGM in respect of all the businesses to be transacted at the aforesaid meeting using an electronic voting system to be provided by Link Intime India Private Limited. The remote e-voting period will start on Friday, August 25, 2023 (9:00 A.M. IST) and ends on Sunday, August 27, 2023 (5:00 P.M. IST). During this period shareholders of the Company, holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form, as on the cut off date (record date) of Monday, August 21, 2023, may cast their vote electronically. The e-voting module shall be disabled for voting thereafter. A detailed procedure for voting by electronic means is given in the notice of the AGM. The members who have cast their vote(s) by remote e-voting may attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote(s) again in AGM.

Pursuant to Regulation 42 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 and Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with relevant Rules the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from Tuesday, August 22, 2023 to Monday, August 28, 2023 (both days inclusive) for AGM.

Any person who becomes member of the Company after mailing the notice of AGM but before the cut-off date may obtain a login ID and password by sending a request to Mr. Neeraj Jain, Link Intime India Private Limited at Noble Heights, 1st Floor, Plot NH 2-C-1 Block L3C, Near Savitri Market, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058 (Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent) at email ID-neeraj.jain@linkintime.co.in or phone number - 91 11 49411000 for obtaining the credentials for remote e-voting. However, if a person is already registered with LIPI, for e-voting then an existing user ID and password can be used for casting his/her vote.

In case of queries/grievances regarding e-voting, you may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") and e-Voting manual available at https://instavote.linkintime.co.in, under the help section entitled@linkintime.co.in or may call at: Tel : +91-11-49411000/022-49186000 or write to Mr. Rajeev Ranjan or write to the Company at atm\_dhli@yahoo.co.in.

For and behalf of Ashnor Textile Mills Limited  
Sd/-  
Suneel Gupta  
Managing Director  
DIN-0052084

# British Museum in London sacks staffer after precious historic treasures stolen

PTI | LONDON

The British Museum, one of London's premier tourist attractions with thousands of precious artefacts on display, has sacked a staffer pending legal action after several treasures from a storeroom were found to have been stolen.

The famous public museum dedicated to human history, art and culture, which also has several ancient Indian artefacts on display including a gallery devoted to "India: Amravati" sculptures, said on Wednesday it has launched an independent review of security after items from the collection were found to be missing, stolen or damaged earlier this year. The matter is also under

investigation by the Economic Crime Command of the Metropolitan Police.

"We called in the police, imposed emergency measures to increase security, set up an independent review into what happened and lessons to learn, and used all the disciplinary powers available to us to deal with the individual we believe to be responsible," said George Osborne, Chair of the British Museum.

The former UK chancellor of the exchequer laid out the museum's priority as threefold: to recover the stolen items; to find out what could have been done to stop this; and to do "whatever it takes," with investment in security and collection records, to

make sure this doesn't happen again. "It's a sad day for all who love our British Museum, but we're determined to right the wrongs and use the experience to build a stronger museum," he said.

According to an official museum statement, the majority of the items in question were small pieces kept in a storeroom belonging to one of the museum's collections.

They include gold jewellery and gems of semi-precious stones and glass dating from the 15th century BC to the 19th century AD.

None had recently been on public display, and they were kept primarily for academic and research purposes, the museum said.

"This is a highly unusual incident. I know I speak for all colleagues when I say that we take the safeguarding of all the items in our care extremely seriously. The museum apologises for what has happened, but we have now brought an end to this - and we are determined to put things right," said Hartwig Fischer, Director of the British Museum.

"We have already tightened our security arrangements and we are working alongside outside experts to complete a definitive account of what is missing, damaged and stolen. This will allow us to throw our efforts into the recovery of objects," he said.

# Markets snap 2-day winning run; Sensex slumps nearly 390 pts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Snapping their two-day winning run, equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty closed in the negative territory on Thursday, tracking losses in index majors Reliance Industries, ITC and HDFC bank amid a weak trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 388.40 points or 0.59 per cent to settle at 65,151.02. During the day, it fell by 493.32 points or 0.75 per cent to 65,046.10.

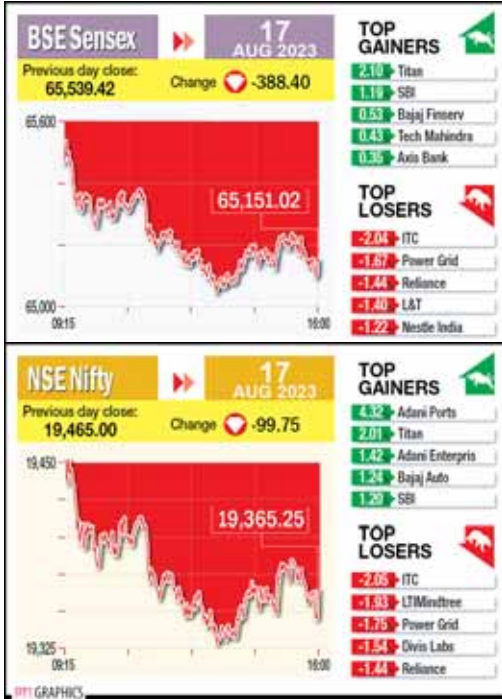
The NSE Nifty slipped 99.75 points or 0.51 per cent to end at 19,365.25.

“The mounting influence of weak global cues hindered the domestic market’s ability to recoup, resulting in sustained selling pressure. The release of Fed minutes unveiled a divided stance among its members regarding the necessity of additional rate hikes, contrasting the previously anticipated rate pause,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

ITC was the biggest loser from the Sensex pack, sliding 2.04 per cent, followed by Power Grid, Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finance and JSW Steel.

On the other hand, Titan, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, Tata Steel, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra and Bharti Airtel were the gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE small-cap gauge climbed 0.19 per cent, and mid-



cap gained 0.06 per cent. As per a study by Goldman Sachs, overseas investors holding in midcaps in India has increased by 175 basis points to 16 per cent of their market capitalisation this year, compared with a drop of 250 basis points over the last five years,” Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said. Among the indices, utilities declined

1.03 per cent, FMCG slipped 0.93 per cent, oil & gas (0.77 per cent), capital goods (0.75 per cent), power (0.73 per cent) and metal (0.25 per cent).

Consumer Discretionary, consumer durables and realty were the gainers.

“Global stocks were mostly lower on Thursday after notes from a US Federal Reserve meeting dented hopes interest rate hikes are finished. Fears over China’s sluggish economic recovery did not help matters either,” Jasani said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended lower, while Shanghai settled in the green.

European markets were trading lower in the afternoon session. The US markets ended in negative territory on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.36 per cent to USD 83.75 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Wednesday as they bought equities worth Rs 722.76 crore, according to exchange data.

“Profit-taking came to the fore amid weak global cues, as rising US bond yields and fall in the currency levels weighed on the equity market sentiment.”

“Investors are also worried about further rate hikes coupled with deflation and slowing demand in China, which has been prompting investors to flee equity markets amid choppy trends,” Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

# CBDT issues draft form for biz to report inventory valuation by cost accountants

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The income tax department has come out with a draft form for various categories of businesses to report valuation of their inventories, including equity and debt securities, livestock or other raw material/by-products, by a cost accountant when asked by a tax officer.

Beginning this fiscal, tax officers have been empowered to order for inventory valuation from a cost accountant at any stage of the proceedings pending before him/her. Such valuation can be sought if the tax officer has doubts regarding the correctness of the accounts, multiplicity of transactions in the accounts or specialised nature of business activity.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has now come out with a draft form 6C inviting stakeholder comments by August 31 on the proposed columns for reporting inventories valuation certified by a cost accountant.

Nangia Andersen LLP Partner Vishwas Panjar said in order to protect revenue’s interest and to prevent deferral of taxes through undervaluation of inventory, a tax officer from this year, has been empowered to order for inventory valuation from a cost accountant.

“The form is quite exhaust-



ive and could potentially overlap with existing inventory reporting obligations because of the presence of multiple experts looking at the same data. For instance, manner of computing Net Realisable Value for an inventory is a subjective exercise and may be different for a tax auditor vis-à-vis a cost accountant,” Panjar said. Also, the assessing officer may not have the necessary skills to appreciate the difference in methodology adopted by the tax auditor vis-à-vis a cost accountant in inventory valuation specially in case of complex and unique businesses. Further, assuming a situation where there is a deviation between value of inventory which the tax officer adjusts in the current assessment year, the

revised cost base should be available in future years. However, there is no guidance within the law to grant this consequent benefit to the assessee in the next year, Panjar added.

In order to ensure that inventory is valued in accordance with the Income Tax Act provisions, the government through the Finance Act 2023, amended the I-T Act to enable Assessing Officer to direct the assessee to get inventory valued by a cost accountant, nominated by the Principle Chief Commissioner or Chief Commissioner.

Assessee is required to furnish the report of inventory valuation in the prescribed form duly signed and verified by the cost accountant, the CBDT said while releasing the draft form.



# ₹ falls 2 paise to close at all-time low of 83.10 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day lower by 2 paise at an all-time low of 83.10 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a strong greenback overseas and a negative trend in domestic equities.

Forex traders said rupee is likely to trade with a negative bias on risk aversion in global markets and rising US dollar.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 83.10 against the dollar, and it finally ended the day at the same level 83.10 (provisional), registering a fall of 2 paise from its previous close.

During the session, the local unit touched a peak of 82.99 and a low of 83.16. On Monday, the rupee depreciated 26 paise to settle at an all-time low of 83.08 against the US dollar. Forex market was closed on Tuesday and Wednesday on account of Independence Day and Parsi New Year, respectively.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.05 per cent to 103.48. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.52 per cent to USD 83.88 per barrel. “The Indian rupee traded lower in line with the Asian currencies and risk-averse sentiments,” said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. The greenback enjoyed good momentum reacting to July FOMC minutes that signalled clear openness to more tightening.

“We remain bullish on the pair and a crossing of 83.30 will pave the way for 83.50 and 83.70 while expected to hold the support at 82.70,” Parmar added.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 388.40 points or 0.59 per cent lower at 65,151.02 points. The broader NSE Nifty declined 99.75 points or 0.51 per cent to close at 19,365.25 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Wednesday as they purchased shares worth Rs 722.76 crore, according to exchange data.

# India can generate 65 GW energy annually from waste, say experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India can utilise the huge amount of waste generated throughout the country to produce 65 GW of electricity per annum, which can grow to 165 GW by 2030 and 436 GW by 2050, according to experts. India generates 65 million tonnes of waste every year, which is estimated to go up to 165 million tonnes by 2030 and 436 million tonnes by 2050 as per a white paper prepared at a two-day workshop of waste management experts held recently.

About 75-80 per cent of the municipal waste gets collected and out of this only 22 to 28 per cent is processed and treated, the document noted.

During the workshop, experts from International Climate Change and Sustainability Action Foundation, IIT, ISM Dhanbad, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), and industries came together to discuss the way forward to deal with the issue of mounting waste dumping sites.

India has 3,159 active waste dump sites accounting for about 20 per cent of the country’s methane emissions, said the white paper which also provides for creating opportunities for recycling, waste-to-energy conversion, and the creation of green jobs.

According to the paper, one tonne of waste is enough for generating one Kwh of electricity. However, the actual output depends upon the quality of the waste.

“We must learn to re-cycle, reduce and re-use the waste... Efforts are needed to compare capabilities, discuss challenges and review emerging technologies for monitoring methane and delineate an action plan for sector specific efforts which india can implement with a specific timeline.



These efforts will assist to capture and profitably use methane emissions,” said J S Sharma, head, International Centre for Climate and Sustainability Action (ICCSA) Foundation.

The workshop ‘Methane Emissions Management from Landfill and Waste’ was organised jointly by the ICCSA Foundation and TISS, Mumbai and it was presided over by Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais. Rakesh Kumar, Officer of Special Duty, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, underscored the need for better source segregation, theory of change and the possibility of using AI (artificial intelligence) for methane management.

“From increased urbanisation and industrial activities, our generation of solid waste is high. The rate of piling of municipal and industrial waste on landfills is expected to increase exponentially,” he said and added that waste management can result in better environment.

He stated that the launch of International Methane Council is a good step.

As per the Global Methane Tracker, 2022 report, methane emission from landfill is estimated to account for 3 to 19 per cent of the anthropogenic sources in the world.

# Sebi extends auction date to Aug 31 for 7 firms’ assets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi on Thursday extended the sanction of 15 properties belonging to seven companies, including Sunheaven Agro India and RaviKiran Realty India, along with that of promoters and directors, to August 31 to recover money illegally collected from investors.

The other firms whose properties will be auctioned are: Infocore Infra, Bharat Krishi Samridhi Industries Ltd, GSHP Realtch Ltd, Just-Reliable Projects India Ltd, and Newland Agro Industries Ltd.

Considering that the interested bidders asked for more time, it has been decided to extend the last date of auction to August 31 from August 21 earlier, according to a public notice issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

The properties will be auctioned at a reserve price of Rs 13 crore. These assets include land parcels and a residential building located in West Bengal.

Of the 15 properties, four are related to Bharat Krishi Samridhi Industries, three each of Just-Reliable Projects India and Newland Agro Industries, two related to Sunheaven and



one each of RaviKiran Realty India, Infocore Infra and GSHP Realtch.

These seven companies had collected money from investors without complying with the public issue norms as the shares were issued to more than 50 individuals.

Under the norms, a firm is required to list its securities on the recognised bourse. It is also required to file a prospectus, among other things.

Going by Sebi’s earlier orders, Sunheaven allotted redeemable preference shares

(RPS) to about 7,772 investors and mobilised Rs 11.54 crore between 2009-10 and 2012-13 and RaviKiran raised funds by issuing RPS to 1,176 individuals.

Further, GSHP Realtch collected money from 535 individuals in 2012-13 by issuing Non-Convertible Redeemable Debentures (NCDs), Infocore Infra mopped up Rs 98.35 lakh by allotting NCDs to 90 investors and Bharat Krishi garnered funds from the public through issuance of RPS and NCDs in 2012 and 2013.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### CHOPRA TAKES OVER AS CMD OF PFC

Parminder Chopra has been appointed as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), of Power Finance Corporation Limited (PFC) by Govt of India w.e.f. 14th August, 2023. Previously, she was holding the additional charge of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), w.e.f. 01.06.2023 and was Director (Finance), PFC since August 2020. With this, Chopra becomes the first woman to lead India’s largest NBFC, PFC. During her term as Director (Finance), she spearheaded the Finance Division, leading to highest net profit, highest net worth and lowest NPA levels. Such robust financial performance has also facilitated PFC getting the highest status of “Maharatna”. She had also played a key role in the successful implementation of INR 1.12 trillion Liquidity Infusion Scheme (LIS) for the power distribution sector, which was rolled out as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative by Govt. of India.



### AIRTEL PAYMENTS BANK REVENUE GROWS 41 PC TO ₹400 CR

NEW DELHI: Airtel Payments Bank on Thursday said its revenue witnessed a year-on-year growth of 41 per cent to Rs 400 crore in the first quarter ended June 30, 2023. The unlisted entity of Bharti Group said that its profit grew by 143 per cent on a year-on-year basis without disclosing the actual number. “For the first time, the Bank’s quarterly revenue grew to Rs 400 crore for the first quarter (Q1) of financial year (FY) 2024, an increase of 41 per cent YoY. For the Q1 FY24, the Bank’s profits grew by 143 per cent on YoY,” the company said in a statement.

### TATA PLAY REPORTS A NET LOSS OF ₹105.25 CR IN FY23

NEW DELHI: Leading DTH system operator Tata Play has reported a net loss of Rs 105.25 crore for the fiscal ended March 2023, according to financial data accessed by the business intelligence platform Tofler. The company reported a net profit of Rs 68.6 crore in FY22, as per the data. Its revenue from operations slipped 5.1 per cent to Rs 4,499.19 crore from Rs 4,741.07 crore a year ago. Tata Play (earlier known as Tata Sky) is not a publicly listed entity. However, it has earlier this year received approval from the capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to raise funds through initial public offerings (IPOs).

### MAGICPIN TO PROVIDE TOMATO AT RS 50 PER KG AT SELECT ONDC PLATFORMS

NEW DELHI: Hyperlocal e-commerce firm Magicpin on Thursday said it will provide tomato for Rs 50 per kilogram at select online apps like Paytm and Pincode available at ONDC network in collaboration with National Cooperative Consumers Federation of India. Magicpin said that till date, it has facilitated the delivery of approximately 20,000 orders for 40,000 kilograms (kg) of tomatoes across more than 90 pin codes in and around Delhi-NCR in just 4 weeks at Rs 70 per kilogram (kg), and henceforth, tomato will be shipped at a lower price of Rs 50 per kg. “The latest reduction to Rs 50 per kg will further benefit the consumers, where essential commodities are facing price fluctuations.”

# ONGC investing ₹1 lakh cr to transform into low-carbon energy player

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is investing Rs 1 lakh crore by the end of this decade in low-carbon energy opportunities, including renewables and green hydrogen as it looks to transform into a low-carbon energy player, the company said.

In a statement, India’s largest crude oil and natural gas producer said it has detailed a “roadmap to scale up its low-carbon energy portfolio significantly”.

“ONGC has aligned itself with India’s ambitious goals and is wholeheartedly contributing to the nation’s aim to curtail carbon emissions by 1 billion tonne and simultaneously reduce carbon intensity by 45 per cent by 2030,” it said.

It said the firm has adopted various de-



carbonization levers resulting in significant emission reductions over years.

“Integrating sustainable practices into core operations has enabled a reduction in Scope-1 and Scope-2 emissions by 17 per cent in the last five years. ONGC has reduced its emissions by 2.66 per cent in FY23 (April 2022 to March 2023 fiscal year). “ONGC plans to significantly increase

its spending on green initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint as a broader effort to achieve net-zero for Scope-1 and Scope-2 emissions by 2038,” the statement said.

The firm is in an advanced stage of crafting collaborations with leading players in the energy space on various low-carbon energy opportunities including renewables, green hydrogen, green ammonia and other derivatives of green hydrogen.

“ONGC is planning to set up two green-field O2C plants in India,” the statement said without giving details.

It is also “charting a roadmap for opportunities in renewable energy and low-carbon sectors. ONGC is investing around Rs 1 lakh crore by the end of this decade, on its multiple green initiatives and is planning to scale up its renewable portfolio to 10 GW by 2030.”

# Darjeeling tea industry is a ‘patient in ICU’: ITEA chairman

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Chairman of Indian Tea Exporters Association (ITEA) Anshuman Kanoria on Thursday said that the Darjeeling tea industry is a “patient in ICU” and virtually on its death bed.

For the Darjeeling tea industry to survive, some government support is needed in the form of subsidy which will help stave off the threat posed by tea from Nepal, he said. Speaking at a session organised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) here, Kanoria said, “Darjeeling tea is an emotion for us. It flows in our blood. Today, the Darjeeling tea industry is a patient in ICU, virtually in its death bed”.



The closure of the gardens due to political agitation in 2017, followed by lockdowns had caused huge financial loss to the industry as a whole, Kanoria said. He said, “A lot of foreign buyers had been turned away and this gave an opportunity to our neighbour (Sri Lanka) to capture some of the some of the export market”.

of Nepal has become serious as it is infiltrating the Indian Market. “With the Darjeeling crop down to 6.5 million kilograms per annum, the production in Nepal has gone up to six million kilograms. We have a serious competitor now,” he noted. The Darjeeling crop has fallen due to low productivity partially caused by climate change, he said, adding the Nepal tea industry comprising mostly small factories is run unlike that in India which is governed by the Plantations Labour Act. “Darjeeling has become a high-cost operation with 60 per cent of the cost emanating from wages to labourers. Most of the Darjeeling gardens are losing to the tune of Rs 200 per kilogram with each garden losing a few crores,” he said. Kanoria said that some support from the government is needed for the Darjeeling tea industry to survive.



# GSTN looking for consultancy firm to prepare roadmap for transitioning IT systems to GST 2.0

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With Infosys’ contract for providing technology support for Goods and Services Tax (GST) ending in September 2024, GST Network (GSTN) has started scouting for a consultancy firm to prepare the bid document for selection of a new service provider and a roadmap for transitioning the system capacity to the next level — GST 2.0.

The consultancy firm would have to ensure a competitive bidding process and a seamless transition of the IT service backbone of GSTN to another technology company, who would be providing the software and hardware required in GST systems for the next seven years beginning October 1, 2024.

The scope of work of the consultancy firm would include preparing a request for proposal (RFP) document by evaluating the present system, based on the experience of the GST technology system of the past seven years, and provide a roadmap for enhancement and operations for the next contract period. Indirect tax reform, GST, was introduced in India on July 1, 2017.

Prior to the GST rollout, in September 2015, Infosys was awarded a Rs 1,320-crore contract for developing the technology backbone for GST Network.

The IT bellwether outfit TCS, Wipro, Tech Mahindra and Microsoft to bag the contract which involved setting up a database for the new tax regime, enrolment, registration, end-to-end automation, besides providing a system for claiming refunds and credits.

Infosys has been providing necessary IT infrastructure support for GST registration, return filing, tax payment by businesses, as well as audit by tax officers.

“The contracted period of the current Managed Service Provider (MSP), for development, enhancement and operations of the GST System, is nearing its completion. Hence, GSTN intends to execute a competitive bid to finalize a MSP for operating the GST System through the next term of 7 years starting 1st October 2024,” the GSTN said.

# ALL EYES ON BUMRAH IN 1ST T20I

## 1st two T20Is is complete sell-out

PTI ■ DUBLIN

The Indian team's global popularity does add financial muscle to emerging cricket boards as Cricket Ireland realised after all tickets for the first two T20Is were sold out.

"The first and second Men's T20 Internationals between Ireland and India are now sold out, with the third match selling quickly," Cricket Ireland posted in its website. All the matches will be held at 'The Village' Malahide Cricket Club Ground which has an official capacity of 11,500.

India have won all their five previous T20Is against Ireland since the MS Dhoni-led side defeated them by eight wickets in a World T20 group fixture in England in 2009.

Ireland then went on to host Team India twice in a two-match T20I series in 2018 and 2022 which were held at the same venue here.

### 'WANT TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION'

The Paul Stirling-led side's wicketkeeper-batter Lorcan Tucker said they are aware of the big challenge and looking forward to make a big impression.

"Malahide generates a special feeling, especially when a big team comes to town," Tucker was quoted saying in Cricket Ireland website.

"We know India may have a good deal of sup-

port, but to have such a big crowd — it's brilliant for cricket in Ireland," he added. "The team are quite experienced with these bigger games. We've played in World Cups; we've played against India before. We know what it's like when these big pressure games come around."

"Tucker knows what India brings to the table. They are the showcase of the summer for fans in Ireland. We just want to make an impression, stay nice and relaxed and play with confidence. That's our main motto going forward."

"We've had a lot of cricket this year. We've been very well prepped, especially in T20 cricket. We've come off a decent run there in Scotland where we managed to qualify for next year's World Cup, so I think everyone's feeling excited," he added.

"We had two great games against India last summer and I think everyone's really looking forward to the big build-up, and the exciting crowd. They're going to come with that energy and it is going to be great," Tucker said.

The 26-year-old is coming from a 93-ball 133 in Lightning's demolition of North West Warriors in an Inter-Provincial Cup game on Monday.

"It was good to be out there for a long period of time and figure out some quirks that haven't been quite right throughout the summer. It's brilliant to get that kind of energy, and that excitement, going into that big series," he said.



PTI ■ DUBLIN

Almost 11 months after he hobbled off the field, Jasprit Bumrah will be cynosure of all eyes when he leads India against Ireland as the fast bowler's fitness and rhythm will be tested in the three-match T20 International series, starting Friday. The team is packed with India's Gen-Next IPL performers like Rituraj Gaikwad, Rinku Singh and Jitesh Sharma but stakeholders in Indian cricket will keenly observe Bumrah, who will be key to home team's plans during the ODI World Cup starting in less than two months.

The 29-year-old Bumrah is coming back after undergoing a surgery to treat the lower-back stress fractures he had suffered during a home series against Australia ahead of T20 World Cup, last year. He will be bowling a maximum of just 12 overs across three games over five days but this series will allow chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar, ODI captain Rohit Sharma and head coach Rahul Dravid to get a fair idea of where the Gujarat slinger is placed in terms of match fitness.

The 50-over cricket is, though, a different beast where he will need to bowl 10 overs across two, three or may be four-over spells. The BCCI, on its official social media handle, released Bumrah's bowling video, where he was seen hurrying a right-hander with a well-disguised short-ball and then almost yorked a left-hander with a toe-crusher, a soothing sight for the Indian team management.

But match situation will be completely different and both Dravid and Rohit have once burnt their hands by rushing him too early before the T20 World Cup in Australia last year. The results were disastrous. That was the last series he played before the longest lay-off of his seven-year international career.

He was named for a home series earlier this year, only to be pulled out at the eleventh hour as he underwent a surgery to treat a career-threatening injury.

The Ireland series not only gives Bumrah an ideal opportunity to add miles to his legs but will also help him get ready for the Asia Cup, where he will be pitted against the likes of Babar Azam upfront on September 2.

Ireland, led by Andrew Balbirnie with useful players like Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, left-arm spinner George Dockrell are a quality side in the shortest format even though they are yet to win a match against India till now.

Their left-arm seamer Josh Little was an integral part of Gujarat Titans squad last year and wouldn't mind to show what he is capable of against an Indian team full of performers.

The players in this Indian team, save Bumrah and Sanju Samson, will be vying for gold medal at the Asian Games in Hangzhou and the core team would be keen to make most of the three T20Is.

The one player, whose place would surely be under the scanner is Sanju Samson. He is unlikely to get into the playing XI unless head coach Sitanshu Kotak gets a standing instruction from main team management to play the Kerala man ahead of Asia Cup.

Two exciting IPL finds — Jitesh and Rinku are expected to get their T20 India caps while Shivam Dube would be itching for a shot at redemption.

Just like Bumrah, even

Prasidh Krishna is making a comeback to competitive cricket and before his lower back stress fracture injury which also required a surgery, the Bengaluru fast bowler was a certainty in ODI set-up.

It is expected that selectors would check out Krishna's form before taking a final call on the Asia Cup squad expected to be announced by the end of this week.

It will be interesting to see how players and the team management balance individual and team goals while keeping the big picture in mind.

### SQUADS:

**India:** Jasprit Bumrah (C), Rituraj Gaikwad (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Shabbaz Ahmed, Ravi Bishnoi, Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan.

**Ireland:** Andrew Balbirnie (captain), Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker, Ross Adair, Mark Adair, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Fionn Hand, Josh Little, Barry McCarthy, Ben White, Craig Young, Theo van Weerkom.

## MSK Prasad joins LSG as strategic consultant

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Former India cricketer and selection committee chairman MSK Prasad was on Thursday named as strategic consultant by Indian Premier League franchise Lucknow Super Giants. In his new capacity, Prasad will be instrumental in providing essential guidance across a spectrum of critical domains to LSG.

"Prasad brings with him a wealth of experience and a stellar track record in cricket operations, coupled with a passion that has driven him to remarkable achievements in both national and international arenas," the IPL side from Lucknow said in a statement.

"His journey is marked by a range of accomplishments that spans from representing the Indian national team to steering the operations of prominent cricket associations; all of which will bring valuable insights and experience to our organisation."

In his previous role as the chairman of BCCI's senior selection committee from September 2016 till March 2020, Prasad played a key role in spearheading talent scouting and player development to help create a robust talent pipeline for the Indian national team across all formats. The former wicketkeeper-batter has also served as the Director of Cricket Operations at the Andhra Cricket Association, where he played a key role in establishing coaching facilities across 13 districts in the region. The 48-year-old former cricketer represented India in six Tests and 17 ODIs, scoring 106 and 131 runs respectively.

## Never saw injury layoff as dark phase, was always preparing for bowling 10 overs in WC: Bumrah

PTI ■ DUBLIN

After spending 11 months away from the game, a fit-again Jasprit Bumrah is back hungrier than ever and says he is ready to bowl long spells for India in the Asia Cup and subsequent ODI World Cup at home.

Bumrah, who last played in September 2022 before lower-back stress fractures pushed him on the sidelines for the 'biggest break' of his crickering career, is making his much-anticipated comeback with the T20 series in Ireland.

Here, he will be required to bowl four overs per game but speaking ahead of the first T20 on Friday, the star pacer said the plan was always to prepare for 50-over events including the Asia Cup beginning August 31 and the World Cup at home beginning October 5.

"We were mindful of the fact there is no Test cricket till the ODI World Cup. In my rehab as well, I was not preparing for a T20 game. I was always preparing for the World Cup compe-

tion. I have been bowling 10, 12 and even 15 overs. So I have bowled more overs, that way it becomes easier when less bowling is required. We kept that in mind that we are preparing for one-day competition and not a four-over competition.

"I have lots of overs under my belt. You have to keep working your way up. From where you left, you are a little down and you keep working your way up." Bumrah, who will captain India in the three T20s against Ireland, told reporters.

Bumrah said he is not holding back in the training sessions, as it was the case in the opening nets here on Thursday. A fully-fit Bumrah is a precious asset for India but the 29-year-old is not going to get expectations get the better of him.

"I don't really think about expectations. I just want to go enjoy the game as I have come after a long break. Never been away from the game this long. I am coming back to enjoy as I love this game.

"I am just the same guy (that I was



11 months ago). I always had a lot of belief. I understand I am coming back after a long lay off. I am very happy to be back. Been working really hard

at the NCA. It has been a long road. The body feels good and looking forward to some game time," he said.

Bumrah has got stellar success

across formats with his slinky action but many former players including West Indian great Michael Holding have raised questions over his future

with the same action that puts a lot of load on his back.

### NEVER TOOK IT IS AS A DARK PHASE

Self-doubt can creep in when a cricketer at the peak of his powers is forced to be away from the game for so long but Bumrah chose to look at the bright side.

"When injury takes time to heal, it can be frustrating. Instead of having self-doubt, I was thinking how to get fit and make a comeback. It is important to give the body time and respect. I never took it as a dark phase and thought my career could be over. I was looking for solutions and when solutions came I was feeling good."

"When you are facing an injury you are trying to solve that problem, not what the world is saying. I wanted to recuperate. You learn to enjoy the game a lot more. I looked at it as an off season. So I got to spend time with family. So was looking at the positives. At the same time, I missed being away from action."

## NZ to tour Bangladesh for three ODIs

PTI ■ DHAKA

New Zealand will tour Bangladesh for the first time in 10 years, when they travel to the country for a split ODI and Test series in September and November. The three-match ODI series will be the dress rehearsal for the two teams ahead of the World Cup in India.

The World Cup begins with last edition's runners-up New Zealand taking on defending champions England in Ahmedabad in a repeat of the 2019 final. Bangladesh begin their World Cup journey against Afghanistan on October 7 in Dharamsala.

As per the itinerary unveiled



by the Bangladesh Cricket Board on Thursday, the tour is set to commence on September 21. All three ODIs are scheduled to take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur. The Test series is scheduled to start in late November following the conclusion of the World Cup. The venues for both Tests will be announced later.

The second leg of the tour will be part of the ICC World

Test Championship cycle. The red-ball clashes will take place after the World Cup.

The Black Caps last toured the country in 2013 for a full series. The two-match Test series was drawn, while Bangladesh secured a 3-0 win in the three-match ODI series. The Kiwis ended their tour, winning the one-off T20I.

### NZ TOUR OF BANGLADESH

1st ODI: September 21, 2nd ODI: September 23, 3rd ODI: September 26 (All matches in Mirpur)

1st Test: November 28-December 2; 2nd Test: December 6-10 (Venues to be decided).



## PCB includes Imran in revised video but controversy refuses to die

PTI ■ KARACHI

In an apparent bid to end the controversy over the release of a video in honour of the former players, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has created more problems for itself.

The PCB had faced a lot of backlash on social media over completely ignoring former captain Imran Khan in the tribute video released on August 14.

Late Wednesday night, the PCB came out with an inexplicable explanation that due to duration problems, the tribute video was abridged and some important clips were missing from it but it had been rectified in the complete version.

It also said the PCB had launched a promotional campaign leading up to the 2023 World Cup and the tribute video was part of it.

The interesting part is that

the duration of the earlier video from which Imran was missing and the "completed" version are around the same duration but this time the board has hacked all the clips and pictures of Wasim Akram and replaced them with Imran.

Cricket fans are now asking and wondering on social media where Wasim disappeared. Wasim had on Tuesday lashed out at the PCB completely overlooking the role of Imran in some of Pakistan cricket's most memorable and iconic moments.

Pakistan's former captain Rashid Latif said the PCB explanation was hard to digest because the tribute video was modified after nearly 48 hours.

"Why wasn't the mistake accepted and resolved as soon as the backlash started on social media and in the media," he questioned. He also noted that the PCB had a verified X (formerly Twitter) account which meant it can upload clips

and videos up to 7-8 minutes duration and secondly there was no duration bar on YouTube as well for the PCB channel to upload longer videos. "So where does this duration problem come in for PCB?"

"It is an attempt to cover up and save face but the PCB still needs to give answers as to who was responsible for authorizing, making, approving and releasing the video," he added.

Ironically, the PCB also got mixed reactions after it uploaded a two and half minute video on Thursday trying to chronicle the journey of Pakistan in all the World Cups from 1975 to 2019. The video is mostly without any voice over or proper footage of Pakistan's World Cup appearances or key moments.

This has now left some people wondering if a 2:30 seconds video suffices to properly chronicle Pakistan's journey in the 50-over showcase.

## Indian men bag 10m air pistol team bronze at ISSF World C'ship

PTI ■ BAKU

India's campaign in the ISSF World Championship began on an unimpressive note as none of the six 10m air pistol shooters competing here on Thursday were able to clinch a Paris Olympic quota, though the men clinched a consolation bronze medal in the team event.

The men's 10m air pistol team, comprising Shiva Narwal (579 points), Sarabjot Singh (578) and Arjun Singh Cheema (577) clinched the bronze medal with an aggregate score of 1734. The Chinese team of Zhang Bowen (587), Liu Junhui (582) and Xie Yu (580) took the gold medal with an aggregate of 1749 points, while the German team, comprising Robin Walter (586), Michael Schwald (581) and Paul Froehlich (576) bagged the silver with an aggregate score of 1743.

On a day when the Chinese shooters claimed all four gold medals at stake, the Indian



men fared poorly in individual 10m air pistol event, with none of them making it to the eight-player final.

## PKL-10 set for Dec 2 return

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Pro-Kabaddi League's 10th edition will return in the 12-city caravan format and is slated to begin on December 2.

The auction for the upcoming season will be held in Mumbai from September 8-9, the organisers stated in a release. "We have witnessed kabaddi spreading across India as a sport people love to watch and play through the success of the last nine seasons of PKL," PKL Commissioner Anupam Goswami said. "We promise a memorable tenth edition which

will be a true celebration of the sport," he added.

Jaipur Pink Panthers are the two-time defending champion, while Patna Pirates are the most successful team with three titles. Seasoned Pardeep Narwal, who currently plays for UP Yodhya, has the most raid points to his name (1,542).

In the defence, Iranian tackler Fazel Atrachali has garnered the most tackle points (424), while he currently leads Purneri Paltan. The complete schedule for PKL Season 10 is expected to be announced in due course.

有一种叫云南的生活

## Yunnan: A Many-Splendored Life

### COOPERATION

# Study tours: Classrooms on the road

Study tours are increasingly popular in recent years. In 2022, the number of participants in study tours exceeded 6 million in China. As more and more cultural tourism industry players, institutions, and schools enter the arena, study tours are undergoing great changes with new development trends emerging. In this issue of our newsletter, to provide another perspective on "a lifestyle called Yunnan", we will focus on those study tours of railways, museums, and folk musical theaters.



### Moving classroom helps Lao children fulfill dreams

The reviving tourism industry is making the economic sector more diversified. Along the China-Laos Railway, study tours have spread to Laos and are expected to become a new form of tourism.

Having been engaged in the tourism industry for more than a decade, Zhang Dawei is keenly aware that this summer vacation is bringing business opportunities. So far, he has opened two study tour routes between China and Laos, and the tours stop in cities along the China-Laos Railway such as Vientiane, Vang Vieng and Luang Prabang.

Zhang is a native of Laos. When studying international finance at Jilin University in China, he learned to speak fluent Chinese. More than ten years ago, he and his Chinese partner Long Xiaoli incorporated Double Dragon Tourism Co Ltd and began to engage in cross-border tourism services between China and Laos.

The China-Laos Railway, with a total length of 1,035 kilometers between Kunming and Vientiane, went into operation in December 2021. As of August 3, 2023, the railway has operated for 20 months and cumulatively delivered more than 19 million trips and 23 million tons of goods.

"Since the opening of the international passenger train in April this year, the China-Laos Railway is bringing significantly more Chinese people to Laos, and we are receiving more and more orders," Zhang said. "Currently we mainly receive study tours from China to Laos. This tourism model is still new in Laos. We hope to organize some study tours from Laos to China so that more Laotians can see China and experience Chinese culture."

Not long ago, a study tour to China was organized for 100 Lao primary school students. First, these kids took the international passenger train from Vientiane to Xishuangbanna. Then, they embarked on a 16-day journey to places such as Kunming, Beijing, Xi'an, Xiamen, and Guangzhou. They tried their hand at making flower cakes in Yunnan, built aerospace models in Xiamen, and attended a model juvenile court in Beijing.

Vicky Sipongma, a primary school girl from Bokeo Province, said, "On this study tour, we traveled from south to north and from west to east. We met with friendly Chinese children and experienced the colorful Chinese culture, which helps me to better understand China. Most importantly, it has always been my dream to visit Beijing."

### Chinese culture passed on through Beijing opera performances

Just a few days ago, led by the professional performers of Yunnan Provincial Beijing Opera Theater, more than 20 children aged from six to twelve staged a Beijing opera performance at the Lianhuachi Courtyard Theater in Kunming. The young performers were dressed in gorgeous costumes, with their faces colorfully painted, leaving a deep impression on the audience.

As China's most influential opera genre, Beijing opera represents the quintessence of Chinese culture, and it is performed throughout the country with Beijing as the center. Zhang Shijie has been a professional performer with Yunnan Provincial Beijing Opera Theater for thirty years. In recent years, according to Zhang, a large number of children have learned Beijing opera at the theater, and more than 200 of them have been admitted to Beijing opera colleges.

Many of them participated in Beijing opera-related study tours and competitions. Some of them have even fulfilled their dreams of becoming professional Beijing opera performers.

"The entry of Beijing opera into schools has brought this theatrical art closer to the students," said Zhou Kai, vice president of Yunnan Provincial Beijing Opera Theater. Every Beijing opera play relates a story. When children learn Beijing opera, they can learn about the history behind the stories and pass on the Chinese culture.

Beijing opera is a profound and extensive art. To arouse the children's interest, the teaching must begin with simple and catchy spoken and sung parts of Beijing opera plays. "We hope to organize more stage performances and study tours themed on Beijing opera. By combining learning with practice, we'll be able to attract more children to learn Beijing Opera. In this way, Beijing opera will be carried forward," Zhou said.

### Exploring mystery of nature at Chengjiang fossil site

"Today we'll mainly learn the paleontological knowledge concerning Chengjiang biota as well as some fossil restoration methods and techniques." At the Chengjiang Fossil Site Natural History Museum in Yuxi, Yunnan, staff members are taking primary and secondary school students from all over the country on a study tour. After all, summer vacation is here.

Among the world's fossil sites discovered so far, the Chengjiang fossil site contains the most concentrated, best preserved, and most varied remains of early Cambrian creatures that amount to more than 20 categories and 300 species. In recent years, relying on its advantageous resources, the museum has been actively

organizing science popularization study tours. Once a national youth education base, the museum has attracted a large number of primary and secondary school students for study tours.

The study tours organized by the museum are themed on the mystery of the Cambrian explosion of life. Through entertaining ways such as staff commentaries, 4D films, and fossil search and restoration, participants can obtain a knowledge of paleontological fossils that is unavailable in school classrooms.

"Unlike normal tours, study tours require good facilities, well-developed teaching plans and qualified instructors for students to obtain the desired knowledge," said Jin Hongsen, executive deputy director of the Chengjiang Fossil Site World Natural Heritage Administration. Study tours enable students to combine book knowledge with on-site practice. To ensure that the study tours are fruitful, the museum has not only upgraded its teaching equipment, function rooms and lecture halls, but also developed a series of featured courses for primary and secondary school students. Moreover, the museum has joined hands with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and higher learning institutions such as Northwestern University and Yunnan University to build a strong team of instructors.

Since it was officially opened to the public free of admission in 2020, the museum has cumulatively received more than 1.5 million participants in study tours. As an important extension of school education, study tours offer more than just knowledge. They also cultivate the kids' love of science and knowledge, Jin said. (Staff correspondents Qin Xuedan, He Rong and Guo Xiaorong)



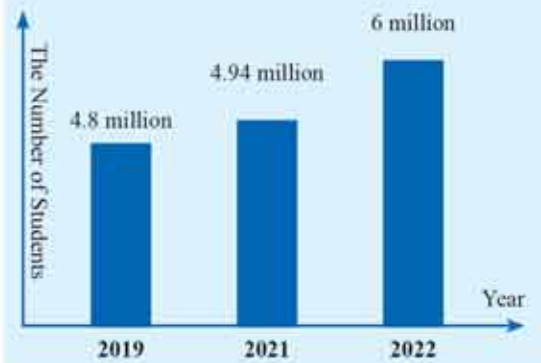
### The development history of study tours

- 2013** In 2013, China's State Council adopted "The National Program on Travel and Leisure (2013-2020)", proposing to "implement study tours in a progressive manner" for the first time.
- 2016** In 2016, China's Ministry of Education and 10 other departments jointly issued "Opinions on Promoting Study Tours for Primary and Secondary School Students", explicitly incorporating study tours into the school teaching and learning program.
- 2019** In 2019, China's Ministry of Education added nine programs to the original catalog of vocational education programs, including study tour management and service.
- 2022** In 2022, China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security published 18 new professions. Among them, the study tour instructor is defined as a person who plans, develops and implements study tour programs and organizes and provides guidance for study tour experience activities.
- 2023** In March 2023, the China Tourism Academy released the "China Study Tours Development Report (2022-2023)". The report shows that 93 Chinese higher vocational colleges began to offer the "study tour management and service" program in 2022. (Southern Metropolis Daily and China Youth Daily)

### Classification of study tours

In accordance with "The Code of Practice for Study Tour Services" that officially came into effect in 2017, study tour products are categorized into the knowledge and science popularization type, nature viewing type, experience and investigation type, motivation and outdoor training type, and culture and recreation type depending on the resources available. (CCTV)

### The number of students participating in study tours in China in recent years



(Statistics released by the China Tourism Academy)

### VOICES

"Museums should provide more opportunities for experiential education and arouse the kids' enthusiasm for study tours through interactive experience. Museums should also deepen cooperation with social institutions and schools, and act as a hub to integrate schools and various educational resources to explore and expand the forms of organizing study tours, thus enriching the content and connotation of study tours and making them more efficient and inclusive."

— Wu Qian, deputy director of the Dongjiao Pavilion of China Railway Museum

"I believe that the ultimate purpose of study tours is 'study'. The value of study tours is to promote the students' quality through traveling, sightseeing, and experiences."

— Xiong Bingqi, director of the 21st Century Education Research Institute and professor at Shanghai Jiaotong University

### STORY

## Study tour instructor Zhang Ye: Promoting children's well-rounded development in entertaining ways

For the public, the study tour instructor is a relatively new occupation. So what is a study tour instructor supposed to do? Is it a good choice for job seekers?

Zhang Ye teaches Chinese at an international school in Thailand. She is also one of the first study tour instructors recognized by Yunnan Province.

Zhang majored in tourism at university. She is only 25 years old, but she has been a qualified study tour instructor for three years. "I took the test in 2020 when the study tour instructor certificate was first introduced." At that time, Zhang's university was running a joint program with a Thai university. Soon after receiving the certificate, she went to Thailand to continue her studies.

"Many people tend to think that a study tour instructor is the same as a tour guide," Zhang said. "A tour guide faces a wide range of people, while a study tour instructor mainly faces primary and secondary school students. They plan routes and guide the kids to think. In fact, parent-child tours, summer camps and winter camps are study tour products, and the

teachers in charge are study tour instructors." In Zhang's opinion, normal tours are often cursory and superficial, while study tours are both educational and entertaining so that kids can achieve well-rounded development through these tours.

Zhang is excited that the study tour instructor has become a new occupation. "I sat for the study tour test mainly because I love travelling," Zhang said. "As with study tours, I can always learn new things when travelling."

Last April, Zhang graduated from university and found a job as a teacher of Chinese at an international school in Thailand. As a qualified study tour instructor, Zhang often takes her students on brief study tours of local gardens and tie-dye workshops, which produce "fairly good results". For Zhang, study tours can combine textbooks and practice, learning and traveling. "The two are well combined. Participants can meet different people and do different things along the way, which provide a good experience for students," she said. (e23.cn and people-tech.cn)

## Rainforest school in Xishuangbanna

It is a common thing to see a lab in a building, but have you ever seen a lab in a tropical rainforest?

In the Wangtianshu Scenic Area of Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, a group of young masters and doctors have founded China's only school for assimilating tropical rainforest knowledge. These young people have developed original rainforest science courses and science popularization activities to educate the public.

At this school, the modern science popularization laboratory almost becomes part of the tropical rainforest. The species to be studied are right next to people. One just needs to step out of the door to observe, sample, and obtain first-hand data.

"Yunnan is a treasure trove of biodiversity, and Xishuangbanna is a bright pearl in this treasure trove," said Dr. Liu Zhilong, head of the Rainforest School. In 2019, Xishuangbanna Wangtianshu Tourism Development Co Ltd and Linnaeus Labs jointly built the rainforest school. Based on the scenic area's environment and resources, Liu and his partners have developed study tour courses. They also invite rainforest experts to give lectures here on a regular basis. The school

has a nature museum, a lecture hall, and function rooms.

"How does it feel to hold a cup of chlorophyll in your hand, or seal a piece of the rainforest in an amber and bring it home for a keepsake?" Liu asked. The rainforest school offers courses such as "The Colors of Life", "Sweetness and Sugar of Fruits", "What Tropical Plant Contains the Most Water in Its Leaves", and "Artificial Ambers DIYing". All these courses are easy to follow, educational and entertaining. They attract a large number of study tours, especially enthusiastic parent-child groups.

"Today, with a growing demand for quality education and a general consensus to protect the environment, the tourism industry is undergoing transformation and upgrading. In such a context, the rainforest school is expected to become a core project to enhance the scenic area's quality," Liu said. As one of the founders of the rainforest school, Liu is full of confidence in the "tourism, education and ecological conservation" development model. He hopes that more people will understand, care for and protect the tropical rainforest.

(yunnan.cn, people.com.cn, and chinadaily.com.cn)