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MYANMAR: GENERALS UNDER FIRE

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NIFTY HITS LIFETIME HIGH, SENSEX JUMPS 493 POINTS

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 33 Issue 332
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

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Modi proposes India as host for COP33 in 2028

PTI ■ DUBAI

Asserting that the world does not have much time to correct the mistakes of the last century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced a "Green Credit Initiative" focused on creating carbon sinks through people's participation and also proposed to host the UN climate conference in 2028, or COP33, in India.

Addressing the high-level segment for heads of state and governments during the UN climate conference (COP28) here, Modi called for a planet proactive and positive initiative and said the Green Credits Initiative goes beyond the commercial mindset associated with carbon credits. "It focuses on creating carbon sinks through people's participation and I invite all of you to join this initiative," he said, stressing the world does not have much time to correct the mistakes of the last century.

This initiative is similar to the Green Credit Programme, notified domestically in October. It is an innovative market-based mechanism designed to reward voluntary environmental actions in different sectors by individuals, communities and the private sector.

Asserting that India has presented a great example to the world of striking balance between development and environment conservation, the Prime Minister said, India is among the only few countries in the world on track to achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions or the national



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during the COP28 in the UAE on Friday

India will bring back its soldiers from Qatar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is exerting all possible efforts to repatriate eight former Indian Navy personnel who were sentenced to death in Qatar last month, stated Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar on Friday.

"We are working closely to ensure that their interests are taken care of," Admiral Kumar mentioned during a media briefing. "The Government of India is making exhaustive efforts to ensure their safe return," he affirmed.

Detailed report on P4

action plans to restrict global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the guardrail to avoid worsening of the impact of the changing climate.

Modi was the only leader to join COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber on the stage along with the UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Steill at the opening plenary. "Over the past century, a small section of humanity has indiscriminately exploited nature. However, the entire humanity is paying the price for this,

especially people living in the Global South," he said.

"Thinking only about our own interests will only lead the world into darkness," the prime minister added.

Modi's statement came in the context that the poor and developing nations bear the brunt of extreme climate events such as floods, droughts, heat/cold waves as a result of changing climate due to historic carbon emissions by the richer countries that have led to increased global warming.

The Prime Minister called for maintaining a balance between mitigation and adaptation and said that energy transition across the world must be "just and inclusive."

He also called rich countries to transfer technologies to help developing nations combat climate change.

Modi has been championing the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE movement), which he had announced at the Glasgow COP in 2021, urging countries to adopt planet-friendly living practices and move away from deeply consumerist behaviour.

Citing a study by the International Energy Agency, Modi said, "This approach (LiFE) can reduce carbon emissions by 2 billion tonnes."

He called on the countries to work together and be decisive against the climate crisis.

"We shall cooperate with each other and shall support each other. We need to give all developing countries our fair share in the global carbon budget," said the Prime Minister.

If India's proposal to host

COP33 is accepted, it would be the next big global conference in the country after the G20 Summit earlier this year.

India hosted COP8 in New Delhi in 2002 where countries adopted the Delhi Ministerial Declaration which called for efforts by developed countries to transfer technology and minimise the impact of climate change on developing countries.

Rich nations should completely reduce their carbon footprint "well before" 2050, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday while calling on the world to deliver a concrete outcome on finance to help developing and poor nations combat climate change.

Climate science defines carbon budget as the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted for a given level of global warming (1.5 degrees Celsius in this case).

Developed countries have already consumed more than 80 per cent of the global carbon budget, leaving developing and poor countries with very little carbon space for the future.

Modi highlighted that India is home to 17 per cent of the world's population, but its share of global carbon emissions is less than 4 per cent.

"India is one of the very few economies in the world that is on track to achieve its NDC targets," he said.

India achieved its emissions intensity-related targets 11 years ahead of the committed time frame and non-fossil fuel targets nine years ahead of schedule.

Continued on Page 2

Bengaluru hit by bomb threat

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Sixty-eight private schools in and around the city on Friday received emails warning of bomb threat on their premises, triggering panic among the staff and parents, police said. The school authorities immediately alerted police, who reached the institutions concerned with the bomb disposal squads and anti-sabotage check teams, they said, while indicating the bomb threat could be a hoax.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said he has asked police to seriously investigate the e-mail and its source, and provide adequate security to schools and temples as a precautionary measure.

State Home Minister G Parameshwara said the message had come from an email id "kharijites@beebie.Com," saying bombs have been placed in the schools in Bengaluru and threatened to kill children and staff.

"We are seriously verifying it and its source. I have spoken to the Commissioner and officials and have given the necessary instructions and verification on whether it is true or hoax and measures to be taken accordingly. We will verify as to who is behind it and if there is an involvement of any terrorist organisation, and take measures accordingly. For now, it cannot be said who is behind it. The message in the email asks people to convert and other things--it will be verified,"

Another senior officer said the police teams have not found any suspicious objects on any of the school premises. "Prime facie, it appears to be a hoax message. We are also in the process of registering a case in this regard and a thorough investigation is underway." Students had already reached schools when they got to know about the email threat. Panicked parents rushed from their respective offices and homes to get their children back home safely.

Continued on Page 2

No division, distinction in CBSE board marksheets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced on Friday that it will not confer any divisions or distinctions to students in the Class 10 and 12 board examinations in the upcoming academic session. The board had previously declared its intention to conduct exams for class 10 and 12 students starting from February 15.

The decision was communicated by CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj through an official release. The release additionally stated that the responsibility of determining the best five subjects for calculating students' marks will exclusively lie with the admitting college.

"If a candidate has taken more than five subjects, the decision to identify the best five subjects may be made by the admitting institution or employer," said a CBSE release.

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Social commerce in India booming

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With a user base exceeding 450 million on social media, social commerce in India is a booming market, currently valued at \$8 billion in 2023, with the potential to reach \$85 billion by 2030.

To seize this opportunity, business communities are keen to jump on the bandwagon to expand their businesses. The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), in collaboration with META, the owner of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, is spearheading a national initiative to train the business community across the country in maximising the use of social media for business purposes, thus promoting social commerce in India. Qualified trainers from META provided training to traders on optimising the use of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and short reels to ensure the growth of their businesses, as stated by Praveen Khandelwal, the national general secretary of the CAIT. In essence, social

commerce refers to selling and purchasing products or services directly through social media platforms.

This could comprise every element from the discovery of products to the checkout process that covers a consumer's complete shopping experience. Not surprisingly, many companies conduct sales both via e-commerce sites and social media handles.

However, in India, the bulk of social commerce transactions are driven by new brands and first-time entrepreneurs. Considering the constant rise in social media users, brands are devising new ways to convert captive audiences into customers.

The CAIT on Friday launched a National Training Campaign "Vyapar Aapke Dwar" by organising a Traders Workshop on social commerce in New Delhi which was attended by trade leaders of more than 200 leading trade associations of Delhi. During the campaign, CAIT has a plan to organise 250 workshops across the country.

Khandelwal said in India there are 75 crore users on WhatsApp, 37 crore on Facebook and 33 crore on Instagram which is much larger number than e-commerce landscape and having about 100 crore users of smartphones. Social commerce will emerge as a much larger digital commerce than e-commerce. Khandelwal said social commerce is preferred because it has simplified shopping, scalable trust-building, smart curation, tools for sellers, unlocking new consumer segments, reimagining high value categories, and building enablers for the social-commerce ecosystem.

"On average, people spend three hours daily online - posting, scrolling, viewing videos and messaging. This period is the window of opportunity when marketing tools deployed by brands can target consumers. Unlike other largely transactional buy-and-sell models, social commerce revolves around developing a specific community.

Continued on Page 2

UGC directs campuses to showcase nation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The craze for selfies among youngsters will now be part of the curriculum on institutional campuses as the Centre has prepared guidelines for universities and colleges to highlight the country's progress. Selfie points will be established within the campus, allowing students, staff, and visitors to take selfies with achievements as background in various formats, including 3D images.

The national university regulator, University Grants Commission (UGC), has directed universities and colleges nationwide to set up selfie points at strategic locations on campuses to raise awareness among youngsters about India's achievements in various fields. The institutions can only install selfie points following approved designs in 3D layouts shared by the Ministry of Education. A UGC official stated that the



themes for the selfie points encompass a broad spectrum of national initiatives, such as "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat," and the major thrust areas of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

"These selfie points will not only serve as a source of pride but also enlighten every citizen about the transformative initiatives that have propelled India's growth on the global stage. Students and visitors should be encouraged to capture and share these special moments on social media platforms, fostering a sense of collective pride," said University Grants Commission (UGC) Secretary Manish Joshi.

ty to harness the energy and enthusiasm of youngsters, molding their minds with inspiration drawn from India's progress in diverse fields. The selfie points in these institutions will emerge as a dynamic and engaging place to instill a sense of national pride and awareness among youngsters and inspire future generations," added the official.

The Education Ministry has been undertaking various initiatives at both secondary and higher education levels to generate patriotic, cultural, and nationalist awareness in recent years. Initiatives such as Tamil Kashi Sangam have been connecting the student community between southern and northern India. Other programs aim to bridge the gap between the northeastern states and the central and southern parts of the country as part of academic progression. The Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors

(YUVA), aligned with the vision of a Global Citizen and as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, is training young authors below 30 years to promote reading, writing, and the book culture in the country, projecting India and Indian writings globally.

Another program, the India@75 Series, documents the contributions of various personalities, the making of new dynamic cities, historic events, and other socio-cultural, political, economic ideas and themes that have shaped India into a mature, independent, strong nation post-1947.

The series focuses on imparting these ideas in a reader-friendly manner to young readers (12+) of the country, standing on four conceptual pillars: People, Places, Events, and Themes.

The publication of a set of 75 books on freedom fighters is also part of the series.

Continued on Page 2

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MIZORAM ASSEMBLY POLLS

Counting of votes deferred to Monday

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The counting of votes in Mizoram will take place on December 4, a day after it was originally scheduled, the Election Commission said on Friday.

It said the decision was taken following representations from various quarters requesting for a change in the date of counting from December 3 on the ground that Sunday holds a special significance for the people of Mizoram, a Christian-majority state. "The Commission, having considered these representations, has decided to revise the date of counting for the General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram from 3rd December, 2023 (Sunday) to 4th December, 2023 (Monday)," it stated. The counting was earlier scheduled for December 3, along with that in four other states -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana - where assembly polls were held last month. Polling for the 40-member



Mizoram assembly was held on November 7. More than 80 per cent of the over 8.57 lakh voters exercised their franchise to decide the fate of 174 candidates. Members of the Mizoram NGO Coordination Committee held protests across the state on Friday seeking a change in the date of counting of votes. The committee is an umbrella body of major civil society organisations and student bodies, including the influential Central Young Mizo Association and Mizo Zirlai Pawl. Addressing a protest rally near the Raj Bhawan in Aizawl earlier in the day, NGOCC chair-

man Lalhmachhuana criticised the Election Commission for remaining silent on the issue so far despite repeated appeals by political parties, churches and NGOs to reschedule the counting date as it falls on a Sunday, a sacred day for Christians, who form the majority of the state's population. The NGOCC had recently sent a delegation to Delhi and discussed the issue with poll panel officials, he said.

Earlier, the Election Commission changed the date of polling for the Rajasthan assembly elections from November 23 to November 25 following demands for a change given "large-scale" weddings in the state that day.

Bengal cops summon BJP MLAs

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Moving at a lightning speed the Kolkata Police on Friday issued summons to 12 BJP legislators within hours of lodging an FIR against them for showing disrespect to the National Anthem.

The FIR was lodged on Thursday after Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee asked the Kolkata Police to do so after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee drew his attention to an incident where the BJP MLAs shouted slogans at their TMC counterparts calling them "chor" or thieves even as they were singing the National Anthem inside the Assembly premises where they were sitting on a dharna for the past couple of days against Centre's non-payment of MNREGA and PMRY funds. The saffron MLAs have been asked to appear on December 4, before their officials at Lal Bazar Police headquarters in Kolkata.

"Often Mamata Banerjee who runs a thoroughly corrupt government in Bengal ... who has ruined the political and social culture of the State... talks of taking revenge against us ... she told the other day

that she would arrest 8 BJP MLAs if the central agencies arrest four of their leaders on charges of corruption ... this police action is a clear consequence of her speech ... she often talks of political vendetta ... now everyone can see who is resorting to political vendetta ... This is a clear act of revenge which will be fought in the court of law," Bengal Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari said, adding his party would move the High Court against the police action.

"We will move the Court for quashing the order," he said even as his party Chief Whip Manoj Tigga said that on Thursday the BJP legislators had walked in from outside already shouting some slogans quite oblivious of whatever was going on inside the Assembly premises.

"Whatever the TMC leaders were singing or talking was inaudible and unclear from a distance and in the din that was on ... hence there was no scope for the BJP MLAs to hear what they were saying or singing ... in that case nothing was deliberately done if at all they were done, Tigga said. Refusing to say whether the BJP leaders would appear at the police headquarter on

the given date as "we will first discuss things inside the party," Siliguri saffron MLA Shankar Ghosh said, "LoP Suvendu Adhikari will take the decision in consultation with the party leaders ... before that it is not possible to say anything ... we will act as per the directions given to us by the party," adding the TMC leadership was deliberately attempting to stall BJP's movements in the State by falsely framing cases.

The TMC leadership which has seen a number of its senior leaders including ministers, legislators and district presidents going to jail on charges of corruption in education, food, municipal and other departments has often blamed the BJP government for pulling the strings from behind to get the central agencies to "falsely" frame the TMC leaders after failing to defeat them politically in 2021 Assembly elections. Meanwhile, the coal scam took a newer turn with the CBI on Friday sending fresh notice to a private bank seeking information regarding the bank details of Bengal Law Minister Moloy Ghatak. The Minister is under the ED and CBI scanner for his alleged role in the scam.

Robber held in Delhi, ₹13 lakh recovered

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old burglar has been arrested from south-east Delhi's Sarita Vihar area and stolen articles worth Rs 13 lakh have been recovered from his possession, police on Friday said.

The accused, identified as Mohammad Saidul of Sarita Vihar area, had been involved in 15 criminal cases previously, they said. "On November 16, a complaint was received at the Jamia Nagar police station by a woman that she went to an outstation to attend a wedding programme and when they returned, she found theft of valuables items," said Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) Ravindra Singh Yadav.

LS ethics panel report on Moitra to be tabled in House on Monday

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The report of the Lok Sabha Ethics Committee recommending the expulsion of Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra in a "cash-for-query" case will be tabled in the lower house of Parliament on Monday. According to the agenda papers

circulated by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, Ethics Committee chairperson Vinod Kumar Sonkar will lay on the table of the House the panel's first report. The committee, at a meeting on November 9, adopted its report recommending Moitra's expulsion from the Lok Sabha over the "cash-for-query" allega-



Six members of the panel voted

in favour of the report, including Congress MP Preeti Kaur who had earlier been suspended from the party. Four members of the panel belonging to opposition parties submitted dissent notes. The opposition members termed the report a "fixed match" and said the complaint filed by BJP Lok Sabha member

Nishikant Dubey, which the panel reviewed, was not supported by a "shred of evidence". Moitra can be expelled only if the House votes in favour of the panel's recommendation.

The Winter Session of Parliament begins on Monday and is scheduled to continue till December 22.

Chadha questions BJP over extension granted to Delhi Chief Secretary

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party leader and Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Friday questioned the BJP over the extension granted to Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, asking the party to reveal its "hidden agenda" behind the move to the residents of the national capital.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor hit back, saying Chadha's press conference raising questions over extension to Delhi Chief Secretary had nothing new, it just showed how much the AAP fears the Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar who is inquiring into umpteen corruption & nepotism complaints against CM Arvind Kejriwal including that of his palatial bungalow.

"Chadha should tell one Chief Secretary since it came to power with whom the AAP Government has shared a good rapport," he said. The Centre extended Kumar's tenure by six months, just a day ahead of his superannuation on November 30.

Addressing a press conference, AAP leader Raghav Chadha said the BJP was employing different tactics to "destabilise" the AAP government after failing to form the government three times in Delhi and then lost the municipal elections as well last year.

"When the BJP understood that it cannot come to power in Delhi, they started employing tactics to destabilise the Delhi government - sometimes through the LG or through special officers.

Rare knee surgery helps old patient stand on her feet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Fortis Hospital, Noida, claimed to have become the first centre in Delhi/ NCR and Uttar Pradesh to successfully integrate robotic joint replacement with an augmented reality system for knee replacement surgery. This groundbreaking procedure was performed on Hira Devi, a 69-year-old patient suffering from severe bilateral osteoarthritis, with the right knee more severely affected than the left. Dr. Atul Mishra, Director & Head of Orthopaedics at Fortis Hospital, Noida, led the surgical team and utilised the Pixee Augmented Reality System. "This state-of-the-art

technology from France represents a significant leap in orthopaedic surgery, allowing for precise alignment and minimally invasive procedures.

"The complexity of the patient's condition, especially the severe deformity in her right knee, posed a considerable challenge. Traditional knee replacement methods would have been less effective and more costly due to the need for additional implants and extensive surgery," said Dr Mishra. He added, "With the Pixee system, we achieved optimal alignment with minimal bone and soft tissue resection, ensuring a faster, less painful recovery for our patient."

Lt Gen Manjinder takes over as Army Training Command GOC-in-Chief

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Lieutenant General Manjinder Singh on Friday took over as the 24th General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army Training Command, a statement issued here said.

He succeeds Lieutenant General Surinder Singh Mahal, who superannuated a day earlier, as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Shimla-based Army Training Command (ARTRAC), the statement said.

Lieutenant General Singh is an alumnus of the Sainik School in Kapurthala, National Defence Academy in Khadakwasla and the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun. He was commissioned into 19 MADRAS on December 20, 1986.

Lieutenant General Singh commanded his battalion in counter-insurgency environment in Jammu and Kashmir, and tenanted varied staff appointments in Corps and Commands along the Western Front.

He has also been an instructor at the Indian Military

Academy and the Indian Military Training Team at Bhutan.

He has attended various prestigious courses such as Defence Services Staff College, Higher Command Course and also had the distinction of attending the National Defence College at Thailand, the statement said.

Lieutenant General Singh was the Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (policy, planning and force development) prior to taking over as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army Training Command.

With his vast experience at tactical, operational and strategic level, he now heads the prestigious Army Training Command, which is entrusted with the task to train and shape the Indian Army, make responsive and adaptive soldiers and evolve doctrines, concepts and more importantly adopt the war fighting technologies to ensure operational readiness for future challenges.

He was decorated with the Yudh Seva Medal in 2015 and the Vishisht Seva Medal in 2019 for his exemplary leadership and devotion to duty.

Social commerce in India booming

From page 1

In other words, brand building is based on dedicated fans or followers who admire and extol the brand, commenting about its offerings and even sharing and promoting the same," Khandelwal said. Social commerce is bound to expand because it already has a large number of both sellers and buyers and the only thing which is needed is to make both these ends connected in a cohesive manner which is an easier way. "The CAIT will rope in its affiliates of more than 45,000 trade associations all over the country to carry the echoes of social commerce to every market of the country," he added.

Moderate snowfall in higher reaches of Himachal

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Wintry conditions set in most parts of Himachal Pradesh as high-altitude tribal areas, other higher hills and mountain passes experienced moderate snowfall while wide-spread rains and hailstorm lashed several places including state capital Shimla on Friday.

Sissu, Gondla, Koksar and Keylong received 20 cm, 15 cm, 10 cm and 8 cm of fresh snowfall while Rohtang, Kunzum, Pin-Parvati passes and Dhauladhar and Churdhar mountain ranges and higher hills of Manali, Chamba, Shimla, Sirmour and Mandi received 20 cm to 30 cm of snow and the areas were wrapped in impeccable white blanket of snow.

The snow and slippery road conditions disrupted vehicular traffic and only 4x4 vehicles were allowed to go to Atul

Tunnel Rohtang. Shimla had a clear day in the morning but the sky was heavily overcast by noon and intermittent heavy rains and hailstorm lashed the town, forcing people to rush indoors.

Widespread moderate to heavy rains lashed several areas of the state and Raipur Maidan in Bilaspur district was wettest in the state with 32 mm rains, followed by Dalhousie 26 mm, Ghanauli 25mm, Chauri 18 mm, Bhunath 14 mm, Chamba 13 mm, Palampur and Kothi 9 mm, Dharamshala and Gaggal 8 mm and Salooni and Nagrota 7 mm each and Shimla 5 mm. The Manali-Leh highway has been blocked due to heavy snow at Rohtang and Kunzum passes and vehicular movement from Solang Nullah to Atal Tunnel and on Jalori road has been stopped, as per the Lahaul and Spiti police.

SPECIAL TRAINS-2023

In order to clear extra rush of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Special Trains as per details given below:-

05624/05623 Kamakhya - New Delhi - Kamakhya Special Express					
Train No.: 05624			Train No.: 05623		
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
---	23:00	Kamakhya	03:30	---	
12:00	---	New Delhi	---	15:10	

DAYS OF RUN: 05624 Ex Kamakhya on 04.12.2023 (Monday) and 05623 Ex New Delhi on 06.12.2023 (Wednesday).

STOPPAGES: Rangiya, Barpeta Road, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, New Coochbehar, New Jalpaiguri, Kishanganj, Kathin Jn, Khagaria Jn, Rusera Ghat, Samastipur Jn, Muzaffarpur Jn, Hajipur Jn, Sonpur, Chhapra, Siwan Jn, Deoria Sadar, Gorakhpur Jn, Gonda Jn, Lucknow, Moradabad & Ghaziabad Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, 2 Tier AC, AC 3 Tier Economy Class, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General.

05626/05625 Kamakhya - Delhi Jn - Kamakhya Special Express					
Train No.: 05626			Train No.: 05625		
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
---	06:30	Kamakhya	22:45	---	
21:45	---	Delhi Jn	---	07:35	

DAYS OF RUN: 05626 Ex Kamakhya on 09.12.2023 (Saturday) and 05625 Ex Delhi Jn on 11.12.2023 (Monday).

STOPPAGES: Rangiya, Barpeta Road, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, New Coochbehar, New Jalpaiguri, Aluabari Road, Kishanganj, Barsoi Jn, Kathin Jn, Naugachia, Mansi Jn, Khagaria Jn, Begusarai, New Barauni Jn, Bakhtiyarpur Jn, Patna Jn, Danapur, Ara, Buxar, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn, Mirzapur, Prayagraj Jn, Kanpur Central, Etawah Jn, Tundla Jn, Aligarh Jn & Ghaziabad Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, 2 Tier AC, AC 3 Tier Economy Class, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General.

For any kind of information such as arrival/departure timings and stoppages enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.



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The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Suprakash Pradhan/ Gayatri Patra/ Santanu Kumar Pradhan/ Girija Pradhan/ S/o Subash Chandra Pradhan Mandipalli Karapalli Rangellund Orissa Ganjam- 760001/ LBEP00005412657/ LBBS00005607971	Plot No. 435, Khata No. 1459, Village Sankar Newly Named As Badabazar Mouza, P.S. Badabazar, S.R.O. Berhampur-1, Dist. Ganjam, Orissa (Admeasuring an area of Area of Ac. 0.092 Decimal	September 30, 2023 Rs. 83,06,390/-	03/06/2023

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: December 02, 2023 Place: Delhi



PM Modi proposes India as host for...

From page 1 "And India did not just stop there, we remain ambitious," he said.

The country aims to reduce emissions intensity of gross domestic product by 45 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels and achieve 50 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. It has also committed to become a net zero economy by 2070. As part of its G20 Presidency this year, India drew consensus from the world's major economies for a Green Development Pact seeking to balance development and the environment. The Pact shifted the conversations from the billions to the trillions needed for the energy transition. It noted that developing countries will need USD 5.8-5.9 trillion in the pre-2030 period, particularly to implement their NDCs.

No division, distinction in CBSE...

From page 1

Furthermore, it is clarified that the Board does not calculate, declare, or provide the percentage of marks. If the percentage of marks is needed for higher education or employment, any calculations required may be performed by the admitting institution or employer," stated a CBSE release. This information was disclosed in response to queries from individuals questioning the criteria for calculating students' percentages in the board's examinations. CBSE had decided last year not to issue any merit list of students when announcing the results for class 10 and 12 board exams. The board also refrained from announcing any toppers for class 10 and 12. The decision to abstain from releasing the CBSE toppers list and merit list aimed to prevent unhealthy competition among students, as stated in the CBSE result statement.

Bengaluru hit by bomb threat

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Some of these students from different schools which received bomb threats said they had exams scheduled for the day. CM Siddaramaiah said, "I have spoken to police officers and I have instructed them to take adequate security measures at all places, to remain cautious, and to find out those behind it." "There is no need for anyone to worry. I have asked security to be tightened, and checks to be conducted at schools which have received threats," he added. Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar visited one of the schools which received the bomb threat. He enquired about the situation from the school authorities and the police. "I was a bit dismayed after seeing the news on TV, as some schools I know and the one near my house were also mentioned. So I went out to check. The police have shown me the e-mail. Prima facie, it appears to be fake (hoax). I spoke to the police...But we should be cautious. Parents are a bit worried, no need to

worry. Police are looking into it," he said. He appealed to parents not to worry and said their children would be safe. "Some mischief mongers might have done this, in 24 hours we will nab them. Cyber crime police are active; they are doing their job...We should also be cautious," he added.

The home minister also pointed about a similar threat last year turning out to be a hoax. "This also may be a hoax, but we won't take it lightly. Even if there is one per cent (doubt), we will take it seriously and take measures like sensitising the intelligence and informing central agencies, which the department has to do," he said. Meanwhile, the Opposition slammed the government over the matter, alleging there was deterioration of law and order in the state and to create a worry-free environment for students, teachers and parents, I urge for a comprehensive investigation of this case and necessary immediate action," he said in a post on 'X'. With such incidents, certain vested interests were able to create an atmosphere of fear or panic among people, state JD(S) chief and former chief minister H D Kumaraswamy said. After the Congress came to power, the law and order situation has deteriorated in the state and there is a lack of confidence among the people about their safety. The government has to take this threat e-mail seriously and immediately bring the truth out, he added.

Atishi flags irregularities in 12 DU colleges in letter to Centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Higher Education Minister Atishi on Friday wrote to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan flagging off irregularities in 12 Delhi University colleges funded by the State Government. Atishi in her letter stated that the city government has noted several serious irregularities and procedural lapses involving hundreds of crores. She suggested that the 12 colleges can be merged and brought under the Delhi government or the Centre may take their full control and in that case, the Delhi government will stop allocating funds to them. "Alternatively, if the colleges were to remain affiliated with

the University of Delhi, the Government of India should assume direct responsibility for full funding. This financial support could be provided through the University Grants Commission (UGC) or the proposed Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC)," Atishi said. Atishi said these 12 colleges are affiliated to DU and funded by the state government and not maintained by the Central government. "In last few years, Directorate of Audit, Delhi government has noted several serious irregularities and procedural lapses involving hundreds of crores from public exchequer. These colleges have created posts and engaged teaching and non teaching staff

without the approval of their administrative department and Finance Department. Salaries worth several crores are being paid who were never appointed through the established procedures," reads the letter. The other irregularities include arbitrary and irregular payments towards sanitation and security services, allotment of canteen and other contractual services. "Despite having crores of funds lying in their corpus, many of these colleges have not taken any initiative to pay the salaries or other dues of their staff, in a timely manner", she said. The letter further highlighted that these are symptoms of a larger malice that plague these colleges. "Though these col-



leges are affiliated with University of Delhi, they are not answerable to it for judicious utilisation of their grants. On the other hand, they also do not feel answerable towards Directorate of Higher Education of Government of

NCT Delhi, which is their administrative department, because they are affiliated to University of Delhi, a central University. As a result, neither the DU nor the Delhi government seems to have any reasonable oversight in the affairs

of these colleges. As a result, even the Delhi government has felt constrained to take action against the management of these colleges even in the face of such established malpractices," the letter said. "I firmly believe that colleges should have reasonable autonomy to run the institution in the best interest of its current and future students, no government can be expected to be unaccountable towards public exchequer," it said. Atishi has put forward two key proposals to the union education minister, aiming to address the existing constraints within the education system. The first proposal suggests a complete merger of the 12 colleges under the Delhi Government, mean-

ing they would be entirely funded by the Delhi Government. In her second proposition, Atishi recommends that the Centre assume full control of these 12 colleges under the DU. In the year 2014-15, the allocation to these colleges was Rs 132 crore. In the year 2015-16, Rs 147 crore were allocated to these colleges. In the year 2016-17, Rs 156 crore were allocated. In the year 2017-18, Rs 171 crore were allocated. In the year 2018-19, Rs 213 crore were allocated. In the year 2019-20, Rs 235 crore were allocated. In the year 2020-21, Rs 265 crore were allocated. In the year 2021-22, Rs 308 crore were allocated. In the year 2022-23, Rs 361 crore were

allocated. This year, an amount of Rs 400 crore has been allocated to these 12 colleges so that they can establish better facilities for all the students studying in them. Twelve fully-funded colleges by the Delhi government are Acharya Narendra Dev College, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, Bhagini Nivedita College, Bhaskaracharya College, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Keshav Mahavidyalaya, Maharaja Agrasen College, Maharshi Valmiki College of Education, Shaheed Rajguru College and Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies.

LG nod to 83 more establishments to operate 24/7, total reaches 607

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved the Delhi Government's Labour Department's proposal to allow 83 more commercial establishments including major brands in retail, fashion, e-commerce, logistics and food sector to operate round the clock. Presently there are 524 establishments are operating on the basis of 24x7. With the fresh 83 approvals, there will now be 607 such shops and establishments situated at various locations in the national capital that will give impetus to economic activities. "These commercial establishments have been given exemptions under Sections 14, 15 & 16 of the Delhi Shops and Establishments Act, 1954 that enables commercial establishments to operate on a 24x7 basis. This is the fourth such proposal which has been cleared by Saxena since October 2022 when first such exemption to operate on the 24x7 basis was given to 314 establishments followed by 55 and 155 in April and June respectively this year," Raj Niwas official said. Some of these shops and establishments that figured in the list of 83 are Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited involved in



the retail trade of readymade garments and accessories, e-commerce giant Amazon Transportation Service Pvt. Ltd. having delivery stations, Godfrey Phillips India Ltd. engaged in retail trade business like departmental and convenience stores, Nykaa Fashion Pvt Ltd and FSN Brands Marketing Pvt. Ltd. (Both dealing with cosmetic and beauty products) and Bikanerwalla International having chain of sweets shops. Hennes and Mauritz Retail Pvt. Ltd. dealing with retail of readymade garments and accessories, AR Milk and Products involved in sale of dairy products, e-commerce firm Link Logistics Limited, I-T firm PCC Softech Pvt. Ltd, 24x7 Departmental Store

Storex, FMCG distributors Link Logistics Limited, InstaKart Services Pvt. Ltd. doing business of courier and logistics, are some of the other business entities whose applications for exemption to operate 24x7 have been approved. Saxena appreciated the chief minister and the labour department over the applications being cleared expeditiously, the official said. According to him, the LG underlined that low disposals may often point towards callousness, carelessness and extraneous considerations being at play while deciding on proposals where departmental discretion is involved. "The LG said there is a need to mitigate any such consideration in the interest of transparent

governance and all measures suggested earlier like developing a 'Single Window System' as an integral portal for approving be followed strictly," the official said. Saxena also directed the labour department to submit within 15 days the reasons why applications that were rejected during the last year were disposed of and what has come out of them in case of re-application. He stressed that it will also be in the interest of a conducive and investor-friendly business environment and resultant economic growth of the city, apart from providing entrepreneurship. The LG also directed the department to consider setting up a facilitation or enabling mechanism for applicants. He has also asked for developing a feedback module to identify hitches in the whole process and provide resolution to the same on a real time basis. The exemptions under sections 14, 15 and 16 of the Delhi Shops and Establishments Act are given to establishments engaged in providing essential services. These sectors include e-commerce, grocery stores, hospitality, airport services, cargo services, cold storage and warehouses, security services and other similar services

Delhi among highest groundwater exploited States: Ministry report

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) of the Ministry of Water Resources in its report "Dyanmic Ground Water Resources of India 2023", has found that the national Capital is covered by diverse rock types of different geological ages from Pre-Cambrian to Recent. According to report, the national capital is among the States which are found highest extractable of ground water. The report mentioned as much as 89 percent of the Capital is occupied by alluvium and ground water is being tapped mostly through tube wells. "Yields of tube wells vary from 4 to 10 lps in older alluvial deposits and from 25 to 55 lps in newer alluvium. About 11 % of the State is occupied by quartzitic hard rock, where bore wells have yield of 0.6 to 5 lps. The ground water resources assessment has been carried out tehsil-wise," the report said. It further highlighted the Total Annual Ground Water Recharge of the State has been assessed as 0.38 bcm and Annual Extractable Ground Water Resources is 0.34 bcm. The Total Current Annual



Ground Water Extraction is 0.34 bcm and Stage of Ground Water Extraction is 99.13 percent. "Out of 34 assessment units (tehsils), 13 units (38.24 %) have been categorized as 'Over-exploited', 102 mcm (29.61 %) under 'Over-exploited', 12 units (35.29 %) as 'Critical', 4 units (11.76 %) as 'Semi-critical', and 5 units (14.71 %) as 'Safe' categories of assessment units. Similarly, out of 1487.61 sq km recharge worthy area of the State, 617.25 sq km (41.49 %) area are under 'Over-Exploited', 306.4 sq km (20.6 %) under 'Critical', 233.73sq km (15.71 %) under 'Semicrotical', 330.23 sq km

(22.2 %) under 'Safe' categories. Out of total 344.49 mcm annual extractable ground water resources of the State, 122.11 mcm (35.45 %) are under 'Over-exploited', 102 mcm (29.61 %) under 'Over-exploited', 46.94 mcm (13.63 %) under 'Semi-critical' and 73.44 mcm (21.32 %) are under 'Safe' categories," it further stated. As compared to 2022 assessment, the Total Annual Ground Water Recharge decreased from 0.41 bcm to 0.38 bcm and Annual Extractable Ground Water Resources decreased from 0.37 bcm to 0.34 bcm. The

decrease in the total annual groundwater recharge can be attributed to a reduction in recharge from rainfall, resulting from lower precipitation during the current assessment year compared to the previous assessment year. There is decrease in the Annual Ground Water Extraction for the state from 0.36 bcm to 0.34 bcm and the Stage of Ground Water Extraction has increased from 98.16 % to 99.13 percent, said the report. In the present assessment, the total annual groundwater recharge in the country has been assessed as 449.08 bcm. Keeping an allocation for natural discharge, the annual extractable ground water resource has been assessed as 407.21 bcm. The annual groundwater extraction (as in 2023) is 241.34 bcm. The average stage of groundwater extraction for the country as a whole works out to be about 59.26 %. Out of the total 6553 assessment units (Blocks/ Mandals/ Talukas) in the country, 736 units in various States/ UTs (11.23%) have been categorized as 'Over-exploited' indicating ground water extraction exceeding the annually replenishable ground water recharge.

Kejriwal felicitates rat hole mining experts from Delhi involved in Silkariya rescue

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday met the rat-hole mining experts from Delhi who participated in the operation to rescue the 41 workers trapped in Silkariya tunnel and felicitated them. Later, BJP leaders also met and greeted them for their effort in the rescue operation.



Manoj Tiwari, Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva also met six rat miners and announced a cash reward of Rs. 25000 to each. The six rat miners are Vakil Hassan, Munna Quershi, Rashid Ansari, Naseem Mallik, Irshad Ansari & Feroze Quershi. Sachdeva said nation will always be grateful to these heroes for their swift work in saving 41 lives, what international machines couldn't achieve the rat miners achieved with their strong will power. Earlier on Thursday, the Congress delegation led by Arvind Singh Lovely met them and appealed to the central and the Delhi governments to honour them with suitable cash rewards and other facilities to acknowledge their selfless service. Rat-hole mining involves digging of narrow tunnels, usually 3-4 feet high, for workers to enter and extract coal. The horizontal tunnels are often termed "rat holes", as each just about fits one person. At the Silkariya tunnel, the 12 experts were called by Trenchless Engineering Services Pvt Ltd and Navayuga Engineers Pvt Ltd to deploy the rat-hole mining technique horizontally in the collapsed part of the main structure.

AAP launches 'Mai Bhi Kejriwal' signature campaign

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Friday launched the 'Mai Bhi Kejriwal' signature campaign to get people's feedback on whether Arvind Kejriwal should resign as Delhi chief minister if he is arrested under a "conspiracy by the BJP". "The 'Main Bhi Kejriwal' signature campaign has been launched today. Under it, people's opinion is being taken on the way AAP leaders are being arrested, and if Arvind Kejriwal is arrested, whether he should resign or continue to run the government from jail," party leader Gopal Rai told reporters. "We conducted a door-to-door campaign and asked

people whether if there was an arrest, Kejriwal should resign or run the government from jail. People firmly said that Kejriwal has done a lot of work for the public. Therefore, he should not resign but run the government from jail. People also said that all these arrests are happening under one agenda," Rai said. The Aam Aadmi Party's Delhi state convenor also interacted with locals during the campaign launched from East Delhi's Laxmi Nagar assembly constituency. Delhi BJP president hit back at the campaign saying the campaign was confined to only AAP workers. "The door to door campaign too has found no takers with common



people asking AAP workers posing as "Main Bhi Kejriwal" as to "Kejriwal Ne Bharstachar Kyun Kiya" why Kejriwal did corruption," he said. "From December 1 to 20, they will conduct a door-to-door campaign at all 2600 polling stations, and from December 21 to 24, they will hold public meetings in all 250 wards. In the end, whatever opinion the public has, they will hand it over to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal," he said. "Our job is to awaken the public. The people have the opportunity to answer this in the Lok Sabha elections," he said. "There is immense anger among the people regarding

the arrest conspiracy by the BJP against Arvind Kejriwal ji. People are asking why does the BJP want to arrest a chief minister who has done so much good work for Delhi," Rai said in a post on X. Earlier this month, the Enforcement Directorate had summoned Kejriwal for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. The chief minister did not appear before the central agency, claiming that its summons was "illegal and politically motivated". Under the campaign, AAP volunteers will take signatures of people on pamphlets by visiting all 2,600 polling station areas in the city as well as their opinion.

City air improves to 'very poor' as AQI reaches 372

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national capital's air quality improved to the very poor category on Friday after briefly touching the severe zone in the morning with thick, grey haze shrouding the city's sky even as no improvement was expected over the weekend with forecasts showing no significant change in meteorological conditions. A 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) of 372 (very poor) was recorded at 4 pm on Friday. Data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) showed most regions in the city having an air quality index (AQI) of above 400. AQI was recorded 509 in Patparganj, 473 in Anand Vihar, 450 in Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, 442 in US Embassy, 443 in Okhla, 438 in Vivek Vihar, 431 in RK Puram, 424 Srinivaspuri, 398 in Jehangirpuri, 396 in Shahdara, 408, 411 in Punjabi Bagh and 423 in Wazirpur. The mini-



mum temperature of 13.3°C on Friday was three degrees above normal. It was 12.6°C on Thursday. The national capital region saw a very polluted month this November, with no improvement from Novembers over the last few years. The average AQI in November was 372. The average AQI this November was 372, the second highest for the month from 2017 onwards, after an average of 377 recorded in 2021. This

is higher than the average of 320 recorded last year, 327 in 2020, and 312 in 2019. Both 2018 and 2017 also saw relatively cleaner air in November, going by average AQI figures. The air quality in Delhi showed marginal improvement following heavy rain last Sunday (November 26). However, on Thursday, the AQI dropped to the 'very poor' category after being in the 'poor' category the previous day, according to CPCB's 24-hour average data.

DU VC addresses newly appointed teachers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Vice Chancellor of Delhi University Professor Yogesh Singh said here on Friday teaching is the best profession on this earth while addressing newly appointed teachers in Delhi University (DU). He also said the teacher only gives. Teachers give values, culture, studies, happiness, positivity and originality, Singh said. He made these assertions while speaking at the inauguration of the Faculty Induction Program organized for newly appointed teachers in DU. A Faculty Induction Program on the topic "NEP 2020: Pedagogical Imperatives for Higher Education" was organized by Delhi University on Friday. On this occasion, Chairman of the National Steering Committee of the National Curriculum Framework Dr K Kasturirangan (former



Chairman, ISRO and former Chairman, National Education Policy Committee) was present as the chief guest. Dr K Kasturirangan said in his address that NEP 2020 is going to complete holistic education. Through this, every aspect of life can be enriched in a holistic manner. The Vice Chancellor said in his presidential address that the number of new appointments of teachers in DU in a year is more than 3500. This is the

largest number of appointments in any university in such a period. He said that they had a total of 5200 vacancies out of which 1700 are still left. Addressing the newly appointed teachers, he said you have got the best opportunity of teaching in the prestigious university of the country, now you have to do the best for others. He said that the teacher only gives. Teacher gives values, culture, studies, happiness, positivity and originality.

Govt trying to bring back former Navy men from Qatar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is making all efforts to bring back eight former Indian Navy personnel sentenced to death in Qatar last month, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said here on Friday. "We are working closely to ensure that their interests are looked after. The Government of India is putting all-out efforts to ensure they are brought back," Admiral Kumar said at a media briefing. The Indian nationals were on October 26 given death sentence by Qatar's Court of First Instance. India described the ruling as "deeply" shocking and vowed to explore all legal options in the case. An appeal has already been filed against the death sentence and a higher court in Qatar has already admitted the plea. The appeal has been filed by the legal team of the detained Indian nationals.



The Indian nationals, who worked with private company Al Dahra, were arrested in August last year reportedly in an alleged case of espionage. Neither the Qatari authorities nor New Delhi made the charges public against the Indian nationals. In its reaction to the ruling by the Qatari court, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) last month said it is attaching "high

importance" to this case and is exploring all legal options. The charges were filed against the eight Indian navy veterans on March 25 and they were tried under Qatari law. All of the former Navy officers had "unblemished stints" of up to 20 years in the Indian Navy and had held important positions, including that of instructors in the force, former military officials had said.

iDEX reaches milestone with signing of 300th contract

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the flagship initiative of the Department of Defence Production, has reached a milestone with the signing of its 300th contract. The contract relates to the design and development of advanced Gallium Nitride Semiconductors (GaN), Defence Ministry said here on Friday.

Giving details, they said it is essential for the next generation of wireless transmitters in defence applications ranging from radars to EW (electronics warfare) jammers. Currently, almost all GaN components are imported being a sensitive and cutting-edge technology whose export is controlled and restricted by many countries.

The proposal aims to design, develop and manufacture GaN components for defence in India using completely indigenous GaN technology. This would significantly enhance the indigenous design and development capability,



paving way for immense potential in the defence sector including exports. The contract was signed here on Friday by Additional Secretary (Defence Industries Production) and CEO/DIO T Natarajan with Agnit Semiconductors Private Limited in the presence of Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and other senior civil and military officials of Ministry of Defence. The iDEX achieved the milestone within nine month of the signing of its 200th contract with a winner of the Indian Navy Prime challenge launched

under the SPRINT initiative on February 15, 2023. The 150th Contract of iDEX was signed in December, 2022. In his address, the Defence Secretary lauded the innovators on their success and reiterated the need for accelerated development of indigenous technologies. He complimented iDEX on the signing of the 300th contract and asked the officials to maintain the impressive tempo of connecting innovators with the Defence Sector. In another development, continuing with the commitment towards 'Make in India' initia-

ive and iDEX being a 'path to procurement' for the innovators, BEL signed a procurement contract with the iDEX Winner Blurgs Innovations Private Limited for their solution TRIDENT, which is an intelligent maritime domain awareness tool with a robust solution designed to enhance maritime security. This solution assists in building superior maritime domain awareness by relying on anomalous detection and would aid in quicker decision making. This is a first procurement order placed by a Defence Public Sector Undertakings

(DPSUs) under the iDEX scheme. The iDEX framework was launched by the Prime Minister in 2018 with the objective to provide a platform of co-creation and co-development in the defence sector, engage start-ups and develop defence and aerospace set up in the country. The iDEX is being implemented by the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), established under the Department of Defence Production. Within a short span of time iDEX, which has also been awarded the prestigious Prime Minister Award for Public Policy in Innovation Category for the year 2021, has emerged as a game changer in the defence eco-system through its flagship programmes like DISC, Prime and Open Challenges (OC). The iDEX has been able to build the required momentum and generate a critical mass of start-ups in the defence sector. It has also been able to generate thousands of jobs and attract India's talent back to the country.

Maximum global talk, minimum local walk, says Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of indulging in "maximum global talk, minimum local walk" on his assertion at the COP-28 that India has struck a balance between development and environment conservation. "How can anyone take what the Prime Minister says globally on environment seriously in light of his disastrous track record in India," Congress general secretary and former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said in a social media post. Modi during his address at the UN climate conference (COP28) in Dubai asserted that India has presented a great example to the world of striking a balance between development and environment conservation. "India is among the only few countries in the world on track to achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions or the national action plans to restrict global warming to 1.5

degrees Celsius, the guardrail to avoid worsening of the impact of the changing climate," he said. Claiming that the Modi Government has made several "illegal and regressive changes" to relax environmental protections, Ramesh said the Prime Minister's statement at the Dubai conference was "yet another of his trademark falsehoods". "Maximum Global Talk, Minimum Local Walk — is the principle followed by the Prime Minister. He has claimed in Dubai that India has 'struck a great balance between ecology and economy'. This is yet another of his trademark falsehoods," Ramesh alleged. The Forest Rights Act of 2006, a historic legislation protecting the traditional rights of adivasis and forest-dwelling communities, was "weakened" with a 2022 notification, he claimed. "Forests can now be cleared without consulting those who live there, and consent from gram sabhas is no longer needed to use forest land," Ramesh said.

UN body applauds domestic standards on millets

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian millets are likely to dominate the global nutriceals platter soon with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), a UN food standards body applauding domestic standards on millets at the same time accepting the Government's proposal for the development of international standards for the superfoods. The Food and Safety Standards Authority of India's proposal for the development of global standards for at least 15 types of millets including finger millet, barnyard millet, kodo millet, proso millet and little millet as group standards as in the case of pulses was unanimously endorsed in the 46th session at FAO in Rome in Italy, said an official from the Union Health Ministry. The meet is being attended by representatives from 161 member countries, including the European Union (EU), said the official. The CAC, an international food safety and quality standard-setting body created by the WHO and the Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN with 188 member countries, currently has standards for sorghum and pearl millet. The Indian delegation led by FSSAI CEO G Kamala Vardhana Rao had proposed international group standards for millets not only considering that 2023 has been declared as the "International Year of Millets" but also reflecting on the growing international trade in these products, he said. With the CAC endorsing the proposal, work on the submission of project documents and development of draft standards will now be initiated by India, he said. The move will set the benchmark in highlighting millet and its benefits worldwide. Presently, India is exporting millets to 139 countries across the globe with export value at USD 64 million in FY 2021-22 while there has been an increase in export of millets by 12.5% during April-December 2023 as compared to the same period last year. The group standards on millets framed by the FSSAI for 15 types of millets, which speci-

fy eight quality parameters, including maximum limits for moisture content, uric acid content, extraneous matter, other edible grains, defects, weevil grains and immature and shrivelled grains, will act as an important foundation for the development of global standards. The existing Codex standards for sorghum and pearl millet would also be reviewed while making the group standards for millets, the official said. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya congratulated the Indian delegation on the "momentous" occasion and said that India has played a pivotal role in making the millet choice of the common man. The major importing countries were USA, Australia, Japan, Belgium etc in 2011-12 which had been shifted to Nepal (USD 6.09 million), UAE (USD 4.84 million) and Saudi Arabia (USD 3.84 million) in 2021-22. The other seven destinations in the current top-ten list of India's millet export are Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, UK, Yemen, Oman and Algeria, said an official from the APEDA.

1.15 crore digital life certificates generated



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 1.15 crore digital life certificates were generated by pensioners across the country during the recently concluded special campaign. Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh complimented the Department of Pension and Pensioners Welfare for the successful conclusion of the nationwide digital life certificates (DLCs) campaign 2.0 from November 1 to 30, it said. He said that the campaign was conducted to implement the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the digital empowerment of Pensioners,

according to the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry. Singh said the Government was deeply committed to improving pensioners' welfare and the campaign was an important step for the ease of living of pensioners. During the nationwide campaign, which was held in 100 cities at 597 locations, 1.15 crore DLCs were generated, including 38.47 lakh for central government pensioners, 16.15 lakh for state government pensioners and 50.91 lakh for EPFO pensioners, it said. "DLC submission is an ongoing activity as more than 35 lakh defence pensioners can submit life certificates in the

month of their retirement. By March 2024, it is expected that total DLC submission would cross the 50 lakh mark," it said. An analysis of the age-wise generation of DLCs reveals that more than 24,000 pensioners above the age of 90 years used digital mode, the statement said. The leading states for DLC generation are Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, having generated 5.07 lakh, 4.55 lakh and 2.65 lakh DLCs, it said. The leading banks for digital life certificate generation are the State Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank, with 7.68 and 2.38 DLCs respectively.

India keeping close tabs on China presence in Indian Ocean Region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As China has stepped up its presence in strategically important Indian Ocean Region (IOR), India is keeping a close watch on it, Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said here on Friday. He also said at any given time, six to eight Chinese warships are in the region besides Chinese research vessels and fishing boats. Assuring that the Indian Navy is cognizant of these vessels, he said "we do keep an eye in the Indian Ocean region and what they are up to" adding the Navy is constantly revising its plans to these challenges. Admiral Kumar made these observations during the media conference here on the occasion of the Navy Day on December four. He outlined the Navy's readiness when asked about Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean region and assistance to Pakistan Navy to



have at least 50 warships. On the issue of women officers in the force, he said the Navy has appointed the first woman commanding officer on a warship. He, however, refrained from disclosing her name as she is undergoing pre-commissioning training. She will command a fast attack craft on the western seaboard, the Navy chief said. He also said since the implementation of Agnipath scheme in the armed forces last year, nearly 1,000 women Agniveers have joined the Navy. The Navy chief said the force follows the dictum "all roles-all

ranks."On the operational side of the Navy, he said ships, submarines, and aircraft have sustained a high operational tempo in the strategic waters in the last one year. "Our ships, submarines, and aircraft have sustained a high operational tempo - undertaking missions and tasks encompassing military, diplomatic, constabulary and benign roles," he said. "Our units were mission deployed across the Indian Ocean Region and beyond, to protect and promote our national interests," he said. The Navy has "remained a

'Combat-ready, Credible, Cohesive, and Future Proof' force enabled by what we call our 'ships first' outlook where every single action that we take is aimed to enable our women and men in operational units to perform their duties very well," the Navy chief said. The Navy's footprint of deployments has been persistently present across the Indo Pacific. Underlining the importance of self-reliance, Admiral Kumar said at present Indian shipyards are building 65 of the 67 warships. These capabilities had their origin in the 1960s and the latest example is induction of the indigenously built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, he said only six or seven nations have the expertise to build aircraft carriers. Stressing upon indigenisation, the Navy chief said the ongoing Ukraine conflict has disrupted logistics supply chain and some countries are facing challenge

NIA chargesheets eight in Telangana for supplying explosives, drones to Maoists

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday chargesheeted eight accused in Telangana for allegedly supplying explosives, drones and other equipment to the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) for attacking security forces in the Maoist-affected areas of the country, an official said. All the eight accused are in custody following their arrest under sections of the Indian Penal Code, Telangana Public Security Act, Explosive Substances Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the official said. While three of them, working as couriers for the proscribed outfit, were nabbed on their way to supply the explosives, drones and a lathe machine, the others were apprehended subsequently, a spokesperson of the federal agency said. The official said investigations have revealed that the explo-



sive material recovered from the possession of the three arrested -- Punem Nageswar Rao, Devanuri Mallikarjun Rao and Vollepogula Umashankar -- was originally supplied to them by accused Jannu Koti, Arepalli Srikanth, Tallapalli Arogyam and Bontha Mahender. The latter four had procured the staff from Sonaboina Kumaraswamy, who held a licence for dealing in explo-

sives, the spokesperson said. The official said investigations have further revealed that the courier trio of Punem, Devanuri and Vollepogula had purchased and supplied a drilling machine to the Maoists in March. They had further purchased a lathe machine in May for delivery to CPI (Maoist), a Left-wing extremist organisation involved in various terrorist activities, the spokesperson

said. The official said these accused had also purchased a drone for the Maoists in May intended for spying on the activities of security forces inside the forest. They further received explosive materials, meant to unleash violent attacks on security forces, from their co-accused, to be supplied to the accused underground Maoists, the spokesperson said. The official said the cache that the three accused were carrying at the time of their arrest was intended for use in manufacturing of country-made arms, to be deployed against the security forces in India's Maoist-affected areas. The case was initially registered at Cherla police station in Telangana on June 5 and taken over by the NIA on August 3, the spokesperson said, adding further investigations to expose and demolish the CPI (Maoist) outfit's nefarious anti-India designs are in progress.

Communities can help end AIDS, says UNAIDS report

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Every minute, a life is lost to AIDS. Every week, 4000 girls and young women become infected with the infectious disease, and out of the 39 million people living with HIV, 9.2 million do not have access to lifesaving treatment across the countries, a new report released by the Joint United Nations Programme on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) / AIDS (UNAIDS) has painted a gloomy picture. However, on the brighter side,

the report, as suggested by its title 'Let Communities Lead' says that there's hope to end the deadly disease by 2030 if communities on the frontlines get the full support they need from governments and donors. "Communities across the world have shown that they are ready, willing and able to lead the way. But they need the barriers obstructing their work to be pulled down, and they need to be properly resourced," said Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS as the world observe World AIDS Day on Friday.

"Too often, communities are treated by decision-makers as problems to be managed, instead of being recognised and supported as leaders. Communities are not in the way, they light the way to the end of AIDS." The report notes that community advocacy from the streets to the courtrooms to parliaments has secured groundbreaking changes in policy. Communities' campaigning helped open up access to generic HIV medicines, leading to sharp, sustained reductions in the cost of

treatment from US\$ 25 000 per person per year in 1995 to less than US\$ 70 in many countries most affected by HIV today, it said. "Investing in community-led HIV programmes delivers transformational benefits," it asserts while citing several instances to drive home the point. For example, it says programmes delivered by community-based organizations in Nigeria were associated with a 64% increase in access to HIV treatment, a doubling of the likelihood of HIV prevention service utilization, and a four-

fold increase in consistent condom use among people at risk of HIV. Talking about community initiatives in India, it said that "a community-led initiative by the Transgender Welfare Equity and Empowerment Trust (TWEET) in India supports the socioeconomic inclusion of the transgender community by increasing awareness of the business sector regarding transgender issues and by helping connect community members to well-paid jobs." As per reports, the number of

People Living with HIV (PLHIV) are estimated at around 24 lakhs. Southern States have the largest number of PLHIV viz. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka being the top three. Annual New Infection (ANI) are estimated at 62.97 thousand in 2021 in India. The UNAIDS report says, among sex workers reached by a package of peer-based services in the United Republic of Tanzania, the HIV incidence rate was reduced to below half (5% vs 10.4%). The report also highlights

how communities are at the forefront of innovation. For instance, in Namibia's Windhoek, a self-funded project by the Youth Empowerment Group is using e-bikes to deliver HIV medicines, food and adherence support to young people who often cannot attend clinics due to their schooling hours. In China, community organizations developed smartphone apps that link people to self-testing which contributed to a more than four-fold increase in HIV tests across the country from 2009 to

2020. The report reveals how communities are also holding service providers to account. In South Africa five community networks of people living with HIV inspected 400 sites across 29 districts and conducted more than 33 000 interviews with people living with HIV. In the Free State province, these findings led provincial health officials to implement new appointment protocols to reduce clinic wait times and three- and six-month dispensing of antiretroviral medicines.

Ajit drops bombshell on Sr Pawar NCP factions to battle it out in Baramati Lok Sabha seat



October 12 an upset NCP President (Sr Pawar) had chosen to resign as the party chief's post after several of the leaders from the Ajit Pawar camp insisted on joining hands with the BJP.

"My father never wanted to resign from his post as the NCP president's post. But, after only several of the party leaders - currently belonging to the Ajit Pawar - insisted on joining hands with the BJP, Pawar saheb was pained by the insistence by this kind of a clamour within the party. He then resigned from the NCP chief's post," Supriya had said.

In another revelation, Supriya said that Sr Pawar had no knowledge about Ajit Pawar and eight of NCP senior MLAs being sworn in as ministers in the Eknath Shinde government on July 2. "The decision (to join the Eknath Shinde-led BJP-Shiv Sena government) was taken by keeping him (Sharad Pawar) in the dark," she claimed.

Contesting several claims made by Ajit Pawar camp leader Chhagan Bhujbal in a television interview on the circumstances leading to Sharad Pawar's resignation, Supriya said: "You people thought it was all a drama. He tendered his resignation from his post as he was hurt, after all the leaders (now in the Ajit Pawar) wanted to team up with the BJP."

"After Pawar saheb resigned from his party president's post, all party leaders, party workers and people from across the state insisted that he continue as the party president. At that time, even Chhagan Bhujbal had insisted on continuing in the post as the party's president," she recalled.



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The two feuding NCP factions, led by Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar, are preparing to battle it out for the prestigious Baramati Lok Sabha seat, a pocket borough of Sr Pawar and his daughter-MP Supriya Sule, in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Fresh from the superlative performance during the Gram Panchayat (GP) elections in which his faction bagged 109 Gram Panchayat (GP) seats out of a total 231 seats followed among others by Sr Pawar-led NCP (27) in Pune district, Ajit Pawar set the stage for a battle royale between the two NCP factions for the Baramati Lok Sabha polls.

Speaking at the party's "Chintan Shibir" at Karjat in Raigad district, deputy chief minister and chief of the NCP faction

headed by him Ajit Pawar said on Friday that his party would contest four seats — Baramati, Shirur, Satara and Raigad — as part of the ruling "Maha Yuti" (grand alliance) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

"We have had preliminary discussions with the leaders of our alliance partners - the Eknath Shinde-headed Shiv Sena and BJP. We will take a final decision after holding discussions with Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnis (of the BJP)," Ajit Pawar said.

Picking up the gauntlet thrown by her cousin Ajit Pawar, Supriya said that she welcomed the decision taken by the rival NCP faction to field a candidate against her. "I am Indian and Maharashtrian who has full faith in democratic system. That being the case, any political party has the right to decide from which constituency it

would put up a candidate. Who will contest from where is an internal of Maha-Yuti. From the bottom of my heart, I welcome the rival decision to field a candidate from Baramati," Supriya said.

Sharad Pawar is a six-term Lok Sabha MP from Baramati, Supriya Sule is a three-term MP from Baramati.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Supriya was elected from Baramati Lok Sabha constituency for the third consecutive term.

Supriya trounced BJP candidate Kanchan R. Kool by a margin of 1,57,000 votes. Supriya polled 6,50,000 votes as against 493,000 votes secured by her rival candidate Kanchan.

It may be recalled that in the Gram Panchayat polls witnessed recently in the politically important Katewadi Gram Panchayat in Baramati taluka of Pune district, the Ajit Pawar-led ruling NCP won 14 out of total 16 seats, while its alliance partner BJP secured two remaining seats.

Katewadi forms a part of the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency represented by the Sharad Pawar family over five decades now. While Ajit Pawar is a one-term Lok Sabha MP from Baramati and for Baramati MLA for seven times, Supriya Sule is a three-term MP from Baramati. In the overall Gram Panchayat elections in Pune district — of which Baramati Lok Sabha constituency is a part, is faction bagged 109 Gram Panchayat (GP) seats out of a total 231 seats followed among others by Sr Pawar-led NCP (27) in Pune district.

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a shocking claim that may embarrass NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister and breakaway NCP leader Ajit Pawar said on Friday that Sr Pawar had himself asked the party workers to go on agitation to demand that he should take back his resignation as the party president in May this year.

Speaking at a "Chintan Shibir" of his party leaders and workers at Karjat in Raigad district, Ajit dada - as Ajit Pawar is known in the political circles - claimed that after he announced his resignation as the party president on May 2, Sr Pawar had called two of his confidants Jitendra Awahad, Anand

Paranjpe and party's women wing leaders and asked them to organise an agitation in front of the YB Chavan centre in south Mumbai.

"Excepting Awahad, there was not even a single MLA among the NCP functionaries who were agitating to demand Pawar saheb to take back his resignation," Ajit dada said.

It may be recalled that Pawar had on May 2 this year dropped a bomb shell in the political circles by announcing his resignation as the NCP president.

However, Pawar agreed to continue in the post on May 5 after hundreds of party workers had gone on a spontaneous agitation demanding that he take back his resignation, while party leaders met him on several occasions

and tried to convince him to take back as continue in the post.

Ajitdada said that he and 10 to 12 MLAs and leaders, including Chhagan Bhujbal, Dilip Walse Patil, Dhananjay Munde, had expressed their intent to join the Eknath Shinde Shiv Sena-BJP government and they wanted Sr Pawar to take a decision in the matter. "Sharad Pawar called me on May 1 and said if he joined the Shinde-BJP government, he would resign as the NCP president. At that time no one had an idea that Pawar would resign from his post as the party president," he said.

"After he announced his resignation from the party chief's post, Pawar saheb Jitendra Awahad, Anand Paranjpe and

women leaders and asked them to start agitation demanding withdrawal of his own resignation," Ajitdada claimed.

"After he took back his resignation, Sharad Pawar insisted that his Supriya Sule be made the party's national president. "Later, Pawar saheb did not like our decision to join the Shinde-BJP government on July 2. But on July 17, he assured he would streamline things. He again met at an industrialist's place and assured me he would set things right. All the while, he was trying his trying to catch us unawares," Ajit dada said.

The claims made by Ajitdada are in contrast to the revelation made by Sr Pawar's MP daughter and party's national working president Supriya Sule on

Make India leading power in medical research, health care: President



President Droupadi Murmu with Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis during the platinum jubilee celebrations of Government Medical College in Nagpur PTI

PTI ■ NAGPUR

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday asked the health care fraternity to work towards making India a leading power in medical research and ensure facilities are so affordable that people from across the world can come to the country to avail them.

She was the chief guest at the inauguration of the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Nagpur.

Hailing GMCH for the services it had rendered in the past 75 years, the President said affordable medical facilities were necessary for the overall development of any society.

The COVID pandemic made everyone realise the importance of a strong health care system, she said.

"It was the hard work of doctors, nurses and other medical professionals which ensured India could vaccinate such a huge

population speedily against the disease," she said.

Pointing out that lack of doctors was a big obstacle in providing universal health care, the President said the country had recently seen a good increase in the number of medical colleges as well as MBBS and post graduate seats, all of which would play an important role in providing proper facilities to people.

Disparity in health services is also a problem and the Central government is addressing it by opening medical colleges in districts, which will reduce regional imbalance and the rural-urban divide, Murmu said.

Hailing the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana as well as the digitisation of medical records, Murmu underlined the need to spread awareness on organ donation, which at the moment was low.

The President lauded GMCH for its research in mental health and for contributing to the health care sector of Maharashtra.

"Take steps in making the country a leading power in medical research and health care and make these so affordable that people from across the world should come to you for health services," she told the gathering.

Lauding GMCH for giving good doctors to the country, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said the state government has given Rs 550 crore for the development of the facility.

This will provide a facelift to the college and hospital due to the addition of modern amenities, said Fadnis, who also told the gathering that he was born in GMCH, Nagpur.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said it was the wish of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that all citizens get good medical facilities at minimum cost.

Gadkari, who is Lok Sabha MP from here, also said GMCH had made Nagpur famous because those who studied medicine here have been tendering services across the world.

'Domestic violence societal menace'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic violence is not a private issue but a societal menace, said Dr Shobha Vijender, noted author and founder of NGO Sampurna. However, it can be resolved through positive intervention for both the victims and the perpetrators of violence, she added.

She stressed that mental health is the core issue when dealing with the victims of domestic violence. She also underscored that intervention and counselling play an important role for women and families on the verge of a breakdown in their happy homes.



Her concern to prepare the future generation to end up the problem of domestic violence was the focal point throughout the discussion held at the Guru Gobind Singh College on her latest book 'Broken Brides: domestic violence in India. The idea of pre-marital counselling of the young minds to understand the real meaning of marriage was the key. She enlightened the audience that marriage was a bond between

two families and of shared responsibilities. She appreciated the college and the organisers for the session saying that such sessions can prepare the young generation to play role of productive members of the society must be conducted.

The concern that more universities and colleges must conduct such sessions was pressed upon.

Also present at the function were the principal Prof Jatinder Bir Singh and Prof Namita Rajput, ex principal of Sri Aurobindo College.

The vote of thanks was proposed by the convener, Dr Gurdeep Kaur.



PM Modi committed towards 100 per cent saturation of Govt schemes: LG Sinha

PTI ■ JAMMU

Asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed towards 100 per cent saturation of government schemes and reaching out to the unreached, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that people should actively participate in the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra'.

Sinha further added that people should avail the "on-spot services" being provided and disseminate the information about the schemes.

He highlighted the efforts of the J&K government to ensure benefits of welfare measures reach the poor and the weaker sections of society.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed towards 100 per cent saturation of government schemes and reaching out to the unreached," Sinha said at the Dhok Waziran panchayat.

The LG said that the Union Territory administration is providing five Marla land to poor landless beneficiaries under the PMAY (G).

"This will raise the living standards of poor, vulnerable landless families, remove the existing societal imbalances and lead to their economic and social prosperity," he said.

He urged them to reach out to the maximum number of families, generate awareness about the government schemes and encourage enrolment of potential beneficiaries.

He emphasised the need to replicate the best practices of Panchayat Dhok Waziran to develop model villages in a holistic way for better livelihood options, improved quality of life and "action-oriented Jan-Bhagidari".

"Individual success stories must reach out to every nook and corner of the UT to highlight the transformation brought about by the government's flagship schemes in their lives," he said.

He said that through integrated action and involvement of every individual, villages can be turned into viable, sustainable economic centres, creating opportunities for youths, women, farmers and vulnerable sections to accomplish the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Gujarat sees 1,052 heart attack deaths in 6 months

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A total of 1,052 persons have died of heart attack in Gujarat in the last six months, with 80 per cent of the deceased being in the 11-25 age group, state education minister Kuber Dindor said on Friday.

In view of the rising number of heart attacks, nearly two lakh school teachers and college professors will be provided training in performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), a crucial lifesaving intervention during such medical emergencies, Dindor said.

"As many as 1,052 persons have died due to heart attack during the last six months in Gujarat. Nearly 80 per cent of them were in the age-group of 11 to 25 years and these students and youngsters were not even obese. The 108 ambulance service receives 173 cardiac emergency calls per day," said Dindor while addressing the media in Gandhinagar. Youngsters are living in fear

because a majority of the heart attack victims were in their age group, he claimed.

"We have seen how people died (due to heart attack) while playing cricket or taking part in garba (a traditional dance form popular during Navratri festivities) in the last six or seven months. I urge teachers to take part in this CPR training camp so that they can save lives," the minister said.

Under this initiative of the state Education Department, CPR training camps will be conducted at 37 medical colleges between December 3 and 17 to provide training to nearly two lakh school and college teachers, he said.

Some 2,500 medical experts and doctors will be present at these training camps and certificates will also be provided to the participants, Dindor added.

Such training was given earlier to Bharatiya Janata Party workers and police personnel in the state, he pointed out.



TN CM asks officials to take precautionary measures as IMD issues yellow alert

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin urged officials to take necessary precautionary measures as the Regional Meteorological Centre has forecast heavy rains in the next two days.

Chairing a meeting with senior officials of the revenue, municipal administration departments as well as the police at the secretariat here, the chief minister told the officials to take coordinated measures to ensure the safety of human lives.

Yesterday's well-marked low-pressure area over the southeast Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression today and lay centered in the same region about 760 km of Puducherry, 780 km of Chennai, 960 km of Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh, and 940 km of Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, the India Meteorological Department said. "It is likely to intensify into a deep depression by December 2 and further into a cyclonic storm on the following day," the IMD said in a bulletin on Friday. Thereafter it would move northwards and cross south Andhra Pradesh and adjoining north Tamil Nadu coasts between Chennai

and Machilipatnam around the evening of December 4, it said.

Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places over the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu.

Following the yellow alert (6-11 cm of rainfall expected) issued by the IMD, the Chief Minister held a review meeting with the district collectors and instructed them to take precautionary measures.

Issuing a set of guidelines on the preparedness and mitigation works for the Northeast Monsoon, Stalin said "I urge the officials to effectively tackle the situation arising out of the cyclonic storm while ensuring minimal inconvenience to the public." They should take necessary precautions in a coordinated manner, he said, and added that the requirements of the districts concerned could be conveyed to the local ministers, chief secretary, or department heads. Revenue Minister K K S R Ramachandran, Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena, Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) S K Prabhakar, Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner J Radhakrishnan, Director General of Police Shankar Jiwali and other officials participated in the meeting.

Manipur CM hits out at BJP baiters

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Friday launched a scathing attack on those who blamed the BJP for the ethnic strife in the State. Addressing 'karyakartas' at the party head office here, Singh said, "Over the past six months, I kept asking myself what fault did we commit? Was it a serious error to launch a campaign to identify illegal immigrants who otherwise would have swallowed the indigenous people of the state?"

"Was it a fault to start a war on drugs to save the youths. Was it also a fault to have stopped the massive deforestation which only destroyed the natural beau-

ty, but also led to emergence of new villages and widespread poppy cultivation," Singh asked.

"My conscience is clear. I am not wrong. BJP is not wrong. The only fault of the BJP is to take up such initiatives to protect the indigenous people of the state," Singh said.

"If these steps had not been taken up by the party and the government, imagine the situation of the state a decade later," Singh said, adding, "BJP will work for a united Manipul." "There is no other party which can save the state's people," the CM said and emphasised on the work done by the BJP for the welfare of the people including implementation of Inner Line Permit and removal of AFSPA



from majority of valley areas of the state.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Shah have given approval to fence around 100km of the Manipur section of the Indo-Myanmar border," Singh said and asked, "Which party or government had launched a biometric campaign to identify illegal immigrants. The unrest we are seeing today is because of such campaigns being taken up."

On the recent peace deal between the Centre and United National Liberation Front, Singh said, "The peace agreement was not an instant thing. It took three to four years to such an agreement."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The helping hand

COP28 sees developed countries pledging aid to developing nations to fight climate change

World leaders are in Dubai, the UAE, to take part in the World Climate Action Summit (COP28) which got under way on November 30. The Summit is an important moment for the heads of State and Government to signal their commitment to transform key climate-related decisions into concrete action and credible plans. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UN secretary general António Guterres and King Charles III have already spoken at the inauguration ceremony. For 12 days, these leaders would discuss the menace of climate change; it is crucial to reflect on the progress made and the challenges ahead. The key outcomes of COP28 and the steps taken to combat the urgent threat of climate change have not been spectacular but some progress has indeed been achieved. On the COP28 opening day, all parties showed solidarity by agreeing to operationalise the 'loss and damage fund' and funding arrangements. Several countries pledged money to the fund, totalling around \$300mn. The conclave saw renewed commitment from nations to the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement. Parties reiterated their commitment to limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to pursue limiting it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This commitment is crucial for preventing the most severe impacts of climate change.



Thankfully, both developing and developed countries have realised the importance of checking climate change. With assured funding, many plans will see the light of the day and go a long way in reducing carbon emissions, including ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable energy capacity and promoting sustainable development. This conference would be remembered for financing climate action, a breakthrough on the very first day. Developed countries pledged increased financial support to developing nations to help them adapt to climate change impacts and transition to low-carbon economies. The financial commitments aim to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations and recognising the shared responsibility; the conferences have emphasised the importance of innovation and technology transfer. As COP28 highlights the significance of nature-based solutions, the discussions focused on the role of forests, wetlands and other ecosystems in enhancing resilience to climate change. Initiatives were launched to promote sustainable land use and conservation practices. While COP28 has made some headway, challenges remain. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the overall fight against climate change. COP28 must achieve some tangible results when it ends. It is not just an environment issue but a question of survival of many developing nation who may perish if sea level rise or droughts and floods ruin their agriculture. It is now or never!

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PICTALK



Sand artist Manas Sahoo creates a sand sculpture to spread awareness about AIDS, in Puri

Myanmar: Generals under fire



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The success of the current offensive in Myanmar shows once again that the ruling junta is doomed

The continuing offensive by an alliance of resistance groups, that began on the morning of October 27, has panicked Myanmar's ruling junta. This is clear from a report in The Global New Light of Myanmar, the junta's media voice, which said that Acting President Myint Swe recently told Myanmar's Defence Council that the country was in a critical condition, and could be torn apart if the military did not act effectively against the groups that carried out the attacks, which were a part of the offensive.

The offensive has been launched by The Three Brotherhood Alliance (henceforth Brotherhood Alliance) comprising the ethnic Rakhine armed group, the Arakan Army (AA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the armed wing of the Palaung (the Burmese name for the Ta'ang ethnic minority group) and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) active in the Kokang Special Region of northern Shan State.

It has made significant gains, seizing the military's bases and towns across northern Shan, Kachin and Rakhine states and the upper reaches of Sagaing and Mandalay regions. According to the website, The Irrawaddy, several resistance organisations including the People's Defence Force (PDF), the armed wing of the opposition National Unity Government (NUG), the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF), and one of the country's most powerful armed ethnic organisations, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), are coordinating with the Brotherhood Alliance's operation.

The Brotherhood Alliance has captured over 224 junta bases and seven towns across northern Shan State, including some strategic centres on key Myanmar-China trade routes. It and allied resistance forces fully control Chin Shwe Haw, a trade hub on the Chinese border, and another strategic town, Hseni, where the Lashio-Muse and Lashio-Chin Shwe Haw trade routes converge, as well as another trade gate—Kyin San Kyawt on the



China border in Muse Township. The Chin National Army and other Chin resistance groups have captured Reh Khaw Da in Fala town on the India border. Rikhawadar and Laidenpi in Chin State and Khampat in the Sagaing region, are also in the hands of the Junta's opponents.

In coordination with Operation 1027, the Karenni Army, the Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF), the KNDF, and the PDF, had jointly launched another offensive, Operation 11.11, on November 11, seizing more than 20 junta bases and outposts in Kayah State's Loikaw and Demoso townships as well as the nearby Pekon township in southern Shan State.

They have also captured the strategically important Kunlong township on the Lashio-Chin Shwe Haw Road that is considered by the gate-way to the Kokang region. The resistance groups have also blocked strategic arteries like the Mandalay-Lashio-Muse and the Mandalay-Lashio-Chin Shwe Haw roads, which pass through Shan State. They also control several border trade routes with China.

The military, which should be called Sit-Tat and not Tatmadaw, had been on the backfoot even before the current offensive began. It was bedeviled by low morale and

desertions. Ye Myo Hein said in a piece datelined May 4, 2023, and featured by the United States Institute for Peace, "the military currently has about 150,000 personnel. Roughly 70,000 are combat soldiers. At least 21,000 service members have been lost through casualties, desertion and defection since the coup. At this troop level, the Sit-Tat is barely able to sustain itself as a fighting force, much less a government." Things have been made worse by discord within. Several three-stars generals have been removed. Many younger officers are unhappy as they recognise that almost the entire country is against them.

The number of casualties has increased since Ye Myo Hein's piece came out, and particularly since the current offensive began. According to reports, hundreds of junta soldiers have been killed. The Junta does not give out credible figures. The fact that the commander of the 99th Light Infantry Division, Col. Aung Kyaw Lwin has been killed—the first divisional commander to have met this fate since the 2021 coup—is, however, significant; so is the recent death of Major Soe Win Hitke, the second-in-command at the Sit-Tat's Lailenpi base, in a drone attack. The odds are now rapidly increasing against the Junta.

The latter doubtless has tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery and air force. Tanks and armoured vehicles are very difficult to deploy in the areas dominated by the ethnic forces. With densely forested mountainous terrains, deep gorges and steep climbs, these are ideal for staging ambushes. Moreover, air-strikes and artillery do not win wars, even when backed by heavily armed and trained infantry. Otherwise, the United States would have won hands down in Vietnam.

The junta will land in history's dustbin—not tomorrow but sooner than many think. India must seriously consider its options. It has to contain China's influence in Myanmar when Beijing has maintained close contact with the ethnic fighters, with some even suspecting that the offensive had its nod.

Second, India has its security concerns in its north-eastern parts, which is primarily why it has maintained friendly ties with the Junta. With areas in Myanmar adjoining India's borders increasingly dominated by the ethnic resistance groups, India must consider cooperating closely with the NUG and establishing links with the ethnic forces.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)



THE JUNTA WILL LAND IN HISTORY'S DUSTBIN—NOT TOMORROW BUT SOONER THAN MANY THINK. INDIA MUST SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ITS OPTIONS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE IMPACT OF CASTE CENSUS

Sir — After the caste-based survey, the Bihar government has now increased the limit of reservation in jobs and education from 60 to 75% (in line with the share of the population). But there was no movement on this issue anywhere in the state. When the Mandal Commission was implemented in the country 34 years ago, this issue became a major cause of tension, which changed the balance of political power in North India. This time nothing like this is happening because the general class is not very excited about the continuously decreasing government jobs in this interval.

Anyway, out of the total employment, only 5.8% are government jobs, the rest are in the private sector or self-employment. Every year, 1.5 crore new youth are added to the already crowded job market of the country. The total number of government employees in Bihar is four lakh and on average a few thousand new jobs are created every year, but 30 lakh new youth enter the job market. This is the reason that this time the reservation percentage increased based on 'whose number is bigger, his share is more' could not create backward-forward tension in the society. However, the strategy of political parties will remain under watch given the general elections.

N Ashraf, Mumbai | Mumbai

DEEPFAKE POLITICS

Sir — There is no end to the problems of the Election Commission as Deepfake has established its deep-rooted designs. The truth is distorted, and deception reigns supreme. As India gears up for its upcoming elections, a sinister weapon has emerged, threatening the very fabric of democracy. Enter the world of deepfakes, where artificial intelligence (AI) crafts hyper-realistic videos that manipulate and mislead voters. From Telangana to Madhya Pradesh, deepfake videos have infiltrated the campaign landscape, spreading fabricated messages and distorting reality. What's more alarming is that political parties themselves are complicit in this high-

Modern-day slavery is rampant



Human trafficking, bonded labour and forced marriages are stark examples of modern slavery. Domestic work, agriculture, construction activities, manufacturing units, and sexual exploitation—all fall into areas of forced labour where there are few regulatory clauses. Child labour is a sordid story of modern slavery and its vagaries with approximate-

ly ten million children falling prey to the devious agendas of employers. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has identified about twenty-five million men and women as victims of modern slavery.

A comprehensive plan to tackle forced labour was laid down in detail in the 2014 General Conference of the ILO. The ILO has specially identified migrant workers who are lured or easy to be tricked because of their poor understanding of the local language and tradition. Enforcement of proposed laws is important to instil a sense of fear in others. Appropriateness and uniformity are needed for the consistent implementation of the laws to the satisfaction of all concerned. To take stock of the progress made by ancillary agencies and the respective governments, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed on December 2.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

tech propaganda game. Caught in this web of deception, social media platforms and tech giants face an uphill battle in combating deepfakes. As the 2024 elections draw near, the onus falls on the Election Commission of India (ECI) to safeguard the democratic process. The clock is ticking, and the stakes have never been higher. Will India rise to the challenge and protect its democracy?

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

BLAME GAMES

Sir — If the BJP accuses Congress of being a political party adept at 'appeasement'. So, shouldn't the BJP be accused of religious division and majority appeasement? Because of this party gives up its religious agenda. If people stop demanding accounts of temples, mosques and atrocities of the Mughal period in the 23rd year of the 21st century, then there will be no difference between BJP and Congress. These people played the latest game of inciting religious sentiments and polarisation in Bihar. Not only Bihar but the people of the entire country were shocked when three days ago

this big headline was seen in which it was written that holidays were abolished for Mahashivratri, Rakshabandhan, Janaki Navami, Ramnavmi, Janmashtami, Teej and Jitutiya from the schools of Bihar. It was also written that the holidays of Muslims like Eid Bakrid and Muharram etc. have been extended. The table of holidays released by the Education Department of the Government of Bihar, there are holidays on all those days, about which there is a discussion in the media that those holidays have been abolished. Then who manipulated this table and put a gun on the media's shoulder? Adding fuel to the fire, BJP leader Giriraj Singh writes on his X handle, "The way Lalu Yadav and Nitish government are attacking Hindus, in future they will be known as Mohammad Nitish and Mohammad Lalu." Day after day, these leaders can go to any extent to achieve success in politics.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Fragile hope emerges in Israeli-Hamas conflict

The ceasefire gives peace a chance but no lasting peace in Gaza is possible without a two-state solution

After weeks of intense warfare in Gaza, a four-day truce has offered a glimmer of hope for millions yearning for peace in the beleaguered enclave. The pivotal question now lingers—can this pause pave the way for a permanent resolution to the enduring hostilities between Israel and Hamas, which have claimed thousands of lives and heightened the spectre of a broader conflict?

Under the current agreement, Israel and Hamas have agreed to a temporary cessation of hostilities to facilitate the release of 50 hostages in Gaza in exchange for 150 Palestinians held in Israel. Humanitarian aid is also set to enter the strip. The flexibility of the deal allows for its extension and expansion if the initial phase proceeds smoothly, raising optimism for a more enduring solution to this deeply entrenched issue with global implications.

The first phase, involving the release of hostages and prisoners, is slated to commenced from November 24. However, disconcertingly, the Israeli Prime Minister



asserted that the war against Hamas will persist beyond this truce, emphasizing Israel's commitment to achieving its objectives, including eliminating Hamas and neutralizing perceived threats from elements in Gaza. Hamas, in parallel, has echoed similar sentiments, underscoring that the truce does not impede their broader missions. They maintain readiness to defend their people and resist the occupation, while Israel remains firm in its decision to retain military presence in Gaza. The aggressive postures of both sides reflect a clash rooted in history, culture, geography, and divergent developmental aspirations.

The current conflict stems from Hamas's incursion into Israel on October 7, resulting in significant casualties on both sides.

Notably, the captives involved in this strife hail from over 40 countries, adding a layer of complexity to negotiations. The diplomatic breakthrough, brokered by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, with support from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and US President Joe Biden, represents a temporary truce. However, achieving a lasting peace requires more intricate negotiations in the future.

The impending challenge lies in negotiating the release of Israeli military personnel held captive by Hamas. Israel faces internal divisions, with political parties in agreement but significant pressure from captive families complicating matters for Prime Minister Netanyahu. Global demonstrations, spanning Europe, the USA, Asia, and beyond, underscore the widespread demand for a lasting peace. The substantial civilian casualties in Gaza have swayed

international sentiment, putting pressure on Israel to reach an agreement promptly.

As leaders worldwide advocate for a truce, the prospect of a two-state solution gains prominence. However, the road to lasting peace is fraught with challenges, and the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains imperative for stability in the Middle East. The recent diplomatic efforts, culminating in the BRICS virtual summit, reflect a global push for a truce and a comprehensive peace process. The call for a two-state solution, echoing the borders of 1967, resonates among leaders worldwide.

Without addressing this long standing issue, enduring peace and stability in the Middle East remain elusive. The implementation of international decisions supporting a two-state solution is deemed essential for the security and prosperity of both sides, emphasizing the imperative of coexistence for a peaceful future.

(The writer is a senior journalist, views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH



FIRST COLUMN

RECLINING WIND GOD

The idol of Shri Bade Hanuman ji, situated at the Sangam in Prayagraj, is unique



RAVI VALLURI

Prayagraj is a prominent city in the populous state of India, Uttar Pradesh. The party that rules Uttar Pradesh invariably conquers India. Triveni Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical and invisible Saraswati rivers, is pre-eminently holy for Hindus.

The Sangam is near the 16th-century Allahabad Fort, built by Mughal Emperor Akbar. In the fort are several architectural marvels such as the ancient sandstone Ashoka Pillar, the underground Patalpuri Temple and a sacred banyan tree. The bustling city which is the cradle of "Kumbh Mela" organised once in twelve years is teeming with a large population and is quintessentially catholic and pluralistic.

The history of the idol of Shri Bade Hanuman ji, situated at the Sangam Kshetra of Prayag is unique. The story connected with the history of the idol goes like this. In the city of Kannauj, an opulent trader resided. He was blessed with large sums of money and materials and all the enjoyments of life but tragically did not have a child who could carry on the legacy.

In sheer desperation, the trader traversed to the foothills of Vindhyaachal to construct a temple for Hanuman ji to fulfil his wish of being blessed with a son. In the chain of hills of Vindhyaachal, the merchant had constructed a huge statue of Hanuman ji out of stone. He decided to bathe the statue of Hanuman ji at several places of pilgrimage.

While bathing this statue of Hanuman ji at different pilgrim spots he eventually arrived at Sangam Kshetra of Prayag. While he was taking rest as the shadows fell, he dreamt that if he would leave the statue at this holy place all wishes would be fulfilled and the hankerings would drop.



At the crack of dawn the following day he decided to work on the lines of the previous night's dream. Thus, he left the statue at Prayag Kshetra and departed for his city, Kannauj. After a passage of time, a son was born to his wife by the munificence of Shri Bade Hanuman ji. Sometime later, the huge statue of Shri Bade Hanuman ji got submerged in the waters and embroiled under the sands. Meanwhile, a mendicant Mahatma who was performing penance with Vyagracharya arrived at Sangam Kshetra in the holy month of Magha to take a dip at Triveni.

One day when the Mahatma was piercing his Trishul in the sand to form his phone, he got an inkling of the statue, through his clairvoyant powers. Mahatma Balgiri began to sift the sand from the spot. He soon spotted the statue of Shri Bade Hanuman ji.

After purifying the Shri Vighrah, he meditated on the valorous qualities of Lord Hanuman. The populace in the neighbourhood was subdued with the radiance of Lord Hanuman and the devotion and miraculous qualities of sage Balgiri. The aura and fame of Shri Bade Hanuman ji expanded rapidly. It is also believed that Mahatma Shri Balgiri ji Maharaj was bestowed with the mammoth statue of Lord Hanuman. He made valiant efforts to make the statue stand erect but he failed.

Subsequently, the statue was tried to be laid in the fort. After numerous abortive efforts, devotees were unable to remove the idol from its place. Thus, it was concluded that Shri Bade Hanuman ji did not wish to be removed from that place. All efforts were terminated and consequently, the statue was left at the place where it was first established by Saint Balgiri where thousands of pilgrims pay obeisance.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

The democratisation of forestry: Indian Scenario

Bridging local and global concerns, promoting equity and passionate stakeholders, are crucial for fostering the conservation of forests



BKP SINHA



ARVIND K JHA

Forests are vital ecosystems that maintain the balance of our planet and provide numerous resources and ecological services indispensable for human survival. Numerous research studies underscore the paramount importance of biodiverse natural forests in both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In today's world, democracy stands as a beacon of hope, a principle that is both popular and attractive. However, the conundrum of choice between 'decision by merit' and 'decision by majority' presents a unique challenge in the context of the sustainability of forests and natural resources.

Historically people lived off natural resources while forests, producing more than what was extracted, sustained themselves. Communities often followed customary rules and norms related to grazing, firewood collection and more, demonstrating a profound respect for nature. Later the Zamindars and Chieftains formalised rules for exploitation of forest-produce. Management of forests using silvicultural principles started during British time and continued thereafter. Village Panchayats in central India, for example, had a say in the exercise of 'nistar' rights indicated in 'Nistar Patra' and 'wazib ul arz' and also in 'Du-chand' areas that were twice the 'cultivated area' of the village. However, the relentless tide of rising populations and development pressures led to such areas' overexploitation and abuse resulting in a loss of productivity, encroachment, and also diversion.

The National Forest Policy 1988 heralded an era of community-led management practices in forestry. The Joint Forest Management in the 1990s and the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, made villagers participants in the domain of forestry. However, with Panchayats saddled with the responsibility of working as the grass-root level governance units for a multitude of social and financial resource-rich sectors and with the emergence of newer livelihood options and development strategies, forestry-related activities had, de facto, a low priority within Panchayats.

In 2006, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) was passed to redress the 'historical injustice' allegedly done to the 'forest-dwelling scheduled tribes' (FSDTs) and 'other traditional forest dwellers' (OTFDs) and recognize forest rights in their favour. FRA, a unique instrument heralding democratization of the forest right claims' scrutiny at the village level provided for vesting of management rights into the eligible communities of FSDTs and OTFDs. Democratization is supposed to equip the management framework with the relevant traditional knowledge and local communities' wisdom. It allows recognition of the interest of communities in preserving forest resources and securing a collective commitment towards their sustainability. While it fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility and the creation of an equitable and just system, it must ensure that marginalized communities are not left behind. India attempted the democratization of forestry using the paradigm of traditional Gram Sabha/ Panchayats. In the past selection of Panchas was based on local customs, traditions, and community consensus. The system was deeply rooted in the principles of inclusivity and collective decision-making where well-respected individuals with leadership qualities, integrity, wisdom, fairness, competence, and



LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS WITH SECTORAL BIASES HARM COMMUNITY INTERESTS AND JEOPARDISE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RESOURCES

knowledge of local issues were selected. Village dynamics, however, have undergone a seismic shift with political leaders gaining influence. The impact of the political system on the village-level psyche; already fractured by caste, class, and economic considerations; is a complex and multifaceted issue today. While the political system does foster awareness and civic participation, state or national politics often eclipses local concerns. Interestingly, however, global prioritization of forest conservation seldom trickles down to the village through political leaders and in instances of damage to forests, they tend to favour their electorate. Political expediency becoming the order of the day, and transforming mindsets to favour forest conservation irrespective of political affiliations is a formidable challenge. Further, convincing people to protect and conserve for the sake of stakeholders beyond their village limits is yet another challenging task.

The journey towards the democratization of forestry has been fraught with challenges and limitations. A fundamental obstacle is the persistence of power asymmetry within local communities. This became glaringly evident during FRA's implementation when powerful elites and interest groups attempted to manipulate amendments to its rules and guidelines. The influence on decision-making led to widespread illegal recognition of non-admissible individual and community forest rights, to the disadvantage of genuine beneficiaries. Such instances of 'elite capture' hurt the sustainability of forests and natural resources. The 2021 Status of Forest Report by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) reveals that Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district; with management rights on the majority of forest areas vested, albeit in violation of provisions, in Gram Sabhas; witnessed maximum forest fires in the previous three years.

Effective forest management in today's context necessitates specialised knowledge in areas like ecology, silviculture, and their interdisciplinary linkages. With the availability of new livelihood options and increased migrations, villages do experience an erosion of traditional knowledge and competencies. Preparation of biodiversity registers under the Biological Diversity Act 2002 by hiring outsiders in many villages is a case in point. Further, a lack of technical knowledge becomes a significant limitation. The case of Mendha Lekha village in Maharashtra serves as a poignant example. Here, a bamboo coupe was clear-felled in 2012 by violating silvicultural prescriptions. The area is yet to regain its productivity creating difficulties for the exercise of forest rights.

The desire for quick economic gain may lead to the prioritisation of short-term gains over long-term sustainability undermining conservation-oriented practices. Bamboo over-harvesting as also neglecting the sanitary felling operations is reported in many villages. In this context, the FSI's 2021 report regarding the loss of about 10,500 sq. km of bamboo-bearing area in the country deserves field-level scrutiny. On the economic front, because of the scale of operation, village-level incomes suffer due to market dynamics and inadequate value chains. The position of the genuine beneficiaries of FRA in the case of the 'tendu leaves' trade controlled by village elites in many villages of Maharashtra is worth examining.

Legal frameworks and implementations with sectoral biases harm community interests and jeopardize the sustainability of resources. In this context, the exclusion of foresters from the FRA's micro-plan preparation committees in Maharashtra warrants a reevaluation. Ministry of Tribal Affairs, GOI issued guidelines for the supersession of existing landscape-based

Working Plans by all village-level micro-plans. While the guidelines have far-reaching implications for the ecosystem continuum vital for biodiversity's survival, they disregard the National Working Plan Code of the MOEFCC, Government of India as well as the Supreme Court's order mandating the sanction of all management plans by the Central Government. Tribal department being the nodal agency for FRA, there is a conspicuous lack of urgency in addressing the mandated issue of sustainability of forests and forest resources which is a non-negotiable precondition for the sustainability of forest rights itself. Exercising effective control on corruption and misgovernance at various levels including that at the panchayat level is yet another serious concern. In the absence of cognizance of violations, FRA's implementation has largely been ignoring the proverb 'Charity beyond law is an injustice to others'.

Duly accepting the fact that contextuality will determine its success, democratization may be adopted carefully as a strategy for sustainable resource management. The development of appropriate institutional capacity, trained workforce, and availability of resources within an appropriately designed legislative framework must become a precondition. Recognizing the limitations and learning from past experiences is essential. Addressing power imbalances bridging local and global concerns, and promoting equity and collaboration among stakeholders, for fostering conservation approaches are crucial. The need for a nuanced understanding and adaptive strategies being paramount, the selection of the most appropriate strategy will be a testament to our commitment to a sustainable and equitable future. The stakes are high, and the time to act is now!

(The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra, views are personal)

Operation 'Firki': Dealing with stray dogs in a humane way

The Government should support research to explore inexpensive, non-surgical options for dog sterilisation

On a misty winter morning of the year 2021, I was drawn to a commotion in the front-lane parking area of my residence in a South Delhi colony. A female dog had appeared from somewhere at night and delivered a litter. The people around appeared with all means to feed the mother and make the family comfortable in cold winter weather.

The mother made the nearby area her permanent abode. She was a very scared stray and would even come near the food after being fully assured that no one was around. Given her very fast movements, I named her "Firki" and she is known by this name all over the place. Out of the six pups, one got



JAGDISH KAUR

crushed under a speeding car and another got injured by a bike. In due course, we arranged for the adoption of five pups.

Efforts began to get Firki sterilised to stop further breeding. True to her name, it was a harrowing task catching her. After repeated requests to MCD, they were able to catch her on the fourth attempt. There was a big sigh of relief which did not last long as after 3 days she was dropped back by on the pretext that her blood tests were abnormal. That was the lost opportunity as she is still at large, managed to deliver three more litters with three surviving dogs each from the second and third litters. We managed to get the second litter picked up



for sterilization with great effort and it was discovered after a few months that they too were dropped back without any surgery (for unknown reasons). Firki has grown smarter with time, hiding in the big drain with her family during the day and coming out for meals in the morning and night only. The overenthusiastic residents have employed dog feeders for dozens of strays in the vicinity and also ensure continued feeding from their

homes. Repeated calls and visits to the South Delhi MCD office, personal requests to the vet, social media posts tagging senior MCD officers, and messages to RWA did not fructify in catching Firki. Many times, when we managed to corner Firki and inform the MCD team, their approach was very casual and pathetic resulting in failed attempts. On advice from a private vet, I could manage to sedate her but the attempt failed again. My desperation and helplessness knew no bounds, to the extent of announcing a reward of INR 10,000 to catch her. This followed dog catchers, colony guards, garbage collectors, cleaners, and some NGOs making attempts to catch but Firki

evaded every attempt. We also got the male dogs in the surrounding area sterilized but there was always some unsterilized dog who would mate resulting in a new litter. So, from a stray dog-free part of the lane, we now have seven dogs all over the place, chasing vehicles and barking throughout the night.

The presence of unvaccinated free-roaming dogs (FRD) or street dogs, amidst human settlements is a major contributor to the high incidence of endemic Rabies in India. Stray dogs chasing morning-walkers, cyclists, and two-wheeler riders, have resulted in serious injuries and death of innocent persons on innumerable occasions.

The National Rabies Control

Programme in India has been under implementation for more than a decade. The "National Action Plan for Dog Mediated Rabies Elimination from India by 2030" is being implemented jointly by various stakeholders. Successful Rabies control programmes have been implemented throughout the world, demonstrating that elimination is technically feasible.

Dog-mediated Rabies has been eliminated from Western Europe, Canada, the USA, Japan, and some Latin American countries. Even low-income countries such as regions of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia have been able to reduce the burden significantly by mass dog vaccination strategy. Non-surgical

methods have existed in the past, however, they have not been widely adopted due to a lack of will and coordination among concerned stakeholders, lack of research, cost-effectiveness and other reasons including rampant corruption.

There is a need for more concerted efforts including ownership and enhanced coordination among concerned partner agencies. In addition, the Government should support research to explore inexpensive, non-surgical options for dog sterilization. RWAs should be more sensitive and help with monitoring count and anti-rabies vaccination of stray dogs.

(Dr Jagdish Kaur, is a public health expert; views are personal)

Israeli airstrikes on Gaza resume after truce ends

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israel's war with Hamas resumed in full force Friday, with airstrikes hitting targets in the Gaza Strip minutes after a weeklong truce expired. Black smoke billowed from the besieged territory, and Israel dropped leaflets over Gaza City and southern parts of the enclave, urging civilians to leave their homes to avoid the fighting. In Israel, sirens warned of incoming rockets at several communal farms near Gaza, a sign that militants also restarted attacks. The renewed hostilities heightened concerns for Palestinians — many of whom have been displaced by the war — as well as about 140 hostages still in Gaza, after more than 100 were freed during the truce.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry singled out Israel's role in the resumption of fighting and said it "complicates mediation efforts and exacerbates the humanitarian catastrophe". A day earlier, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Israeli officials and urged them to do more to protect Palestinian civilians as they seek to destroy Hamas. Blinken arrived Friday at the COP28 climate talks in Dubai, where he was to meet with Arab foreign ministers and other officials.

Israel's retaliation for Hamas' deadly Oct 7 raid has killed thousands of Palestinians, uprooted most of Gaza's 2.3 million people and led to a humanitarian crisis. Hundreds of thousands of displaced people are now crammed into the territory's south with no exit, raising questions over how any Israeli offensive there could avoid heavy civilian casualties. It was not clear to what extent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will heed appeals from the United States, Israel's most important ally.

Netanyahu's office said Friday that Israel "is committed to achieving the goals of the war: releasing the hostages, eliminating Hamas and ensuring that Gaza never again constitutes a threat to the residents of Israel". Only hours in to the renewed offensive, the Health Ministry of Hamas-controlled Gaza said 109 people had been killed and dozens wounded. In the leaflets it dropped in southern Gaza, Israel urged people to leave homes east of Khan Younis, warning that the southern town was now a "dangerous battle zone". Other leaflets warned residents of several neighbourhoods in Gaza City in the north to move south.

The Israeli military also released a map carving up the Gaza Strip into hundreds of numbered parcels, and asked residents to learn the number associated with their location in case of an eventual evacuation. It was not immediately clear how Palestinians would be updated on calls for evacuation. Hundreds of thousands of people fled northern Gaza earlier in the war, in an extraordinary mass exodus that saw many take shelter in Khan Younis and other places in the south.

One of the first airstrikes Friday destroyed a large building in Khan Younis. Moments later, residents were seen frantically searching the rubble for survivors as medics approached. One wounded person was carried away on a stretcher. In Hamad City, a Qatari-funded housing development near the city, a strike hit an apartment in a multi-story residential building, while other parts of the building appeared largely intact. Elsewhere, a strike hit a home near Gaza City in the north, and in the refugee camp of Maghazi, in central Gaza, rescuers clawed through the rubble of a large building hit by warplanes. A foot stuck out of the tangle of concrete and wiring.

Israel has said it is targeting Hamas operatives and blames civilian casualties on the group, accusing the militants of operating in residential neighbourhoods. Since the war erupted Oct 7, in response to a deadly Hamas attack on southern Israel, many of those killed in Israeli bombardments have been women and children. In Israel, white smoke trails could be seen in the skies over Sderot on the border with northern Gaza after Israel's missile protection systems activated. Netanyahu said the war resumed because Hamas had violated the terms of the truce. "It has not met its obligation to release all of the women hostages today and has launched rockets at Israeli citizens," he said in a statement.

'Israel already knew about Hamas attack'

Jerusalem (AP): Israel's military was aware of Hamas' plan to launch an attack on Israeli soil over a year before the devastating Oct 7 operation that killed hundreds of people, The New York Times reported Friday. It was the latest in a series of signs that top Israeli commanders either ignored or played down warnings that Hamas was plotting the attack, which triggered a war against the Islamic militant group that has devastated the Gaza Strip.

Harris to tackle delicate tasks of talking climate

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Vice President Kamala Harris will tackle two delicate tasks this weekend in Dubai: She'll try to demonstrate US environmental leadership despite President Joe Biden's notable absence from an annual summit on climate change and she'll work to nudge forward fragile efforts to shape the next phase of the war between Israel and Hamas. Harris has only a brief opportunity to accomplish either goal while she's in the United Arab Emirates. She leaves Washington on Friday and is scheduled to appear only briefly at the United Nations conference known as COP28. Like most vice presidents, Harris is expected to hew tightly to administration talking points on controversial issues where any divergence could ricochet around the globe.

American sentiment has been inflamed by Washington's support for Israel's military campaign in Gaza. Administration officials said Harris will be delivering remarks at the climate summit on Saturday and holding bilateral meetings with regional leaders. But details on her schedule remain scarce and the trip appears to have been hastily arranged. As recently as last week, Harris' staff said she had no plans to attend the climate conference, known as COP28. White House officials have not explained the change in plans. Biden attended the last two UN summits, which were held in Scotland and Egypt, but he disappointed some environmental activists by his decision to skip this one.

Top leaders to discuss Global warming

Dubai (AP): International climate talks turned to a power game on Friday as dozens of world leaders including the Saudi crown prince and India's prime minister were to speak, but two of the world's most powerful men — President Joe Biden of the U.S. and China's President Xi Jinping — were glaringly absent.

Resumption of Israel-Hamas war casts shadow over COP28 climate summit

AP ■ DUBAI

As world leaders gathered for the COP28 climate summit in Dubai, the collapse of a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war Friday plunged the conflict back into open combat and cast a long shadow over the talks. Israel's top diplomat for the Middle East huddled with leaders at the summit as his colleagues went through a book of posters of those held hostage by the militant group Hamas, placing yellow "released" stickers by some while looking at others still held. Meanwhile, just a street away at the Palestinian territories' first-ever pavilion, an official gave a horrified look when Associated Press journalists gave her the news that Israeli airstrikes and ground fighting in the Gaza Strip had resumed. Even United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres brought up the fighting in his remarks at a COP conference meant to focus on restraining global warming. "As we see in this region, con-



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, left, and Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, center, walk after leaving a group photo at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit, Friday in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

flicts are causing immense suffering and intense emotion," he told the delegates. "We just had the news that the bombs are sounding again in Gaza." The war hadn't been initially the plan for Israel at this Conference of Parties held in the United Arab Emirates, with which it only struck a diplomatic recognition deal

in 2020. Their country pavilion sits just across from the Emiratis' own. Oded Joseph, the Israeli Foreign Ministry's top diplomat for the Mideast, told the AP that he believed that the war had not ruptured Israel's ties to the UAE and others. However, Joseph acknowledged what he called the "traumatic images" of dead Palestinian

women and children after Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. He contended those deaths came because "Hamas took a strategic decision to take human take civilians as human shields." "Unfortunately, wars are always ugly and wars always demands us for us to pay in many prices," Joseph said.

The Times said Israeli officials were in possession of a 40-page battle plan, code-named "Jericho Wall", that detailed a hypothetical Hamas attack on southern Israeli communities. It was unclear how the document was obtained by Israel, but the article said that it had been translated — indicating it may have been in Arabic and directly intercepted from Hamas.

The Israeli military declined to comment on the report, saying it was "currently focused on eliminating the threat from the terrorist organisation Hamas." "Questions of this kind will be looked into in a later stage," it said. The document was seen by many Israeli military and intelligence officials, the report said, though it was unclear if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or other top leaders had seen it. The document predicted that Hamas would bombard Israel with rockets, use drones to disable Israel's security and surveillance abilities at the border wall, and take over southern communities and military bases. Another 2016 Israeli defense memo obtained by the Times said Hamas intended to take hostages back to Gaza. The Oct 7 attack — in which 1,200 people were killed and 240 people were abducted and taken to Gaza — would uncannily mirror the one outlined in the battle plan. But Israeli officials had brushed off the plan, the report said, dismissing it as "aspirational" rather than something that could practically take place, the report said.

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NOTICE OF THE 101st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING INFORMATION

NOTICE is hereby given that:

- The 101st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Chelsford Club Limited ("Club") is scheduled to be held on **Wednesday, 27th December, 2023 at 11.30 AM** at the Club premises 1, Raisina Road, New Delhi-110001 to transact the matters as stated in the Notice convening the meeting.
- Electronic copies of the Notice of the AGM, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March, 2023 have been sent to all members whose email IDs are registered with the Club. The same are also available on the website of the Club: www.chelsfordclub.in and on the website of National Securities Depository Limited e-voting website: <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com>. Notice of AGM, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March, 2023 have been sent to all the members at their registered address in the permitted mode. The electronic dispatch and dispatch by post has been completed by 02nd December 2023.
- Green Initiative in the Corporate Governance.**
Due to high price of paper and printing, additional copies of the Notice will not be available at the AGM. Members are therefore, requested to bring their copy to the AGM venue.
- In compliance with provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 as substituted by the Companies (Management and Administration) Amendment Rules, 2015 as amended, the Club is pleased to provide e-voting facility to its members, to vote from a place other than venue of the AGM (remote e-voting). The Club has engaged the services of National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) to provide e-voting facilities enabling the members to cast their vote in a secure manner.
- All the Members are informed that:
(a) The business as set forth in the Notice of the AGM may be transacted through voting by electronic means.
(b) The e-voting facility will be available at the link <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> during the voting period from Sunday, 24th December, 2023 (9 AM) to Tuesday, 26th December, 2023 (5 PM). The remote e-voting shall be disabled thereafter, by NSDL.
(c) The cut-off date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means or at the AGM is Wednesday, 20th December, 2023. A person whose name is entered in the Register of Members as on the Cut Off Date only, shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting in the AGM.
(d) Any person, who has become a member of the Club, after the dispatch of the Notice of AGM may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request to the Club Secretary at info@chelsfordclub.in and request for their login ID and Password. After verifying their membership details, the Club will forward the request to NSDL and NSDL will forward the login ID and password to their respective email ID.
(e) Members who have cast their votes by remote e-voting prior to AGM may attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.
(f) The facility for voting through ballot shall be made available at the AGM and the members attending the AGM who have not cast their vote by remote e-voting or by ballot shall be able to exercise their right to vote at the AGM through Ballot.
(g) The Club has appointed Mr. Ishant Arora (CS) of Ishant & Associates, alongwith Sh. Sunil Sareen and Sh. Sushil Kumar Dwivedi, Members of the Club, as scrutineers to scrutinize the entire Ballot and Voting process in a fair and transparent manner.
(h) In case of any query/grievance in relation to e-voting, they may be addressed to Mr. Puneet Bhasin, the Club Secretary, at info@chelsfordclub.in or members can visit "Help/FAQ" section (under download section) available at NSDL's website <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> or write an email to evoting@nsdl.co.in or call NSDL at toll free number 1800 1020 990 / 1800 224 430.
(i) The result of election/voting at the AGM shall be declared on Wednesday, 27th December, 2023 at 7:00 PM. The result declared, alongwith the Scrutineers' Report shall be displayed at the registered office of the Club and also placed on the Club's website (www.chelsfordclub.in) and on the website of e-voting agency National Securities Depository Limited (website: <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com>).

Place: New Delhi
Date: 02nd December 2023

For Chelsford Club Limited
Puneet Bhasin
Secretary

Indian student found dead in London river

London (PTI): A 23-Indian student who went missing in the UK last month has been found dead in the river Thames here. Mitkumar Patel arrived in the UK for higher studies in September and was reported missing on November 17. The Metropolitan Police discovered his body in the river Thames near the Canary Wharf area of east London on November 21 and was declared dead by paramedics.

"The death is not believed to be suspicious," the Met Police said. Parth Patel, a relative, has since launched a Go Fund Me online fundraiser and raised over GBP 4,500 since last week. "Mitkumar Patel was a 23-year (old) boy who came to the UK for higher studies on 19th

Indian student beaten, forced into labour for months in US; 3 charged

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Authorities in the US have rescued a 20-year-old Indian student, who was held captive for months without access to a bathroom, viciously beaten, and forced to work at three homes by his cousin and two other Indian-origin men in an incident described as "absolutely inhumane and unconscionable". The victim, whose name was not disclosed, spent months trapped in three homes in the US state of Missouri. On Wednesday, police descended upon a home on a rural highway in St Charles County. They later arrested

Venkatesh R Sattaru, Sravan Varma Penumetcha and Nikhil Verma Penmatsa, and on Thursday charged them with offences including human trafficking, kidnapping and assault. Police were dispatched to investigate the home after a concerned citizen became aware of his situation and called 911. The victim is safe and being treated at a hospital for multiple bone fractures, as well as lacerations and injuries covering his entire body, said prosecutor Joe McCulloch. Over seven months, the men locked the student in a basement and forced him to sleep on an unfinished floor without access to a bathroom,

charges say. He scavenged for scraps in nearby restaurant dumpsters and was beaten with electrical wire, PVC pipe, metal rods, wooden boards, sticks and a water supply hose for a washing machine, St Louis Post-Dispatch, a major regional newspaper, reported. "It's absolutely inhumane and unconscionable that one human being could treat another human being like this," said McCulloch at a news conference Thursday. The three defendants are accused of confining and abusing the victim at three different homes owned by Sattaru in Defiance, Dardenne Prairie and O'Fallon, starting in April 2023, accord-

ing to St Charles County's official website. Sattaru was identified by investigators as the ringleader and lives in the O'Fallon home with his wife and children. The main suspect in the case, Sattaru, 35, is additionally charged with human trafficking for the purpose of slavery and contributing to human trafficking through misuse of documentation. Penumetcha and Penmatsa live in the home where the student was rescued. Authorities said the student had come to the US from India last year with hopes of studying at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla.

FORM G INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR TERIYAKI BUILDERS PRIVATE LIMITED OPERATING IN TRADING BUSINESS AT NEW DELHI (Under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 38A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)	
RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of the corporate debtor along with PAN & CIN/ LEP No.	Teriyaki Builders Private Limited (Formerly Known as Oasis Suppliers Private Limited) PAN No.: AABCC0490F CIN : U91990DL2011PTC37749
2. Address of the registered office	Registered Office: 865, Ground Floor, Shop No. 2, Gali No. 7, Govindpuri, Kalkaji New Delhi, South Delhi-110019 Earlier Registered Office : 740 GF, Janta Flat, GTB Enclave, Dilshad Garden, Delhi, North East Delhi-110093
3. URL of the e-voting	Not Applicable
4. Details of place where majority of fixed assets are located	No Fixed Assets of Corporate Debtor as per the provisional financial statements as on CRP Commencement date i.e. 29th August, 2023
5. Installed capacity of main products/ services	NIL
6. Quantity and value of main products/ services sold in last financial year	NIL
7. Number of employees/ workmen	5
8. Further details including last available financial statements (with schedules) of two years, lists of creditors are available at URL:	Details can be sought by email to Resolution Professional at corp.teriyakibuilders@gmail.com
9. Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code	Details can be sought by email to Resolution Professional at corp.teriyakibuilders@gmail.com
10. Last date for receipt of expression of interest	17/12/2023
11. Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	23/12/2023
12. Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	28/12/2023
13. Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	06/01/2024
14. Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	11/01/2024
15. Last date for submission of resolution plans	10/02/2024
16. Process email ID to submit Expression of Interest	corp.teriyakibuilders@gmail.com

Sudhanshu Gupta
Resolution Professional of M/s Teriyaki Builders Private Limited
(Formerly Known as Oasis Suppliers Private Limited)
Regn. No.-IBBI/PA-002/IP-N00216/2017-18/10668
Address: 311, Agarwal Chamber-2, Plot No. 30, 31, Veer Savarkar Block, Opp. Metro Pillar No. 58, Shakarpur, East Delhi-110092
Email Address: sg_1973@rediffmail.com
Contact No.: +91-9811547321

Dated : 01.12.2023
Place : Delhi

Buckingham Palace 'exploring all options' as King Charles III embroiled in race row

PTI ■ LONDON

Buckingham Palace officials said on Friday that they were exploring all options, including legal, as King Charles III and Kate Middleton – the Princess of Wales, were embroiled in a race row after the Dutch edition of a controversial new book named them erroneously. Omid Scobie's 'Endgame: Inside the Royal Family and the Monarchy's Fight for Survival' hit bookshelves around the world this week and repeated an allegation that senior members of the British royal family had raised questions around the skin colour of Prince Archie – the son of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle born in May 2019. Meghan, of African American heritage, first raised the issue of an unnamed royal referencing their first-born's skin colour during the couple's infamous interview with Oprah Winfrey over two years ago. While the main edition of Scobie's new book chose not to name the senior royals, the Dutch edition included the



allegation that it was King Charles and Kate who had discussed the skin colour. "We're exploring all options," a palace spokesperson told the BBC. Initially, most UK media outlets were holding off naming the royals but it has been dominating headlines after TalkTV aired the names of Charles and Kate from the Dutch book fiasco. "Some individual has written some rumour and scuttlebutt that has made various claims about His Majesty the King that are, frankly, completely unproven," UK Security Minister Tom Tugendhat told

TalkTV when asked about the row. "The King's done a brilliant job for us, not just in the last year since he's been King, but he's been absolutely fantastic for many, many years in arguing in the interests of the British people as Prince of Wales. So frankly I see this as just rumour, hearsay and an attempt to disparage somebody who's served our country with enormous dignity and enormous grace for many, many years," he said. The Dutch publisher of the new book, Xander Uitgevers, said it had been pulled from shelves in the Netherlands due to an "error". Scobie, meanwhile, has been insisting it was not part of some publicity stunt and lamented that the row had "overshadowed" the release of his book. "All of this is frustrating because it feeds into something that couldn't be further from the truth. And also, quite frankly, I've always felt the names weren't needed to have this discussion," he told the BBC.

Japan expresses concern about Osprey aircraft

Tokyo (AP): Japan's top government spokesperson expressed concern on Friday that the U.S. military is continuing to fly Osprey aircraft in the country without providing adequate information about a fatal crash this week in southwestern Japan despite repeated requests that it do so. One crew member was killed and seven others are missing, along with the aircraft. The cause of Wednesday's crash, which occurred during a training mission, is still under investigation. Search operations widened Friday with additional U.S. military personnel joining the effort, while Japanese coast guard and military ships focused on an undersea search using sonar. The Pentagon said Thursday that US Ospreys continue to operate in Japan, and Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said she was not aware of an official request from Japan to ground them. "We are concerned about the continuing Osprey flights despite absence of an explanation about their safety" from the U.S. military, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said on Friday.

How secret trip by Kissinger grew into 50-yr relationship with China

AP ■ BEIJING

Officially China has called Henry Kissinger "an old friend". A commentator likened him to a giant panda, a goodwill ambassador between two countries that have been at odds more often than not over the decades.

Kissinger, who died Wednesday, developed a special relationship with China in the second half of his 100-year-long life. It started with a secret trip in 1971, when he feigned illness while at a meeting in Pakistan and flew undercover to Beijing for unprecedented talks that led to US President Richard Nixon's groundbreaking visit the next year.

For that act, he is remembered positively in China as an

envoy who was willing to overlook ideological differences at the height of the Cold War and to engineer a rapprochement that over time brought communist-ruled China fully back into the family of nations. Many Chinese people mourned Kissinger's death on social media.

"This is one of the main reasons for him to be revered," Zhao Minghao, an international relations professor at Fudan University in Shanghai, said. "He helped Nixon open China's door and promoted a thaw in China-US relations."

The willingness to overlook differences took on renewed importance in recent years as US-China relations frayed and attacks on China mounted from both Democrats and

Republicans in Washington. Kissinger made more than 100 trips to China, according to the Chinese government, and was welcomed as an American it could talk to; as recently as July, he was met by China's leader Xi Jinping.

"At present, there is no one in the US who can have frank, face-to-face talks with the highest Chinese leader, who understands China and who can be the next giant panda," commentator Shi Shusi said, likening Kissinger to the animal that has become an international symbol of Chinese diplomacy. "He was the giant panda the US sent to China - rare and friendly," Shi said. "Since the US doesn't have such an animal, Kissinger played giant panda."



An editorial in the state-run Global Times newspaper called Kissinger's death "a tremendous loss for China-US relations." It criticised the current direction of US policy toward China under the headline: "May there be successors to Henry Kissinger in the US."

Mao Zedong to economic reformer Deng Xiaoping and Presidents Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and Xi.

Following the Chinese military crackdown on democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, Kissinger met Jiang three times between 1989 and 1991 as China worked to mend its relations with the United States.

Wang Jisi, an international relations scholar, wrote last month that Kissinger had played a role in the release of Harry Wu, a Chinese American rights advocate detained by Beijing in 1995. According to Wang, Kissinger downplayed Wu's importance and said it would not be worthwhile for US-China relations to sour over one person. China

deported Wu soon after.

"The role for people like Kissinger is not to advise the government but use their own wisdom, connections and experience to serve the long-term interests of their country by shuttling among the politicians and businesspeople of different countries," Wang said in an article posted on the official news site of Peking University.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who met Chinese officials in Beijing in June, said he sought Kissinger's advice when he "was travelling to China more than 50 years after his transformative trip".

Kissinger's meetings with China's leaders made the top headlines in state media, contributing to his fame among

the general public, said Zhang Feng, a former journalist who is a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York.

His realpolitik approach resonated with many Chinese, who admired his ability to set aside values and negotiate back and forth among several countries with ease, Zhang said.

Then-Defence Minister Li Shangu met with Kissinger on his July trip to Beijing - after turning down a request to meet with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin in the spring.

Xi hosted the elder statesman at Villa No. 5 of the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, where Kissinger had met then-Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai more than 50 years ago.

US to step up efforts in pushing China to negotiate with Dalai Lama envoys

Congressional committee passes bill

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A powerful Congressional committee has passed a bill to strengthen US efforts in pushing China to negotiate with the Dalai Lama's envoys to resolve the longstanding Tibet-China dispute and counter the Communist Party's propaganda about the history of Tibet.

The bill, which among other things also dismisses as inaccurate the Chinese claim that Tibet has been part of China since antiquity, was passed unanimously by the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"This bill stresses the need for a dialogue between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the democratically elected leaders of Tibet. Any resolution must include the wishes and the voices of the Tibetan people," House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul said during the

markup. "Tibetans are a democracy-loving people who wish to practice their own religion freely and have their own wishes and desires acknowledged as we do in the United States of America. The freedoms that we enjoy, we want to be enjoyed by the people of Tibet," McCaul said. The bill, an amended House version of legislation introduced last year by Congressmen Jim McGovern and Michael McCaul, as well as Senators Jeff Merkley, and Todd Young, will pressure the Chinese government to resume negotiations with the Dalai Lama's envoys or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan people. The dialogue process has been stalled since 2010.

McCaul said the ruling Chinese Communist Party or CCP has a long and violent record of oppression against the people of Tibet.

In October of 1950, Chinese Communist troops annexed Tibet, killing tens of thousands of Tibetans and monks. The CCP's ongoing oppression of the people of Tibet ultimately forced the Dalai Lama to flee to India. This persecution has continued to this day, he said. Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China

Dispute Act pushes back against CCP propaganda about the history of Tibet. "The United States has never accepted that Tibet was part of China since ancient times," as the CCP falsely claims. This legislation clarifies US policy, highlights the unique language, religion, and culture of the Tibetan people, and directs US diplomacy to push back against CCP propaganda," McCaul said.

McCaul, another main sponsor of the bill, said under international law, Tibetans are people who have the right to determine their own destiny. Also under international law, there is a right to truth. The truth is that Tibet has not always been part of China, as the Chinese government claims. "My bill requires the State Department to counter the PRC's disinformation about Tibet, its history and its institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama. Rather than lie about the history of Tibet, I call on the Chinese Government to restart dialogue with the Dalai Lama to resolve the long-standing dispute between Tibet and China and respect the aspirations of the Tibetan people," he said.

Philippines opens coast guard surveillance base in SCS

AP ■ THITU ISLAND

The Philippine coast guard inaugurated a new monitoring base Friday on a remote island occupied by Filipino forces in the disputed South China Sea as Manila ramps up efforts to counter China's increasingly aggressive actions in the strategic waterway.

Confrontations between Chinese and Philippine ships have intensified this year in the contested waters, resulting in minor but alarming collisions near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal occupied by a Filipino marine contingent in October. The high-seas face-offs have fuelled fears of a larger conflict that could involve the United States, which has repeatedly warned that it's obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

China has accused the US of meddling in an Asian dispute and sowing discord in the region. National Security Adviser Eduardo Ano and other Philippine officials flew to Thitu Island on an air force plane Friday and led a ceremony to open the newly con-

structed, two-story centre that will have radar, ship-tracking and other monitoring equipment - either already installed or added early next year - to monitor China's actions in the hotly disputed waters and other problems, including sea accidents. "It's no longer gray zone. It's pure bullying," Ano told reporters after the ceremony, describing the actions of Chinese ships as flouting international law.

Later peering through a mounted telescope on the island, Ano said he spotted at least 18 suspected Chinese militia ships scattered off Thitu, including a Chinese navy vessel. Villagers say they have gotten used to the sight of Chinese ships lurking at a distance from Thitu, but a few say they're still haunted at times by the fear of Chinese forces intruding one day into the island.

"I can't avoid thinking sometimes that they would suddenly barge into our territory," said Daisy Cojampo, a 51-year-old mother of three whose husband works as a town government employee. Surrounded by white beaches, the tadpole-shaped Thitu Island is called Pag-as - Tagalog for hope - by about

250 Filipino villagers. It's one of nine islands, islets and atolls that have been occupied by Philippine forces since the 1970s in the South China Sea's Spratly archipelago.

The Philippines claims the region as its most remote offshore township, under its western island province of Palawan. It has encouraged fishing families to move there with incentives such as free rice, to underscore its control over an area also claimed by China and Vietnam. The 37-hectare (91-acre) island now boasts internet and cellphone connections, a more stable power and water supply, a newly cemented runway, a wharf, grade school, gymnasium and even an evacuation centre in times of typhoons.

However, Thitu remains a meagre frontier settlement compared to the Chinese-built Subi island, more than 22 km (14 miles) away. Subi is one of seven mostly submerged reefs that China transformed starting about a decade ago into a missile-protected cluster of island bases, three of them with military-grade runways, sparking alarm among other claimant states in the South China Sea. Philippine aircraft and ships, including those vis-

iting Thitu island, have routinely been warned by the Chinese coast guard via radio calls to stay away from what China claims as its territory or face unspecified repercussions. The Filipinos have countered with their own radio messages, ordering the Chinese to leave their territory and stop dangerous and provocative maneuvers. It was not immediately clear if Chinese radio warnings were sent to the Philippine air force and coast guard planes that brought Ano and other officials to Thitu on Friday along with three Associated Press journalists and several other invited members of the media.

Dwarfed by China's military might, the Philippines has decided this year to allow an expansion of US military presence in its local camps under a 2014 defense pact. It also recently launched joint sea and air patrols with the United States and Australia in a new deterrent strategy that puts the two allied powers on a collision course with Beijing.

China has warned that such joint naval patrols must not hurt its "territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests".

Since President Ferdinand

Marcos Jr took office last year, the Philippines has been deepening its security ties with Washington and US allies like Japan and Australia in a major shift from his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who had nurtured cozy relations with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin while criticising Western security policies.

Duterte had mostly kept the territorial disputes with Beijing on a backburner during his six-year term. Early this year, the Marcos administration launched a strategy of exposing China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea, including the Chinese coast guard's use of a military-grade laser and water cannons and the blocking of Philippine patrol ships and supply boats near disputed shoals, to draw international attention to such aggression, according to Philippine officials.

Speaking in Honolulu, where he met US military leaders about two weeks ago, Marcos said the situation in the South China Sea "has become more dire" with China showing interest in atolls and shoals that are "closer and closer" to the Philippine coast.

11 civilians killed in attack by gunmen in Iraq's eastern Diyala province

Baghdad (AP): A group armed with explosives and guns killed 11 people in eastern Iraq, security officials said Friday. The attack took place Thursday night in the area of Muqaddiyah in Diyala province. A roadside bomb exploded and gunmen then opened fire on rescuers and bystanders at the scene, two security officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The victims were all civilians, the officials said. The gunmen fled and no group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Diyala province has seen periodic attacks by Islamic State cells and sporadic violence due to sectarian tensions between Shiites and Sunnis, as well as fighting between rival militias and their tribal and political allies struggling over influence and lucrative racketeering networks. The province, which borders both Iran and Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region, is a prime conduit for smuggling. The Iraqi military's joint operations command said in a statement that it would form a committee to investigate the attack. Lt Gen Qais al-Muhammadawi, deputy commander of the joint operations, travelled to Diyala on Friday to attend a funeral for the victims and to "determine the circumstances of the incident", the statement said.

The provincial governor of Diyala, Muthanna al-Tamimi, vowed in a statement to "pursue the perpetrators of the terrorist attack". Nechirvan Barzani, president of the Kurdish region to the north, said the attack "proves the fact that terrorism still poses a real threat and challenge, and that we must confront them with all our force and ability". He called for greater cooperation between the Iraqi army, Kurdish peshmerga forces and other security forces, as well as with the US-led international coalition against IS.

Anti-graft body files case against Imran, his wife

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani accountability court on Friday filed a corruption case against jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife and other suspects in a Rs 50 million corruption case. The National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) Deputy Prosecutor General Muzafar Abbas and investigative officer Umar Nadeem filed the case in an accountability court in Islamabad.

A total of eight people have been charged in the case. Others besides 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief include his wife, Bushra Bibi, her friend Farhat Shahzadi aka Farah Gogi, PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari, former accountability czar Shahzad Akbar and Barrister Zia-ul-Mustafa Naseem.

The NAB on Friday filed the corruption case against former prime minister Khan, his wife and other suspects in the 190 million pound settlement case, Geo News reported.

The case comes as the anti-graft buster concludes its investigation with the court sending the PTI chief on judicial remand in the GBP 190 million (Rs 50 billion) Al-Qadir Trust corruption case. The Al-Qadir Trust case is about the settlement of 190 million pounds, about Rs 50 billion, which the UK's National Crime Agency sent to Pakistan after recovering the amount from a Pakistani property tycoon. Being the prime minister then, Khan, instead of depositing in the national treasury, allowed the businessman to use the amount to partly settle a fine of about Rs 450 billion imposed by the Supreme Court some years ago.

The tycoon, in return, allegedly gifted about 57 acres of land to a trust set up by Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, to establish the Al-Qadir University in the Sohawa area of the Jhelum district of Punjab.

Hearing the case earlier this week, on November 27, accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir rejected NAB's request for extending Imran's physical remand in the case. The court instead, sent the

Spl court to conduct cipher trial of Pakistan ex-PM, Qureshi at Adiala jail today

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani special court on Friday decided to hold an open hearing in the cipher case against incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan on Saturday in the Adiala Jail at Rawalpindi after receiving approval from the government. Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain presided over the hearing against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the Federal Judicial Complex building because a formal permission for a jail trial had not been granted by the government.

However, during the hearing, the court was informed that a formal notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, granting permission for the jail trial of the accused in the cipher case, had been received.

Subsequently, Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain remarked that further proceedings would be held Saturday at 9:00 inside the Adiala jail and ordered the authorities to produce Khan, 71, and Qureshi, 67, for the hearing. He also assured that the proceedings would be open for media, relatives and other people who are allowed to witness the hearing process.

"Not only will justice be done but it will be seen as well,"

PTI chairman on a 14-day judicial remand.

At the previous hearing, on November 24, the judge had instructed NAB to conclude its investigation and present a report. Officials from the accountability bureau have been visiting the Adiala Jail since November 15 to investigate the PTI chief's role in the case. Khan has been in jail since



the judge said at one point during the hearing.

The cipher case pertains to a diplomatic document sent by the country's embassy in Washington in March last year. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) launched a case on Aug 15 against Khan and Qureshi, accusing them of violating the secret laws while handling the document.

Both the leaders are in Adiala jail where they were indicted in the case on Oct 23. Both have pleaded not guilty. However, the Islamabad High Court nullified the proceedings and now the court would begin the process of the case from the beginning. The IHC also ordered that the trial should be completed within four weeks.

August 5 when he was arrested due to a conviction in the Toshakhana corruption case. In September, he was shifted from the Attock prison to Adiala jail. The former cricketer-turned-politician was ousted through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022. More than 150 cases have been registered against him since his ouster from power.

Paraguay official resigns after pact with fictional country

Buenos Aires (AP): A Paraguayan government official was replaced after it was revealed that he signed a memorandum of understanding with representatives of a fictitious Indian guru's fictional country, who also appear to have duped several local officials in the South American country. The revelation sparked a scandal - and lots of social media mockery - in Paraguay but it's hardly the first time self-described representatives of the United States of Kailasa duped international leaders. Earlier this year, they managed to participate in a United Nations committee meeting in Geneva and also signed agreements with local leaders in the United States and

Canada. Arnaldo Chamorro was replaced as chief of staff for Paraguay's Agriculture Ministry on Wednesday shortly after it was revealed that he signed a "proclamation" with representatives of the United States of Kailasa. Among other things, the October 16 "proclamation" expressed a "sincere wish and

recommendation for the government of Paraguay to consider, explore and actively seek the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States of Kailasa and support its administration as a sovereign and independent state in various international organisations, including, among others, the UN," according to a copy of the agreement posted on social media.

Canada. Arnaldo Chamorro was replaced as chief of staff for Paraguay's Agriculture Ministry on Wednesday shortly after it was revealed that he signed a "proclamation" with representatives of the United States of Kailasa. Among other things, the October 16 "proclamation" expressed a "sincere wish and

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given by Bahi Paper Mills Limited, H-475, First Floor, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 110060 (Company) that the Original Sale Deed executed by Sri Gurmeet Singh and Kuldeep Singh in favour of Bahi Paper Mills Limited, registered as document no. 2216 on 15.07.1996 with SRO Kashiapur, Udhham Singh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh (now Uttaranchal) in relation to immovable property bearing Khata No. 28, Kharsa No. 741, measuring 1.618 Hectares, situated at village Mauja Girhrai and Khata No. 36, Kharsa No. 28 Min, measuring 2.945 Hectares, Kharsa No. 29/1, measuring 0.150 Hectares and Kharsa No. 37/1, measuring 0.304 Hectares, situated at village Mauja Baghelwala, Tehsil Kashiapur, District Udhham Singh Nagar, Uttaranchal, in the name of the Company, has been misplaced/lost from the company office at H-475, First Floor, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 110060 and is not traceable since July 15, 2023. The Company shall create mortgage charge on the basis of certified copy of sale deed of the aforesaid property for the benefit of State Bank of India, for securing the loans/credit facilities availed by JGN Sugar and Biofuels Pvt. Ltd.

A lost property report to this respect has been lodged with Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi bearing unique ID: 1179371/2023 on 29/11/2023. Any person(s) coming into possession of the aforesaid mentioned document and/or any person(s) who is/are having knowledge of the whereabouts of the aforesaid mentioned document, are hereby requested to intimate the same to Mr. Raj Bhandari, address H-475, First Floor, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 110060 having mobile no.: +91 7630780009 & email id: bahipapermills@gmail.com, under intimation to Mr. Lovensh Gautam, Relationship Manager, State Bank of India, Industrial Finance Branch (09001), 14th Floor, Jawahar Vihar, Bhawan, 1, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi - 110011, having mobile no.: 9974091477 & email id: rm5.09601@sbil.co.in, as soon as possible. Public is warned not to deal with the aforesaid mentioned document and any person receiving the said document or dealing with properties on the basis of the said Document would be doing so at his/her/their own risk and responsibility. Anybody not returning the said Document and dealing with the same shall be liable to be prosecuted as per the law of the land. Any transaction on the basis of the lost aforesaid mentioned document, whether done in past or which may be done in future, shall not be legally valid.

Antarctica Properties Company Ltd.

Public Notice

Know all through this Public Notice that the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) Delhi, Office of Delhi Pollution Control Committee, 5th Floor, ISBT Building, Kashmir Gate, Delhi-110006 has granted Environmental Clearance Certificate to our Project "Proposed Expansion of 'The Address' at Plot No. 4-B, Mayur Vihar Phase-I Extension, Delhi-110091, vide Environmental identification No. EC23B038DL113325 dated 17.10.2023 and the details of the said Environmental Clearance has also been displayed at the following website of the M o E F & C C / S E I A A : "environmentclearance.nic.in".

Antarctica Properties Company Ltd.

Municipal Corporation Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

(Executive Engineer Mech)

Tel No:- (0240) 2333536-40
Fax No:- (0240) 2331213

Address:- Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation, Executive Engineer (Mech)

Head Office:- Town Hall, Pin No:- 431001 E-Tender Call CSMC (For Help) Mob No :- 9764999780

No. CSMC/Mech/3594/2023/ Dt. 29.11.2023

Sr. No.	Work Name	Last date of tender submission
1.	Scrap Auction of CSMC Old Vehicles and other Scrap.	13.12.2023

Note :- For the above started work is available on web site. www.mahatenders.gov.in

Sd/-
Supintendent (Mech)
Municipal Corporation
Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

Public Notice

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A lost property report to this respect has been lodged with Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi bearing unique ID: 1179371/2023 on 29/11/2023. Any person(s) coming into possession of the aforesaid mentioned document and/or any person(s) who is/are having knowledge of the whereabouts of the aforesaid mentioned document, are hereby requested to intimate the same to Mr. Raj Bhandari, address H-475, First Floor, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 110060 having mobile no.: +91 7630780009 & email id: bahipapermills@gmail.com, under intimation to Mr. Lovensh Gautam, Relationship Manager, State Bank of India, Industrial Finance Branch (09001), 14th Floor, Jawahar Vihar, Bhawan, 1, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi - 110011, having mobile no.: 9974091477 & email id: rm5.09601@sbil.co.in, as soon as possible. Public is warned not to deal with the aforesaid mentioned document and any person receiving the said document or dealing with properties on the basis of the said Document would be doing so at his/her/their own risk and responsibility. Anybody not returning the said Document and dealing with the same shall be liable to be prosecuted as per the law of the land. Any transaction on the basis of the lost aforesaid mentioned document, whether done in past or which may be done in future, shall not be legally valid.

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Nifty hits lifetime high, Sensex jumps 493 points on favourable macro data

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Key equity index Nifty hit its lifetime high while Sensex jumped 493 points to close at an 11-week high, driven by favourable macroeconomic data and continuous foreign fund inflows. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 492.75 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 67,481.19, the highest closing level since September 18. During the day, it surged 575.89 points or 0.85 per cent to 67,564.33. The Nifty climbed 134.75 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 20,267.90. During the day, the benchmark touched its intraday record high of 20,291.55, up 158.4 points or 0.78 per cent. Among the Sensex firms, ITC, NTPC, Axis Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints and Tata Steel were the major gainers. Mahindra & Mahindra, Wipro, Maruti, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank were among



the laggards. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 8,147.85 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. "Better-than-estimated India GDP numbers will raise the growth outlook for FY24 and provide cheer for the market to continue its upward momentum. The global market too rallied on hopes that the ECB has completed its rate-hiking cycle on the back

of easing inflation and ahead of the FED chair speech today. "The auto sales numbers witnessed a festive cheer, while the premium valuation restricted the upside potential," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. India retained the tag of the world's fastest-growing major economy, with its GDP expanding by a faster-than-expected rate of 7.6 per cent in

the September quarter on booster shots from government spending and manufacturing. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.96 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.48 per cent. Among the indices, power jumped 1.57 per cent, FMCG climbed 1.53 per cent, utilities (1.46 per cent), realty (1.32 per cent), metal (1.07 per cent), commodities (0.92 per cent)

and industrials (0.88 per cent). Auto emerged as the only laggard. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,511.15 points or 2.29 per cent while the Nifty 473.2 points or 2.39 per cent. In Asian markets, Shanghai settled in the green, while Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. The

US markets ended mostly with gains on Thursday. India's manufacturing sector continued with its robust performance in November, mainly on the back of substantial easing in price pressures and strengthening demand from clients, according to a monthly survey on Friday. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 56 last month from the eight-month low level of 55.5. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.57 per cent to USD 80.40 a barrel. The BSE benchmark ended 86.53 points or 0.13 per cent higher at 66,988.44 on Thursday. The Nifty edged up 36.55 points or 0.18 per cent to 20,133.15. Most exit polls on Thursday put the BJP ahead in Madhya Pradesh and gave it an edge in Rajasthan while predicting that it was an advantage for Congress in Telangana and Chhattisgarh.



RBI, BoE sign pact for cooperation, information exchange related to CCIL

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank of England on Friday signed an initial pact for cooperation and exchange of information related to Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishes a framework for the Bank of England (BoE) to place reliance on the RBI's regulatory and supervisory activities while safeguarding the UK's financial stability, the RBI said in a statement. "The MoU also demonstrates the importance of cross-border cooperation to facilitate international clearing activities and

the BoE's commitment to deference to other regulators' regimes," it added. Further, the statement said the MoU confirms the interests of both authorities in enhancing cooperation in line with their respective laws and regulations. "It will also enable the BoE to assess the application of CCIL for recognition as a third country Central CounterParty (CCP), which is a pre-requisite for UK-based banks to clear transactions through CCIL," the statement said. The MoU was signed by RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar and BoE Deputy Governor for Financial Stability Sarah Breeden in London.

Oct-Nov sugar output down 11% to 4.3 mn tonne, says NFGSFL



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's sugar production was down by 10.65 per cent at 4.32 million tonne during October-November, the first two months of the ongoing 2023-24 season, cooperative body NFGSFL said on Friday. Sugar season runs from October to September. The production stood at 4.83 million tonne in the year-ago period. India is one of the largest sugar producing countries in the world. According to the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd (NFGSFL), the country's overall sugar production was down on account of lesser output in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Sugar production in Maharashtra, the country's second largest producer of the sweetener, was lower at 1.35 million tonne in October-

November of this season as against 2.02 million tonne in the year-ago period. Sugar production in Karnataka, the country's third largest producing state, was also lower at 1.1 million tonne as against 1.21 million tonne. However, the production in Uttar Pradesh, the country's top producer of the sweetener, remained higher at 1.3 million tonne as compared to 1.06 million tonne in the year-ago period, the cooperative said in a statement. Sugar recovery was 8.45 per cent in the first two months of the current season. As per the NFGSFL data, sugar output was lower as the total quantity of sugarcane crushed in October-November was less. About 51.01 million tonne of sugarcane was crushed during October-November of the 2023-24 season, as against 57.06 million tonne in the year-ago period. Even the number of sugar mills that were in operation was lower at 433 as against 451. NFGSFL has pegged the total sugar output at 29.15 million tonne for 2023-24 season, lower than 33 million tonne in the previous season.



Gold rises by ₹100; silver jumps ₹500

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose Rs 100 to Rs 63,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid gains in precious metal price globally, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 63,200 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver also jumped Rs 500 to Rs 79,700 per kilogram. In the international markets, both gold and silver were quoting higher at USD 2,042 per ounce and USD 25.30 per ounce, respectively. Spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,042 per ounce, up by USD 2 from its previous close. Traders are expecting that the Federal Reserve would not raise interest rates again and potentially easing monetary policy in the first half of 2024, which will continue to support gold prices. HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi said.

Will never give company specific incentives in EV sector: Govt official on Tesla demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will never provide company or enterprise-specific incentives in the electric vehicle sector, a top government official said on Friday, amid a push from American electric carmaker Tesla for special sops to set up its factory in the country. If the government has to consider providing incentives then it will only be for all EV makers and entrants who want to come to India, the official said. The official added that inter-ministerial discussions have happened on the customs duty concession demand of the US-based electric car maker Tesla, but "we never" came to any conclusion on those. In 2021, the US-based electric car maker demanded a reduction in import duties on electric vehicles (EVs) in India. It had requested the government to standardize the tariff on electric cars to 40 per cent irrespective of the customs value. At present, cars imported as completely built units (CBUs) attract customs duty ranging from 60 per cent to 100 per cent, depending on engine size and cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value less or above USD 40,000. "Never. It will never be a com-



pany-specific. It will always be for all entities, companies. If any concessions are given, these will always be linked to fairly stringent performance criteria for everybody. It's never going to be an enterprise-specific thing," the official said when asked if the government is considering specific concessions for Tesla. The official clarified that the reports on duty concessions and others related to the company are "mostly in the nature of speculation". "They have asked for some concessions but we never came to any conclusion. Nothing has come to any conclusion at all on that," the official added. Last month, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal visited the manufacturing facil-

ity of US-based electric vehicle major Tesla in Fremont, California and said that the company would be doubling its auto components imports from India. The world's largest electric car producer Tesla Inc's chief Elon Musk met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June in New York and after the meeting Musk had said that he planned to visit India in 2024. There are reports that India is looking at giving customs duty concessions to Tesla for setting up a plant in the country. In September, Goyal said the company is looking to source components worth around USD 1.9 billion from India this year against USD 1 billion in 2022. Going forward, demand for

electric vehicles will increase and it will help in pushing the growth of the sector. Earlier, the government had stated that it is not looking to frame a separate policy for providing incentives to Tesla, and the company can apply to avail of support measures under existing schemes like PLI for auto and advanced chemistry cells. The government has rolled out production-linked incentives (PLI) schemes (PLI) for advanced chemistry cell (ACC) battery storage with an outlay of Rs 18,100 crore and Rs 26,058 crore PLI scheme for auto, auto-components and drone industries. In August 2021, Musk said Tesla might set up a manufacturing unit in India if it first succeeded with imported vehicles in the country. He had said Tesla wanted to launch its vehicles in India "but import duties are the highest in the world by far of any large country!". Currently, India imposes 100 per cent import duty on fully imported cars with CIF (Cost, Insurance and Freight) value more than USD 40,000 and 70 per cent on those costing less than the amount. Certain domestic EV makers are also against extending any kind of company-specific incentives.

Foreign exchange reserves jump \$ 2.5 bn to \$ 597.9 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves increased USD 2.538 billion to USD 597.935 billion for the week ended November 24, the Reserve Bank said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had jumped USD 5.077 billion to USD 595.397 billion. For the week ended November 24, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased USD 2.14 billion to USD 528.531 billion, as per the data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves were up USD 296 million to USD 46,338 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up USD 87 million to USD 18.218 billion. India's reserve position with the IMF rose USD 14 million to USD 4.848 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

India, US agree to strengthen cooperation in pharma, semiconductors, critical minerals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and the US have agreed to strengthen cooperation in sectors like pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, critical minerals and emerging technologies, an official statement said on Friday. The two countries also discussed collaborative opportunities in green and clean technologies; and strengthening partnership in critical technologies, the commerce ministry said. These key areas emerged from the discussions during the meeting of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo at a review meeting of the India-US CEO Forum virtually last night. "As both sides are focused on closer engagement based on



trust, following key areas emerged from the discussions -- supply chain cooperation across pharma, semiconductors, critical minerals and energy; collaborative opportunities in green tech and scaling up manufacturing for clean tech; and strengthening partnership in critical and emerging technologies," it said. Raimondo urged the CEO

Forum to seize the current momentum and implement the pivotal recommendations outlined by the forum members. She also announced the inclusion of four new members in the forum from the US industry including Honeywell, Pfizer, Kyndryl, and Viasat. The Forum, comprising CEOs from leading Indian and US-

based companies, is co-chaired by N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons, and James Taiclet, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lockheed Martin. This was the eighth meeting of the forum since its reconstitution in December 2014. It is a key advisory private sector body to India-US Commercial Dialogue, and it witnessed participation from 27 CEOs from both sides. The next meeting will take place early next year. Goyal encouraged the industry to leverage platforms like the Semiconductor Supply Chain and Innovation Partnership, Innovation Handshake, India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and Global Biofuels Alliance and explore collaborative opportunities.



Honda Motorcycle, Scooter India sales up 20% to 4,47,849 units in November

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India on Friday reported a 20 per cent rise in total sales at 4,47,849 units in November 2023. The company had sold 3,73,234 units in the same month last year, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) said in a statement. Domestic sales were at 4,20,677 units as against 3,53,553 units in the same month a year ago, it added. Exports were also higher at 27,172 units last month as compared to 19,681 units in November 2022, the company said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor sales up 51% at 17,818 units in November

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Friday reported 51 per cent growth in sales at 17,818 units in November 2023 as compared to the year-ago month. The company had sold 11,765 units in November 2022, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said in a statement. Domestic sales last month were at 16,924 units in the domestic market, while exports stood at 894 units, it added. The company had undertaken a week-long maintenance shutdown from November 11-19, 2023 for upkeep of machinery and equipment to sustain operational efficiencies, maintain quality and safety, the statement said. "We recorded a strong festive season with healthy bookings, and we are extremely thrilled



to see the market responding very positively to our entire product range," TKM Vice President of Sales and Strategic Marketing Atul Sood said. TKM said its cumulative sales for calendar year 2023 (January-November) stood at 2,10,497 units, up 40 per cent over the same period in 2022, when the sales were 1,49,995 units.

BUSINESS BRIEF

IIFL SAMASTA TO RAISE UP TO ₹1,000 CR VIA BONDS
Delhi: IIFL Samasta Finance, which is one of India's largest non-banking microfinance companies (NBFC-MFI), will raise up to Rs 1,000 crore through its maiden public issue of secured bonds, for the purpose of growth and capital augmentation. The bonds offer up to 10.50 per cent and a high degree of safety. The issue opens on Dec 4 and closes on Dec 15. IIFL Samasta Finance will issue bonds, aggregating to Rs 200 crore, with a green-shoe option to retain over-subscription of up to Rs 800 crore (aggregating to Rs 1,000 crore).

INTERNATIONAL EXPO ON FOOD AND BEVERAGES

New Delhi: The Three day 5th edition of 'SIAL INDIA', an international exhibition for food and beverages, collocated with Vinexpo India, an event on wine and spirits, will be hosted here at Yashboomi, India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC), Dwarka. The exhibition is powered by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MOFPI) and is supported by Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority and Forum of Indian Food Importers. SIAL India is jointly organised by Comexposium, France and Inter Ads, India. Vinexpo India is jointly organised by VinexpoIndia, France and Inter Ads, India. Not only India is now the biggest market in the world... but the appetite of the middle class for new and innovative products is amazing, said Nicola Trentesaux, Director SIAL Group.

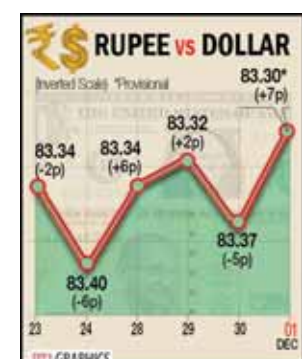
Rupee rises 7 paise to settle at 83.30 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 7 paise to settle at 83.30 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, following positive cues from equity markets and strong domestic macroeconomic data. Forex analysts said easing crude oil prices in the international markets also favoured the local currency. Global crude price retreated from the level of USD 84 to

USD 80 per barrel as oil-producing countries' grouping OPEC+ agreed not to reduce output in 2024, they added. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened stronger at 83.29 against the dollar and traded between the peak of 83.25 and the lowest level of 83.36 against the American currency intra-day. It finally settled at 83.30 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a gain of 7 paise over the previous close. The rupee settled 5 paise lower at 83.37 against the dollar on Thursday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.19 per cent lower at 103.30 on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures declined 0.23 per cent to USD 80.67 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex surged 492.75 points, or 0.74 per cent, to set-

tle at 67,481.19 points. The Nifty advanced 134.75 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 20,267.90 points. A monthly survey on Friday said India's manufacturing sector continued with its robust performance in November. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 56 last month from the eight-month low of 55.5 recorded in October.



tle at 67,481.19 points. The Nifty advanced 134.75 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 20,267.90 points. A monthly survey on Friday said India's manufacturing sector continued with its robust performance in November. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 56 last month from the eight-month low of 55.5 recorded in October.

Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market on Thursday as they purchased shares worth Rs 8,147.85 crore, according to exchange data. According to the Thursday data released on Tuesday, India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 7.6 per cent during July-September beat most estimates, including 6.5 per cent projected by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), retaining the country's tag of

the world's fastest-growing major economy. Also, another data released simultaneously showed that the output of eight key infrastructure sectors jumped 12.1 per cent in October 2023 against 0.7 per cent expansion in the year-ago period. The government's fiscal deficit at the end of October touched 45 per cent of the full-year budget estimate, as per the data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

NATIONAL BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thapa, Sanjeet, Panghal reach finals

PTI ■ SHILLONG

Veteran boxer Shiva Thapa (63.5kg) and 2021 Asian champion Sanjeet (92kg) hardly broke a sweat as they stormed into the final of the men's National Boxing Championships here on Friday. Thapa, the six-time Asian Championships medallist, showcased his experience as he secured a commanding victory 5-0 over Hariवंश Tawari of Maharashtra. The Assam boxer, who has endured a mediocre year, will take on Vanshaj of SSCB in the summit clash. Sanjeet, on the other hand,

faced little resistance from Vicky of AIP as the SSCB boxer won the match through an unanimous decision. He will be up against Naveen Kumar of Haryana in the final. On a day when 12 SSCB pugilists entered the summit clash, 2019 world championship silver medallist Amit Panghal (51 kg) Panghal tamed Ankit of RSPB. The bout was closely contested but the 28-year-old Panghal, who failed to make the Indian squad for this year's world championships and the Asian Games, maintained his composure in the crucial moments to beat his opponent 5-2.



Panghal will now face Anshul Punia of Chandigarh in the gold medal bout. The other SSCB boxers to enter the final are: Barun Singh (48kg), Pawan (54kg), Sachin (57kg), Akash (60kg), Vanshaj (63.5kg), Rajat (67kg), Akash (71kg), Deepak (75kg), Lakshya (80kg) and Jugnoo (86kg). In another semifinal, RSPB's Sagar entered the final of the 92+kg weight class. Sagar's skillset and power-packed punches were on full display as he dominated the bout, warding off Vishal Kumar of Delhi 5-0. The 2022 Commonwealth Games silver medallist will take on Jaipal Singh of Punjab in the gold medal bout.



NATIONAL RANKING TT

Sharath, Sathiyam earn hard fought wins

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

Veteran Achanta Sharath Kamal and fellow international G Sathiyam entered the men's singles quarter-final of the 4th UTT National Ranking Table Tennis Championships here on Friday. Except for the top seed, Manav Thakkar, who blanked out Yashansh Malik of Delhi 3-0, second seed Sathiyam and sixth seeded Sharath had to endure tough fight from Raj Mondal of RBI and Akash Pal of the Railways respectively, before winning by identical 3-2 margin. Sourav Saha of PSPB went the distance to beat third seed Snehit of AAI 3-2 in a tough pre-quarterfinal battle while Anthony Amalraj defeated fourth seeded Manush Shah 3-1. Another India international Sanil Shetty went down to Ronit Bhanja of the Railways in another clash that went down to the wire. Ronit won 3-2.

Sharath was down 0-2 against Akash Pal before summoning his vast experience to win the last two extended games despite stiff resistance from the Railway's padder. The fast-paced match witnessed several long rallies, most of which went Sharath's way. Second-seed Sathiyam, caught on the wrong foot and trailing 0-2, raised his game to the extent that it put enormous pressure on Raj Mondal, who matched stroke for stroke. But Sathiyam stemmed the rot in the third game and continued similarly to subdue his RBI rival. In contrast, the sixth and seventh women seeds, Moumita Datta and Swastika Ghosh, departed in the pre-quarterfinals and went 2-3 down to Yashini Sivashankar of Tamil Nadu and Anusha Kutumbale of the Railways, respectively. But the two top seeds, Sreeja Akula and Archana Kamath, who won her first National Ranking title in Vadodra last month, sailed through.

JUNIOR WORLD C'SHIPS
Boxers confirm eight more medals



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asian junior champions Nisha (52kg) and Akansha (70kg) progressed to the semifinals as eight Indian boxers assured themselves of a medal each at the IBA Junior World Boxing Championships in Yerevan, Armenia. The Indian girls once again led the proceedings with their dominant show as all five boxers in action won their respective matches to enter the semifinals. Akansha began the day on an aggressive note before her opponent Kurbonboeva Rayhona of Uzbekistan unsettled the Indian pugilist with her counter attack. However, the Indian ultimately won the bout with a 4-1 split decision verdict.

Italy, Croatia tough options as lower seeded teams in Euro 2024 tournament draw

AP ■ MILAN

Defending champion Italy and World Cup semifinalist Croatia are among the lower-seeded teams in Saturday's draw for next year's European Championship, a quirk created by the way UEFA decides the seedings for the tournament. While FIFA relies on its world rankings to help ensure no powerhouse team comes out of the lowest-ranked pot 4 in its World Cup draws, UEFA is basing its seedings for Euro 2024 solely on the teams' results and points earned in qualifying for the tournament. So Italy - which finished second in its qualifying group and dropped plenty of points along the way - is in pot 4 alongside three playoff winners yet to be determined. Croatia and the Netherlands are both in pot 3

together with teams like Scotland and Slovenia, who rarely reach major tournaments. Host Germany and group winners are in pot 1 for the 24-team draw in Hamburg, which is held in a ceremony that starts at 6 p.m. Local time (1700 GMT) on Saturday. The draw will have placeholders in pot 4 for the three eventual winners of the second-chance qualifying playoffs in March. **TOP-RANKED TEAMS** This pot includes the other five group winners and the runner-up with the best record, which was Austria from the group Belgium won. Here are some surprises, like Albania topping a group that included Poland and the Czech Republic.



home and away by a dominant France. Both Croatia and the Netherlands lost to eventual champion Argentina at last year's World Cup, in the semifinals and quarterfinals, respectively, and look like the toughest options in a pot that also includes the Czechs, Scotland, Slovakia and Slovenia, which last reached the Euros in 2000. **LOWEST-RANKED TEAMS** Qualifying for major tournaments is such an adventure for Italy. After failing to reach the last two World Cups, being in pot 4 is perhaps not so bad for the defending champion after another unconvincing qualifying campaign. Italy was beaten twice in qualifying by England and needed to hold on for a decisive 0-0 draw against Ukraine last week just to finish second in the group.

Sport gave Devi new lease of life

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Born without arms, Sheetal Devi would use her feet to climb trees. But little did she know that the childhood habit was acting as the spade work in laying a strong foundation for future success. The practice of climbing tress in her village in Jammu and Kashmir strengthened her core muscles and helped her in becoming a trailblazing para archer, who recently became the world number one in women's compound archery open category. Before getting hooked on to sport, she was dreaming of becoming a teacher. She could not become one, but the 16-year-old is certainly giving life lessons to many. Sheetal was born without arms because of a condition called Phocomelia. It's a rare congenital deformity in which the hands or feet are attached close to the trunk with the limbs being underdeveloped or absent. Her life changed when she went to Bengaluru to get prosthetic arms and met with Preethi Rai, the founder of storytelling start-up, 'Being You'. Preethi tried her best to get Sheetal artificial arms but it didn't work out as her shoulders couldn't bear the weight of the prosthetics. But Preethi, who had worked with many para athletes in the past including para shuttler Mansi Joshi, noticed Sheetal's inner strength and introduced her to former India hockey team physiotherapist Shrikant Iyengar, who took her fitness



test. She came out with flying colours in the test, scoring 8.5 out of 10. "When we first met in Bengaluru in 2021, Sheetal was keen to have prosthetic hands. After a lot of convincing she decided to take up sports," Preethi said. "We reached out to Shrikant Iyengar and he recognised her sublime core strength, which she had developed while regularly climbing tress in her village." Having given up on her initial dream of becoming a teacher, Sheetal, the world's first-ever armless female archer to compete internationally, is now determined to win a medal for the country in next year's Paris Paralympics. "I felt really good that I became world no.1. My sir told me to give my best and I just tried to give my best." "I will work hard for Paralympics and hope to win a medal for the country. I am con-

fidant and fully prepared for Paralympics," Sheetal said on Friday during the launch of a book cover featuring her. "I used to think that I can't do anything in life but everyone supported me and that is the reason I am here today. If I didn't get that support I guess I wouldn't have been where I am today." The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Sports Complex in Katra, where she had trained initially, gave her three options -- running, swimming and archery -- and she chose the last one. "I always wanted to become a teacher but sports happened by chance and I am not thinking about being a teacher anymore. What I am thinking right now is to win many more medals for the country," Sheetal told PTI. In just one and a half year, Sheetal rose to the pinnacle of her sport, winning two gold medals in this year's Hangzhou Para Asian Games in individual

compound and mixed team compound besides claiming silver medal in doubles compound event. She thanked the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board for playing a big role in her journey. "Whatever I am today is because of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sports Complex in Katra and its coaches Abhilasha Chaudhary and Kuldeep Wadhwan," Sheetal said. Sheetal said she was also inspired by American para archer Matthew Stutzman, who too was born without arms. He competed at the 2012 and 2016 Paralympics and won a silver medal in 2012. "I met him (Stutzman) and I felt really good after meeting him. He motivated me a lot," she said. "When I didn't start archery Preethi didi had sent me his videos and I got motivated seeing his videos. And when I met him I got to learn more about him."

UK police probe ticket problem that sparked violence

AP ■ BIRMINGHAM

English police had 46 supporters of Legia Warsaw in custody Friday after "90 minutes of sustained violence" the night before when 1,000 Polish fans arrived to Villa Park but weren't given their tickets to the game against Aston Villa. West Midlands Police said their investigation will include determining why the tickets weren't distributed but that they'll pursue charges against those arrested after four officers were injured. "The disorder that we encountered last night was the most severe that a lot of us have ever seen," assistant chief constable Damian Barratt told Talk Sport radio. "It was undoubtedly, as I say, instigated as a result of this issue related to ticket allocation," he continued. "That's something I'll be taking up with football authorities and UEFA in particular. I will be expecting some strong decisions on their part." Villa won the Europa Conference League game 2-1. The away fans section of the stadium was empty. UEFA said Friday that it "strongly condemns the unacceptable violence" that took place. "UEFA is in the process of gathering all official reports from the game before deciding on potential next steps," the gov-



erning body said in a statement. "We have no further information or other comment to make at this stage." The normal process of ticket allocation, Barratt explained, is that the home club through UEFA provides them to the away club. "Unfortunately that didn't happen. As a result, it wasn't that we excluded fans, it was that there were no fans with tickets that we could potentially safely facilitate into the ground and for that reason we had to make the decision in conjunction with the club that the turnstiles will not be opened," Barratt said. The Polish fans had been instructed to come to the stadium to receive their tickets and be escorted inside by police. Aston Villa and Legia Warsaw did not return emailed messages Friday seeking comment.

Nadal to return in January after being out for a year

AP ■ MADRID

Rafael Nadal will return to playing at the Brisbane International in Australia in January, the 22-time Grand Slam champion said on Friday. "After a year of not competing, it is time to come back," Nadal said in a video posted on social media. "It will be in Brisbane in the first week of January. See you there." The 37-year-old Spaniard has not played on tour since last January, when he hurt his hip flexor during a loss in the second round of the Australian Open. In May, a little more than a week before the start of the French Open, Nadal announced that he would miss the tournament he's won a record 14 times and wasn't exactly sure when he might return to play. Nadal had said then that he hoped to compete in 2024, which he expected to be his final season. "You never know how things will turn out," Nadal said at a news conference at the time, "but my intention is that next year will be my last year." He wound up having arthroscopic surgery in June in Barcelona. Dating to the end of 2022, the Spanish left-hander has lost seven of his past nine matches, including going 1-3 this season. Nadal's 22 Grand Slam singles titles rank second to Novak Djokovic's 24 for the most among men.

After cricket, movies are source of entertainment in Lanka: Muttiah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan cricket legend Muttiah Muralitharan says Hindi and Tamil films enjoy a huge fan following in his home country and the craze for cinema comes in a close second to cricket in the island nation. The legendary spinner also said he recently watched Tamil hits such as "Jailer," "Leo" and Hindi movies "Jawan" and "Tiger 3". "In Sri Lanka, Hindi movies are famous because very few movies are made in Sri Lanka. They (Sri Lankan films) don't have a lot of budget but they still run in theatres because

people want to watch films in their own language. Both Hindi and Tamil movies are famous in Sri Lanka. Something for entertainment in Sri Lanka, cricket is a part, next one is the movies," Muralitharan told PTI in a virtual interview. Most of the people in Sri Lanka are Sinhalese, but they watch Hindi movies a lot, he added. "A young person there can even speak Hindi because they have watched Hindi movies. Mostly there are Hindi movies, Hollywood movies are very few," the 51-year-old former cricketer said. Growing up, Muralitharan said as he spent most of his time liv-



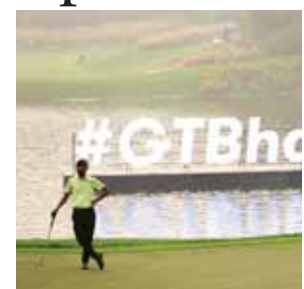
ing at a hostel, he would hardly get an opportunity to watch television. "In those days, we had to go to a cinema hall. Earlier, the movies in Sri Lanka came months after the release. It's only been in the last 10 years that films have been released in Sri Lanka (around the same time) as well," he added.

Muralitharan's biopic "800", titled after the record number of wickets he took in Test cricket, will start streaming on JioCinema from December 2. The film is written and directed by MS Sripathy. Asked about the response to the biographical drama in Sri Lanka upon its theatrical release in October, Muralitharan said the film did well back home. "(It ran in theatres there for) More than a month. In India, a film only runs for 14 days or so. Some run for a week because too many movies come and they take (films) off and put (the new ones) there.

Rashid leads pack heading into final round of Kapil Dev Grant Thornton golf

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

Two-time international winner Rashid Khan led the pack with a total of six-under 138 at the end of round two of the Rs 2 crore Kapil Dev Grant Thornton Invitational golf tournament here on Friday. Delhi-based Rashid (68-70), a three-time PGTI Order of Merit champion, followed his first round of 68 with a steady 70 that saw him continue at the top of the leaderboard. Gurugram's Karan Pratap Singh (68-71), the joint first round leader along with Rashid, slipped to tied second



place after his 71 in round two that took his total to five-under 139. Sunhit Bishnoi (69-70), who had played his second round on Thursday, shared the second spot with Karan. kRound

two resumed at 9:30 am as there was a two-and-a-half-hour fog delay. Out of a total of 120 golfers, the 84 players who couldn't complete their second round on Thursday, came out and completed their rounds on Friday. As a result of the fog delay on the first two days, the tournament has been reduced to a 54-hole event and the third and final round will be played on Saturday. The cut was declared at six-over 150. Fifty-three professionals made it to the final round. The professionals who made the cut will now be joined by

amateurs in the last round where the Pro-Am Team Championship will be played alongside the main event. There will be two professionals and two amateurs in each group. Rashid, a 10th tee starter, began the day on a promising note with two long birdie conversions on the 10th and 13th. He dropped a couple of bogeys thereafter but negated the effect of those with birdies on two par-5s, the 18th and eighth, where he narrowly missed 10 to 12 feet eagle putts. "I hit the ball well today but couldn't make as many putts as I would've liked," Rashid said.

IGNORED AXAR SHINES

PTI ■ RAIPUR

Ignored for the upcoming assignment in South Africa, left-arm spinner Axar Patel responded with excellent figures of 3/16 as India got the better of Australia by 20 runs in the fourth T20I to win the five-match series here on Friday. This was India's fifth consecutive T20I series on trot. Rinku Singh blazed away to a 29-ball 46 while Jitesh Sharma smashed 35 in 19 balls before Australia pulled things back to stop India at 174 for nine after the visitors opted to bowl first. Cruising at 167 for four in 18.3 overs, India lost five wickets for only seven runs in the last two overs, thanks to Ben Dwarshuis (3/40) and Jason Behrendorff (2/32). In reply, Australia were restricted to 154 for seven in 20 overs as India took an unassailable 3-1 lead with a match to go. Matthew Wade remained not out on 36 off 23 balls. Axar Patel (3/16) and Ravi Bishnoi (1/17) were magnificent, bowling eight overs for only 33 runs with four scalps to their credit. There was no dew and hence the target of 175 became defendable unlike Guwahati. Both spinners hit immaculate lengths and mostly bowled stump to stump which became

INDIA BEAT AUSTRALIA BY 20 RUNS TO CLAIM SERIES



Australia's undoing. Set a target of 175, Australia were off to a flyer with Travis Head (31 off 16 balls) collecting a flurry of boundaries to lift his team to 42 for one in four overs, including picking 22 runs off seamer Deepak Chahar. Seasoned spinner Axar however had the hero of Australia's World Cup final caught after the

batter got a leading edge while attempting a slog-sweep. It was a huge breakthrough for India, coming 10 balls after leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi knocked over Josh Philippe's off-stump with one that straightened. Playing across the line, Aaron Hardie's middle stump was disturbed by Axar as he put India in a position of strength by leav-

ing Australia at 55 for three at the end of seventh over. Skipper Suryakumar Yadav introduced Avesh Khan into the attack and the seamer started on a good note, conceding six runs in his first over. Ben McDermott (19) and Tim David (19) steadied the Australian innings with a 35-run partnership before Axar picked

up his third wicket to leave the visitors in a very difficult situation at 87 for four in the 12th over and with the run rate pressure increasing. Axar hit McDermott's off stump as the batter went for a big shot. Taken to the cleaners by Head earlier in the innings, Chahar came back strongly to dismiss David and reduce Australia to 107 for five in the 15th over and the match tilted decisively in favour of India. Earlier, Aaron Hardie started the match with a maiden over before Yashasvi Jaiswal (37 off 28 balls) got off the mark with a lovely cover drive Jason Behrendorff. The 21-year-old Jaiswal launched into Ben Dwarshuis in the third over, hitting the left-arm seamer for three boundaries to set the tone for the hosts. Ruturaj Gaikwad (32 off 28 balls) watched the action from the other end as Jaiswal went after the bowling and when the former did get strike for the first time in the fourth over, he employed the cut shot off a Behrendorff delivery to open his account with a boundary. Jaiswal continued with his aggressive ways and played debutant spinner Chris Green through the off-side for a four before smashing him over the midwicket fence for a six.



Ganguly bats for Rohit as Indian captain till 2024 T20 World Cup

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Impressed with his captaincy at the ODI World Cup, former captain Sourav Ganguly on Friday threw his weight behind Rohit Sharma, saying he should lead India at least till the T20 World Cup in June next year. Rohit, who led India to the ODI World Cup final at home, and Virat Kohli have taken a "break" and will miss the white-ball leg of the upcoming South Africa tour, beginning December 10. Talking to reporters, Ganguly said the duo deserved rest so that they come back "fresh" for the hectic calendar ahead. "Once Rohit is back playing all formats, he should be the captain of India, because he has done so well in the World Cup," said the former BCCI president, who was named the Dabur Chyawanprash's brand ambassador for East India, during a program here. "You saw in the World Cup how well they played. They are absolutely integral and an important part of Indian cricket." Interestingly, both Rohit and Kohli haven't played a T20I since the semifinals against England in the 2022 T20 World Cup and the BCCI was not clear whether the duo should be in India's scheme of things for the T20 global showpiece in six months time. After the 2022 T20 World Cup, Hardik Pandya was named India's T20 captain but following his injury during the ODI World Cup, Suryakumar Yadav is leading the team in the ongoing five-T20 series against Australia. "World Cups are different than a bilateral series because the pressures are different. They have been exceptional this World Cup and hopefully six-

seven months down the line in the West Indies they will be again at their best," Ganguly said. "He's (Rohit) a leader. I expect and I presume that he will continue as captain till the T20 World Cup in 2024." The duo will be back for the two-Test series in South Africa beginning with the Boxing Day Test in Centurion. "Very rightly, they have taken a break because there is so much cricket all the time. I cannot imagine that you played a World Cup final on the 19th and in three days' time you're playing a T20I series against the same team," Ganguly said. "It is not easy to pick yourselves up, especially with the pressures and demands of the World Cup. I'm happy that they have got a break. "They will come back fresh for Tests — there're five Tests against England — there's IPL, and then the T20 World Cup, so it's non-stop cricket. Hopefully they'll come back fresh and keep performing." **HAPPY FOR DRAVID:** The BCCI has also extended the contract of India head coach Rahul Dravid at least till the T20 World Cup, even though the exact duration of his second term is not yet known. It was during Ganguly's BCCI tenure that Dravid had become the head coach and the former India left-hander was happy for his teammate's contract extension. "I'm not surprised that they have shown faith in Dravid. When I was president of the Board, we convinced him to do this job. And I'm so happy to see yesterday that his tenure has been extended. "It was always the case, depending on whether he wanted it or not. I wish him luck for another

World Cup in June. He was very close this time. "They may not have won it, but they probably were the best team in the competition with the way they played. So he's got another seven months for a World Cup in the West Indies. Hopefully, at that time, he will not be runners-up, but a champion," he said. Asked about India's title drought at an ICC global showpiece, Ganguly said: "Hopefully they will cross the bridge one day." "As a captain, I've qualified for three finals, and lost twice — 2003 World Cup and 2001 Champions Trophy. So I don't have the right to say how to win finals. I managed just one win that too as joint winners with Sri Lanka (2002 Champions Trophy)," he said. "At least, they are making the final and by dominating the tournament. Hopefully they will cross the bridge one day, their luck will change. There is no rocket science. "At Australia 47/3, India had a great chance, one wicket and it would have been different. But it's past now." **THANK YOU PUJARA, RAHANE:** Test specialist batters — Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane — were not included for the two Tests against South Africa. "At some point of time you have to play new talents. It happens, there is enormous talent in India and the team has to progress. Pujara and Rahane had enormous success for India, sport doesn't remain with you forever," Ganguly said. "You cannot be there forever, it will happen to everyone. I must thank them what they have done for Indian cricket and selectors want fresh faces, so that's the way it is."



Taijul takes 4 wickets as Bangladesh closes in on win

AP ■ SYLHET (BANGLADESH)

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam claimed 4-40 to rip through New Zealand's batting lineup as Bangladesh closed in on a victory in the series-opening Test on Friday. New Zealand was reduced to 113-7 at stumps on day 4, chasing a victory target of 332. Daryl Mitchell batted patiently to end the day on 44, with Ish Sodhi on 7. Opener Devon Conway was Taijul's only other batter to put up resistance with 22. Pacer Shoriful Islam extended Tom Latham's lean patch with a six-ball duck in the first over, and Kane Williamson failed to build on his first-innings century on an increasingly deteriorating wicket. Williamson started with a brace of boundaries against Mehidy Hasan but Taijul troubled him by varying the pace and finally trapped him lbw for 11. Williamson reviewed in vain. Henry Nicholls was the next to go, top-edging a slog-sweep off Mehidy to Nayeem Hasan at short fine leg for 2. Conway was playing with positive intent with wickets falling around him and perfectly swept the spinners to keep the score-

board moving before Taijul had him caught by Shahadat Hossain at short leg. With New Zealand at 46-4, the onus was on Mitchell but he found little support from the other end. Wicketkeeper-batter Tom Blundell (6) was stifled by Taijul before edging a turning delivery behind, and Nayeem pegged back the visitors further with a successful review to remove Glenn Phillips. When Taijul got the better of Kyle Jamieson for 7, Bangladesh looked like they could wrap up the win on day four. But Mitchell and Sodhi survived a tricky 30 minutes before the bad light forced stumps. Earlier, Bangladesh was bowled out for 338 in its second innings. Najmul Hossain Shanto added just one run to his overnight score and was out for 105 as Bangladesh lost a succession of wickets. Mehidy Hasan scored 50 not out to help the side take the lead past 300. The hosts started Day 4 on 212-3 but lost Shanto in the second over when Tim Southee had him caught down the leg side, ending a 98-run fourth-wicket stand.

Marsh defends controversial act of resting feet on World Cup trophy

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, who faced criticism from Indian fans for resting his feet on the World Cup trophy, on Friday insisted that the gesture was not disrespectful and he won't mind repeating the controversial act. Soon after Australia defeated hosts India by six wickets in the final to claim their record-extending sixth ODI World Cup, skipper Pat Cummins shared a picture of Marsh with his feet on the trophy on his Instagram account, creating a huge furore on social media. "There was obviously no disrespect meant in that photo at all," Marsh said on 'Sen Radio'. "I haven't given it too much



thought, I haven't seen a lot on social media even though everyone tells me it's gone off. There's nothing in that," he added. However, when asked if he would do it again, Marsh said "Yeah probably, to be honest." The picture, which went viral on

social media, didn't sit well with Indian fans. Even pacer Mohammed Shami claimed that he felt "hurt" by Marsh's action. "The trophy for which all the teams in the world fight, the trophy which you want to lift over your head, keeping a foot on that trophy did not make me happy," Shami had said. **Hope big series aren't scheduled after World Cups, players deserve to celebrate** Four days after Australia beat India in the final, the two sides squared off in a five-match T20 series. Marsh hopes such big series won't be scheduled so soon after ICC tournaments in future as triumphant players deserve to celebrate for a while with their families at home.

Wong fires England Women's A to four wicket series levelling win against India

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Jessy Wong's late flourish helped England Women's A level their three-match T20 series against India with a four-wicket win here in the second game on Friday. Chasing 150 to win, England stumbled towards the end with India making regular breakthroughs but Wong, who plays for Mumbai Indians in the Women's Premier League, produced a match-winning innings as she hit a 15-ball 35 (5x4, 1x6). The contest appeared to be heading towards another close

finish like the first game with England losing wickets in heap but Wong went ballistic on a turning track here at the Wankhede Stadium, scoring the last 23 of her runs off only seven balls. With 17 needed off 12, Wong hit two fours and a six off Kashvee Gautam (1/34) to take England over the line who finished at 151/6 in 18.5 overs. The series-decider will be played here on December 3. Before Wong's heroics, Grace Scrivens top-scored with 39 and added 38 runs for the first wicket with Maia Bouchier to provide a strong start.

IPL media rights value can touch \$50 billion: Dhumal

PTI ■ BENGALURU

IPL chairman Arun Dhumal believes that the media rights value of the league has the potential to touch a staggering USD 50 billion over the next two decades, provided it keeps innovating and improvising with fans' interests in mind. The current media rights value of the league stands at USD 6.2 billion (approx Rs 48000 crore) for a five-year period starting from 2022. Even by this estimate, IPL is the second-most high-valued league after the National Football League (NFL), as the American sporting entity struck a USD 110 billion media deal for an 11-year period starting from last year.

"If I have to see how it has gone over the last 15 years and if I have to go by estimates going forward, we are expecting media rights (of the IPL) to go somewhere close to USD 50 billion by around 2043," said Dhumal while speaking at the RCB Innovation Lab's Leaders Meet India here. Dhumal, who is also a former BCCI treasurer, also pinned his hopes for a financial windfall on the advent of the Women's Premier League (WPL) and cricket's inclusion in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. "We need to keep innovating, keep doing better in terms of fan engagement, and keep making it better in terms of the quality of games," he said.



SA20 ropes in de Villiers as 'Brand Ambassador'

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

SA20, South Africa's premier T20 cricket league, has roped in former Proteas skipper AB de Villiers as its official 'Brand Ambassador' for the second season. The second season of the SA20, which kicks off on January 10, will feature 34 matches over four weeks and will showcase elite domestic and international players from the six global franchises. De Villiers will be working very closely with the management team of the league to help strengthen SA20's global fanbase and reinforce the league's brand across key strategic markets of India and the UK. He will be joined by an illustrious ensemble of South African cricket legends, including Herschelle Gibbs, Allan Donald, Dale Steyn and Mark Boucher. Robin Petersen completes the list. De Villiers said: "It is an honour to be associated with SA20. It embodies a pioneering vision for

South African cricket, with the potential to illuminate the global cricketing stage. "SA20's remarkable talent and international reach provide a platform to showcase the finest of South African cricket, propelling it to unprecedented levels." Speaking on the appointment of De Villiers as the brand ambassador, Betway SA20 League Commissioner, Graeme Smith said, "AB's exceptional cricketing talent and magnetic personality make him the perfect fit for our league. His involvement will undoubtedly elevate the league's status, both on and off the field. "AB's passion for the game and his ability to connect with fans align perfectly with our vision for SA20. We believe his presence will not only inspire players but also engage cricket enthusiasts across the globe, helping us achieve unprecedented success. We look forward to a fantastic season ahead, with AB playing a crucial role in making it a resounding triumph."

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A day after their Test careers met with a dead end, veteran batters Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane on Friday soldiered on for Saurashtra and Mumbai respectively with contrasting results in the Vijay Hazare Trophy here. Pujara's 35th List A fifty, an arduous 114-ball 55, could not prevent a Saurashtra collapse for a lowly 144, and Mumbai, despite captain Rahane falling for 12, reached 150 for 5 in 34.4 overs for a five-wicket win at the Alur grounds. Both Rahane and Pujara had failed to find a place in India's Test side, which was announced on Thursday, to tour South Africa. However, Shardul Thakur showed his all-round prowess to play a big part in Mumbai's win. Thakur first took 2 for 37 from eight overs as defending champions Saurashtra's batting unit floundered. Mumbai were on a shaky ground at 76 for 5, but Thakur (39 not out off 44 balls) and

PUJARA'S FIFTY IN VAIN AS MUMBAI EDGE OUT SAURASHTRA DESPITE RAHANE'S FAILURE

wicketkeeper batsman Prasad Pawar (43 not out off 63 balls) stitched together 74 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket to guide their side home. **PADIKKAL POWERS KARNATAKA:** Devdutt Padikkal celebrated his entry into the India 'A' squad to tour South Africa, slamming a hundred to set the foundation for Karnataka's 22-run victory over Chandigarh in a Group C match in Ahmedabad. Padikkal's 103-ball 114 and Nikin Jose's 114-ball 96 powered Karnataka to 299 for 6 with skipper Manish Pandey chipping in with an unbeaten 53 off 48 balls. The hundred by opener Arslan Khan (102 off 103 balls) and 51 by Ankit Kaushik kept Chandigarh in the hunt for a good while, but eventually they had to settle for 277 for 7 in 50 overs.

PUNJAB SHOCK STASTUDDEN TN: Fifties by Mandeep Singh (68), Prabhsimran Singh (58) helped Punjab outwit Tamil Nadu by 76 runs in their Group E match at the BKC grounds, Mumbai. Punjab made a competitive 251 all out in 45.2 overs, and then bowled out a strong TN lineup for 175 in the 35th over. Veteran Dinesh Karthik made an 82-ball 93 for them. However, pacer Siddharth Kaul took 5 for 50 to hinder TN's charge. **BRIEF SCORES:** **Group A: Sikkim:** 83 all out in 33.5 overs (Akhil Scaria 3/12, Abhijith Praveen 3/20, S Midhun 3/10) lost to **Kerala:** 84/3 in 13.2 overs (Krishna Prasad 38 not out) by 7 wickets. **Saurashtra:** 144 all out in 40.5 overs (Cheteshwar Pujara 55 not out; Mohit Avasthi 2/32, Shams



Mulani 2/16, Shardul Thakur 2/37) lost to **Mumbai:** 150/5 in 34.4 overs (Prasad Pawar 43 not out, Shardul Thakur 39 not out; Jaidev Unadkat 2/35) by 5 wickets. **Group B: Vidarbha:** 282/6 in 42 overs (Dhruv Shorey 101, Aman

Mokhadre 83; Shubam Singh 2/34) beat **Chattisgarh:** 273/9 in 42 overs (Shashank Singh 154; Umesh Yadav 2/45, Darshan Nalkande 2/58) by 9 runs. **Group C: Karnataka:** 299/6 in 50 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 114, Nikin Jose 96, Manish Pandey 53 not out; Mandeep Singh 58, Siddharth Kaul 29; Baba Aparajith 3/49, R Sai Kishore 2/43) beat **Tamil Nadu:** 175 all out in 34.2 overs (Dinesh Karthik 93, Siddharth Kaul 5/50, Prerit Dutta 3/32) by 76 runs. **Goa:** 383/6 in 50 overs (Suyash Prabhudesai 132 not out, Snehal Kauthankar 114, Ishaan Gadekar 54; Hopongkyu 3/68) beat **Nagaland:** 151 all out in 39.1 overs (Jonathan Rongsen 55; Arjun Tendulkar 4/30) by 232 runs. **Baroda:** 263/9 in 50 overs (Kinit Patel 72, Shashwat Rawat 44, Shivalki Sharma 42; Kumar Kartikeya 3/45) lost to **Madhya Pradesh:** 266/6 in 48.5 overs (Venkatesh Iyer 71 not out, Rajat Patidar 77, Yash Dube 72; Babashafi Pathan 3/36) by 4 wickets.