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TMC MP Moitra evades questions PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI NEW DELHI Red CMP Moitra evades evades questions innocence to the allegations levelled against her and told the preligementary committee that save Moitra after all evidence save Moitra after all evidence. Red CMP Moitra evades evades questions innocence to the allegations and OBC MP. "No power can save Moitra after all evidence save Moi

Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra's deposition before the Ethics Committee of Parliament on Thursday in an alleged cash-for-query case sparked fireworks as the members of the Committee, owing allegiance to the Opposition, walked out in between

With Moitra facing heat from both Lok Sabha and her party TMC, she refuted the allegations but admitted that she shared her parliamentary login with businessman Darshan Hiranandani, who admitted to posting questions on Moitra's parliamentary login.

Sources privy to the matter allege that nearly 47 log-ins to her parliamentary account were made from Dubai.

Moitra is likely to be expelled from Parliament if the allegations against her are proved, for which some evidence has been shared by the IT and the Home Ministry with the panel headed by BJP MP Vinod Sonkar. Interestingly, the firebrand and most vocal TMC leader carried all her luxury bags, beauty products, and other luxury items for the Ethics committee to examine, as alleged by Hiranandani that he gifted to

Lok Sabha's Ethics Committee is probing BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's "cash-for-query" allegations against the TMC MP. He has accused Moitra of asking questions, which were keyed in through her parlia-



appear before Lok Sabha Ethics Committee at Parliament House complex in New Delhi on Thursday (Right) BJP MP Nishikant Dubey addresses a press conference in New

TMC MP Mahua Moitra arrives to

mentary account, at the behest of Hiranandani in return for bribes and favours from the Dubai-based scion of a wellknown business family.

After the meeting, BJP MP and panel member Aparajita Sarangi, however, said that Moitra behaved in an angry, rude, and arrogant manner when she was asked about the affidavit submitted to the committee by businessman Darshan Hiranandani.

However, Opposition members talking to the media accused the Ethics panel's chairperson of asking the TMC MP personal and unethical questions, Sonkar, who contin-



ued the deliberations even after the walkout, later counteraccused the Opposition members of behaving unethically and boycotting to detract from

allegations against Moitra. Talking to reporters after the meeting ended, Sonkar alleged that objectionable words were used against the committee's functioning and against him. Moitra later wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla alleging "unethical, sordid, prejudiced" behaviour meted out to her at ethics panel hearing.

Opposition members of the committee, which had asked Moitra to depose before it in connection with allegations of "gifts-for-query" against her, also questioned the manner in which the meeting was conducted.

"We found the Ethics committee chairperson's questions to Moitra undignified and unethical," Congress MP and panel member N Uttam Kumar Reddy told reporters after the walkout.

Moitra has been accused of asking questions, which were keyed in through her parliamentary account, at the behest of Hiranandani in return for bribes and favours from the Dubai-based scion of a wellknown business family.

parliamentary committee that the charge is motivated by animus of advocate Jai Anant Dehadrai after she broke her personal relations with him.

She was supported by Opposition MPs, including Reddy and Danish Ali of the BSP, in the meeting while a few BJP members, including VD Sharma, wanted her to respond to the substantive part of the allegations and not make it all about the personal relationship going bad.

Sources said a large part of her deposition before the committee was about her relationship with Dehadrai as she appeared to blame him for the leaks and allegations

Citing Dehadrai's submission, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey had filed a complaint against her with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla who referred the matter to the committee. Separately talking to reporters,

Dubey said Moitra tried to create a wrong narrative about the proceedings and the strident criticism o Opposition was perturbed that ness conglomerate.

innocence to the allegations levelled against her and told the parliamentary committee that the ethics panel was headed by an OBC MP. "No power can save Moitra after all evidence provided by me and others against her," said Dubey. Dubey has accused Moitra of

compromising national inter-

est by sharing her parliamentary portal log-in and password with an outsider, and has cited the agreement MPs sign to keep the details secret to demand action against her. What has added to Moitra's woes is an affidavit by the businessman in which he admitted to giving bribes to her so that she could ask questions to target the Adani Group and Prime

Minister Narendra Modi.

Sources said she claimed that Hiranandani was forced by the government to file the affidavit and has sought to question him during her appearance at the panel, an unlikely eventuality as it is not a standard practice in the working of such parliamentary panels

The TMC MP has also claimed that the Adani Group is behind the "bogus" charges due to her strident criticism of the busi-

Trinamool distances itself

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has preferred to stand aloof from party MP Mahua Moitra's corruption case.

The Trinamool Congress feels Sources said Moitra pleaded that the leaders who get

embroiled in corruption should fend for themselves. "The party has made its stand of zero tolerance for corruption ... if some leader gets involved then it is for him or her to come out

clean," a party leader said.

Detailed report on P2

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate in the excise policy scam on Thursday and held a roadshow in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli with Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann.

Kejriwal said the summons did not clarify whether he was being called as a witness or as an accused, and that they failed to provide details of the FIR filed against him, and they did not specify whether he ws being summoned as an individual, the CM of Delhi, or the convener of the AAP.

According to official sources. the ED is now expected to issue fresh summons to him. Sources indicated that a fresh date for Kejriwal could be issued for a closer date as the Supreme Court has recently taken note of the prosecution's assurance that the trial in the case will be concluded within the next 6-8 months.

In April this year, Kejriwal was questioned by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with its case in the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy case. Kejriwal's party colleagues Satyendra Jain, Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh are in judicial custody in the case. As the Delhi Chief Minister refused to appear before the



Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections, in Singrauli district, on Thursday PTI ED, the BJP hit out at the AAP national convener, alleging that

he ran away as he did not want to face the truth. Delhi BJP leaders staged a dharna near Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat

on Thursday, demanding Kejriwal's resignation over the alleged excise policy scam. The AAP on Thursday alleged there was a "political conspiracy" behind the Enforcement Directorate's summons to Kejriwal and claimed that Opposition leaders were being deliberately targeted

Asking that summons be recalled, Kejriwal wrote, "In view of the above, please recall the said summons, which is, to say the least, is vague and motivated."

Congress selfish: Nitish

from the Center," he said.

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday became the latest Opposition leader from the INDIA bloc to express his annovance with the Congress for not prioritisceived and formed by Nitish himself in June this year, with the grand old party being its centrifugal force under his coordination.

The senior JD(U) leader claimed "nothing much" is happening in the alliance, a bloc of $2\bar{8}$ parties formed to counter the BJP juggernaut in the 2024 general elections.

During the last one week, other key stakeholders, including Sharad Pawar, Sitaram Yechury, Akhilesh Yadav, and Omar Abdullah, too have voiced their concerns and expressed the need to expedite the formulation of INDIA if everyone is interested in dismantling Narendra Modi in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Though Nitish's statement provided the much-needed



ammunition for the BJP to attack the alliance, and particularly the JD(U), which broke ranks with the BJP to join the RJD in leading the State, Bihar Congress chief Akhilesh Prasad Singh said the Bihar Chief Minister was correct in his assessment.

Addressing a hastily convened Press conference at the AICC headquarters in the national Capital, Singh said the Assembly elections are underway in five States.

"Nitish expressed his concern about expediting the develop-ment of the INDIA framework because, just like him, all Opposition parties are extremely anxious to dislodge the BJP-led Modi Government

Nitish blamed the Congress' preoccupation with Assembly polls in five States for the INDIA coalition's inability to build on the momentum it had gained in recent months. Nitish had hosted the first meeting of Opposition leaders e after talking to all leaders and meeting and visiting them personally in an effort for the formation of the

new coalition. 'Nitish first convinced the Congress to take the lead role, and after receiving assurances of full support, he proceeded to gain the confidence of RJD's Lalu Prasad

"It was Lalu who was initially reluctant to include the Congress, considering their history of tantrums, but Nitish convinced him of the need to keep the national party as pivotal," one RJD leader told *The*

Pioneer. *There has not been much progress on that front. The Congress party seems to be more interested in the five Assembly polls. In the INDIA coalition, all of us had agreed

to assign the Congress the leading role.

"But it appears they will respond and call the next meeting only after they are through with the ongoing elections," said Nitish at a rally in Patna called by the Left party CPI — Bhaajpa hataao Desh bachao ge the BIP from power save the country).

Speaking in the presence of senior leaders like CPI general secretary D Raja, the Bihar CM recalled that parties opposed to the current dispensation had come together to form the new coalition. Turning towards Raja, the Bihar CM recalled his close association with the Left parties since the 1980s when CPI and CPI(M) had worked together to help him win his

first election. Responding to Nitish, the Congress asserted that the Opposition INDIA bloc had been formed for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections at the national level and was not State spe-

Singh said, "It was a CPI event. I have heard his speech. The

intention of his remarks is that the Modi Government should be removed as soon as possible. But it will be removed only when the time comes and there

are elections." Not being offensive like his Uttar Pradesh counterpart Ajay Rai who annoved SP supremo Yaday over sea ing in Madhya Pradesh elections, the Bihar Congress chief said the summary of the Bihar Chief Minister's remarks was that the parties that have come together should be more proactive and jointly dislodge the Modi government, so there is nothing wrong in what he stated. "I believe that States make up the country, so the five States are important as well,"

Singh said. The summary of his remarks was that the Congress is busy in State elections and then the Congress will call a meeting. Before also, at Sadaqat Asharam (Congress office in Patna), Lalu Prasad had come and had said INDIA bloc's first rally will be in Patna's Gandhi Maidan," Singh told the



Onion grabs headlines again

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

While the common citizens have not yet overcome the shock of tomato price, onions' rates have already skyrocketed. Retail prices have leapt to ₹80-90 per kg in most parts of the country.

The price rise came soon after

the Navratri festival ended. Until then, onions were being sold at ₹35-40 a kg. This price increase is a common occurrence almost every year when the gap between two crops leads to a surge in prices. Prices of this commodity are expected to remain high throughout the festival sea-

But the price rise is a cause of concern for the Centre as it is grappling to contain it ahead of the crucial upcoming Assembly polls in five States this month. The Centre now is determined not to let prices touch ₹100 as what happened for tomatoes and has started selling onions to consumers at a subsidised



rate of ₹25 per kg in over a dozen cities to make the item affordable and cool prices by boosting availability.

The Government has also imposed a Minimum Export Price (MEP) for onions and it has directed procurement of an additional two lakh tons of onion for buffer stocks.

'The Government has directed NAFED and NCCF to augment the retail points for the sale of onions at a highly subsidised rate of ₹25 per kg in several States, including Delhi and NCR

In addition to sale through online platforms like ONDC, it will be sold through mobile vans as well. Consumers should not panic as we are keeping an eye on the market manipula-tions and within a couple of days the price of the bulbous roots will be stabilised," Rohit Kumar Singh, Secretary, Consumer Affairs, Government of India, told The Pioneer.

Historical evidence has shown that soaring prices of staple crops have always been a red flag for any incumbent Governments in India. Governments have collapsed in the past owing to the spike in onion prices. The BJP suffered heavy losses and never returned to power in Delhi, a result widely blamed on high

onion prices In the poll-bound Madhya Pradesh, the average price of onion is ₹40 a kg which means the commodity is being sold

around ₹70-80 a kg. Similarly, in Rajasthan and Telangana, the prices have touched ₹80 a kg which was being sold at ₹25-30 a kg till Navaratri.

The rising prices of onions have

compared to other grocery items because of its widespread use in Indian dishes. In Chhattisgarh, the prices are ₹70-80 a kg in urban areas while in rural areas, it is being

become a political issue in the five poll-bound States with

both the Congress and the BJP

playing the blame game. Urban

consumers tend to be sensitive

to the rise in onion prices

sold at ₹50 a kg. The data from the Department of Consumer Affairs showed the average price of onion across the country is around

₹56.63 per kg. Meanwhile, the maximum rate was ₹90 per kg; the modal price was ₹60 per kg, and the minimum rate of the vegetable is ₹18 per kg. The average wholesale price of onion stood at ₹4,657.46 on

November 1, up from ₹3,476.21 a week ago. According to officials of the Department of Consumer Affairs, prices soared because of short supplies as many States

reported reduced production

due to inclement weather during the monsoon season that ended mid-October.

Many onion-producing areas reported a wipe out of the crop. The crop, which usually arrives in October, is now expected to arrive in December due to delays caused by rain damage and a heatwave.

Vegetable vendors at the Ghazipur market said prices could breach the ₹100 mark if the supply shortage was not addressed. According to vendors, prices had increased due to the late arrival of fresh harvest from key producing states such as Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

increased 32 per cent.

Not only onion, the prices of most vegetables are high this November. Most of the vegetables are being sold between ₹60 and ₹80 a kg. Besides vegetables, wheat has risen 12 per cent in Delhi from a year earlier. Rice costs 22 per cent more, tomatoes are up 80 per cent, while onions have

Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 match between India and Sri Lanka at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Thursday. Mohammed Shami (5/18) and Mohammed Siraj (3/16) ran through the Sri Lanka batting lineup as the Islanders were bundled out for 55 in 19.4 overs while chasing 358 **India dominates** taker in World Cup history. Siraj (3/16 in 7 overs) was crowd wouldn't have believed

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj intimidated and scarred an underprepared Sri Lanka with a fast bowling exhibition for the ages as India demolished the islanders by a record 302 runs to enter the World Cup semifinals here on Thursday.

On a Wankhede track that looked placid, India piled on a mammoth 357 for 8 in 50

Sri Lanka crumbled under lights for a paltry 55 in 19.4 overs to ensure an eighth semifinal appearance for India at the global event. This was India's biggest victory by margin of runs in the 48-year history of the tournament.

With 14 points from seven games, Rohit Sharma's army will like to finish with an allwin record as they now face South Africa in Kolkata on November 5 and the Netherlands in Bengaluru on November 12.

Shami (5/18 in 5 overs) took his second five-wicket haul in this edition and with 45 scalps, became India's highest wicket-

equally incisive and Jasprit Bumrah (1/8 in 5 overs) formidable as ever in a picture-perfect bowling performance. As the Indian juggernaut rolls on, every performance seems like a dream played on a loop. Exactly 45 days ago, Siraj had dismantled the Sri Lankans for 50 in the Asia Cup final and it seemed that the effect of that

game has stayed in the minds of the Lankans, who became the second team after Bangladesh to get eliminated from the 10-team event. It was fascinating to see how

the same 22 yards looked so different when the two teams batted. While Virat Kohli (88 off 94

balls) missed out on a world record-equalling 49th ODI hundred with the maestro Sachin Tendulkar himself in attendance, batting seemed like the easiest job on the planet. Shubman Gill (92 off 92 balls) and Shreyas Iyer (82 off 56 balls) pulverised the opposition even as they missed out on personal landmarks. But the capacity Wankhede

three fours.

a-ball 92.

what came in next. On that placid track, the ball started jagging around as Siraj and Shami didn't give any

Lankan batters any respite during the 19 odd overs that they bowled. If Siraj came wide off the crease and delivered unplayable in-

cutters, Shami bowled from close to the stumps and got the ball to move away enough that either it kissed the outside edge of the bat or there was loud thwack of the stumps. Kohli enjoyed a 189-run second wicket stand with his heir apparent Gill, who looked a million dollars during his run-

After a mini-slump, it was Iyer, who feasted against a mediocre bowling attack on a placid track, to get some form back before the match against South Africa at Eden Gardens, which will be played on a spicier track. Starting briskly with a flurry of sixes, Iyer's innings was instrumental in taking India past 350 after they lost both Gill and Kohli in quick succession. His

innings featured six sixes and

Mamata silence on Mahua; TMC in two minds

¬he Trinamool Congress has I preferred to stand aloof from party MP Mahua Moitra's corruption case.

The Trinamool Congress feels that the leaders who get embroiled in corruption should fend for themselves. "The party has made its stand of zero tolerance for corruption ... if some leader gets involved then it is for him or her to come out

clean," a party leader said.

However, with the Left and the Congress pouring their empathy for the besieged Trinamool Congress MP and her own party preferring a 'golden silence' till she came out victorious in her battle against the BJP, a faint crevice has started showing in the Bengal ruling outfit with the number of leaders advocating a "visible sup-

Though Moitra in a statement openly recorded her affection for Mamata Banerjee calling her a second 'Mom' (mother) the Chief Minister's 'golden mum' on the firebrand MP

increasing by the day.

than surprised) many a party

No wonder why a couple of leaders have openly supported Moitra irrespective of the stated party lines.

At least two ministers in addition to Firhad Hakim and an MP have expressed their support for Moitra saying "the party should stand by him at any cost lest it sends a bad message to the organization." While Hakim on Monday said

that irrespective of his party's stance he would stand by Moitra. "She has been an excellent parliamentarian and an asset of the TMC ... whatever be my party's stance I am strongly behind her," Hakim who has reportedly lost much of his clout in his party and one of whose close relatives have a few months ago joined the Congress Party said.

Another senior TMC leader Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay backed Moitra saying the MP would not have incurred the wrath of the BJP had she attacked any of their leaders. "That she has attacked Adani



has ruffled the BJP ... the people are watching everything," Chattopadhyay said. A party MP from North 24 Parganas requesting anonymity said that the "TMC is known y its firebrand culture set up by our fearless leader Mamata Banerjee ... this is the time to show that we are the same old TMC and our leader is the same old firebrand leader who never compromises on wrongs ... I think there is a need to stand by Mahua ... I think there is a need to go for a nationwide opinion building

Another senior leader and former minister said that the party should stand by its leaders until their guilt was proved because regularly jettisoning the besieged leaders could send a bad signal down the line. "It is more of the organization

which includes workers and the leaders rather than the people who are closely watching the top leaderships' actions when some of us are in trouble ... Already words are out that the TMC is a party that uses its leaders and then throws them out," he said adding however that the party still had "full faith who will pull us out of the

If such a "system of use-andthrow continues then the party will get weakened organizationally ... no one will want to work with full commitment in future," he said.

Incidentally the Congress has come out in full support for Moitra with senior party leader Adhir Chowdhury wondering why she should alone be made the scapegoat of things. "I am not aware of whatever has happened but as things appear to pened but as things appear to me now ... the BJP government is gagging everyone's voice ... the MPs are sent to parliament to speak ... to take up people's cause and the government is there to reply to them ... why don't they reply to the questions raised by Mahua Moitra instead of going

On the Trinamool Congress' dealing of Moitra he said, it was the old political culture of Mamata Banerjee to use and throw people in her own interests. "She has been well-known for that ... she used Partha

him out ... now the TMC is distancing itself from the likes of Anubrata Mondal, Jyoti Priya Mallick ... they have only two leaders in the party: one Mamata Banerjee and two her nephew Abhishek Banerjee for whom the party men: leaders, workers alike must stand up and act ... For Abhishek they spend crores in awsuits but for others they pre-

fer 'golden silence'." CPI(M)'s Sujan Chakrabarty too gave a roundabout support to Moitra by condemning the BJP's "ethics committee tamasha.

He said, "today they are summoning this leader and that to suit their own political needs ... but what happened to the ethics committee in the Narada scam when 9-10 of their leaders including MPs, ministers and even today's Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari who was then in TMC took money in front of camera ... but noth ing happened to them ... the ethics committee led by LK Advani did not sit for even

Unwritten writ directs TMC leaders not to speak out of turn

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

With the BJP going all-out against opposition parties on issues of corruption, an unwritten writ has been allowed to circulate in the Trinamool Congress line asking leaders not to speak out of turn against the top BJP leaders and some specific business groups of the

Aware of the BJP's Ambani-Adani sensitivity even Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee who has for long been on the Enforcement Directorate radar in a number of cases — including cattle and coal smuggling, recruitment scam - have preferred silence on specific emo-

"A day after the Chief Minister expressed her "golden silence" and "tolerate-till-you-can" strat-

egy a senior leader of the party said, "Our party wants not engage in dirty politics but to fight for the people's issues ... we will fight against the Centre for the State's dues and not raise personal issues ... our leader Mamata Banerjee has never personally attacked anyone in her carrier and as her loyal soldiers we too will follow that ... Bengal has nothing against anything personal against any politician (read the top BJP leadership) or any business group," the leader said.

Well-placed TMC sources also said that for now junior Banerjee would go slow in his attack on the BJP and would concentrate on the State and organisational politics leaving the party's national affairs on the Chief Minister. Instead of Abhishek, the party's fight for the clearance of MNREGA funds would be

'Money to developing nations for climate adaptation has declined'

ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELH

S peaking volumes about the lip service that the nations are paying to the global warming threats impacting livelihoods and lives, a new UN report has noted that public multilateral and bilateral adaptation finance flows to developing countries has declined by 15 per cent to \$21 billion in 2021.

The adaptation finance gap is the difference between the estimated costs of adapting to climate change in developing countries and the amount of finance available to meet these

The report "Adaptation Gap Report 2023: Underfinanced. Underprepared - Inadequate investment and planning on climate adaptation leaves the world exposed" which comes ahead of the annual UN climate talks in Dubai, UAE further points out that as there has been growing adaptation finance needs but faltering flows, the current adaptation finance gap is now estimated at \$194-366 billion per year. At the same time, adaptation planning and implementation appear to be plateauing,

"This failure to adapt has massive implications for losses and damages, particularly for the most vulnerable,"

said The report notes that the adaptation finance needs

of developing countries are 10-18 times as big as international public finance flows - over 50 per cent higher than the previous range estimate.

"Today's Adaptation Gap Report shows a growing divide between need and action when it comes to protecting people from climate extremes.

Action to protect people and nature is more pressing than ever," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in his message on the report.

"Lives and livelihoods are being lost and destroyed, with the vulnerable suffering the most. We are in an adaptation emer-

gency. We must act like it. And take steps to close the adaptation gap, now," he added.
"In 2023, climate change yet again became more disruptive

and deadly: temperature records toppled, while storms, floods, heatwaves, and wildfires caused PUBLIC NOTICE



These intensifying impacts tell us that the world must urgently cut greenhouse gas emissions and increase adaptation efforts to protect vulnerable populations. Neither is happening," said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

"Finding new ways to deliver finance for adaptation action is essential," Anderson said. "Neither the goal of doubling

2019 international finance flow to developing countries by 2025 nor a possible New Collective Quantified

Goal for 2030 will significantly close the adaptation finance gap on their own," she lamentindicating that the 55 most cli-

mate-vulnerable economies alone have experienced losses and damages of more than \$500 billion in the last two These costs will rise steeply in

the coming decades, particularly in the absence of forceful mitigation and adaptation. Studies indicate that every bil-

lion invested in adaptation against coastal flooding leads to a USD 14 billion reduction in economic damages. Meanwhile, \$ 16 billion per year

invested in agriculture would prevent approximately 78 million people from starving or chronic hunger because of climate impacts.

The report identifies seven ways to increase finance, including through domestic expenditure, international finance, and the private sector.

one official estimate, the United States, European Union, World Bank and other wealthy institutions collectively provid-\$83.3 billion in climate finance in 2020, leaving a large gap to close.

Two women die in ceiling plaster collapse incidents in Thane, Palghar

PTI THANE/PALGHAR

wo women died in the last 1 24 hours in separate incidents of ceiling plaster collapse in Thane and Palghar districts in Maharashtra, civic officials said on Thursday. In Thane, Chandrika Kunju (33) died after the ceiling plaster of her home in a chawl fell on her in the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, Assistant Municipal Commissioner (Kalwa) Subodh Thanekar said. She was rushed to a hospital where she died while undergoing treatment, he

Kerala 'bomber' Dominic has no links with us: Jehovah's Witness KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI er-in-law and wife are members

 $D_{\text{who claims that he was the}}^{\text{ominic Martin, the person}}$

one who caused last Sunday's bomb blast during the prayer meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses at Kalamassery is not a member of the congregation and has nothing to do with the organ-This was disclosed to The

Pioneer by TA Sreekumar, spokesman of Kerala region of JW. Three persons (two women and a 12-year old girl) lost their lives and 50 persons were injured in the blast caused by tiffin box bomb and powered by improvised explosive device. "Martin himself has told the police that he has not attended any prayer meetings of the JW during the last seven years. Neither he nor his parents are members of the sect.

"His association with the JW is through marriage as his moth-

of the sect," said Sreekumar in an exclusive interview with this newspaper.

The disclosure by Sreekumar has put the Kerala Police in a quandary as the latter was going ahead with the assumption that the bomb blast was executed by martin without any outside help.

Martin had surrendered to the police within 90 minutes of the blast with the claim that he alone was responsible for the act. Martin had handed over to the police the video film he shot in the run up to the bomb blast including how he procured the materials for assembling the bomb and how he perfected the blast.

The media in Kerala is frightened by the police action against reporters and media houses for questioning the assumption and conclusion by



The CPI-M led Kerala Government has issued stern warning to all people not to link the Kalamassery blasts with Hamas or Lashkar-e-Toiba in the backdrop of the war in Gaza.

The State Government has filed a case against union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar for his social media post lambasting the government of Kerala for allowing leaders of Hamas to address meetings in the

Sreekumar said that at no point of time Martin has approached the authorities of the JW congregation with any kind of grievances. "How is it possible for a person who ĥas not attended even a single prayer meeting of the congregation allege that ours is an anti-national organization? The motto and objective of the JW is to mould good citizens so that we have good families and good society where all could live peacefully and happily. We teach our members to cooperate with the government, whether it be in State or Centre. Our people stay away from politics, follow the laws of the land, pay taxes and work in government and corporate establishments,"

Sreekumar, born-Hindu and later got converted to JW, said that the congregation does not allow religious conversion of any kind. 'We hold the view that reli-

gious conversions are against the Constitution of the nation. Even children born to parents belonging to the JW have to undergo lessons in Bible, attend the prayer meetings and follow the life style prescribed by the congregation. "Then only they would be

considered as members of the JW," he explained. He said last Sunday's attack was

the first of its kind incident in the history of JW in India. "Our mission is to wait with patience for the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The JW operates in 240 countries and in India itself there are more than 70 conventions being held to propagate the news of hope. We have been

functioning in India for more than hundred years and there have been no complaints against us all these years," he

There are more than 15,000 people in the JW congregation in Kerala.

The life of a follower of the sect is full of prayers and learning Bible. If one wants to join the sect, it is not that easy as one has to be thorough with the teachings of Bible. "Good individuals, good families and high standard of life and happiness everywhere are our mission. "A committee of scholars with

maturity and wisdom lead the JW in India," he said. Though the JW had decided to

do away with the regional conventions and prayer meetings in the backdrop of Sunday's mishap, the leadership has given green signal to resume the same from next week, said

SC stresses on reducing cash component in electoral process, reserves verdict

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The electoral bonds scheme should not become a tool for "legitimisation of quid pro quo" between power centres and people who are benefactors of that power, the Supreme Court said on Thursday as it underscored the need for reducing the cash component in the electoral process.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said the legislature and the executive can devise a system which does not have the "flaws" of this scheme and is more transparent.

'You can still devise a system which balances out in a proportional way, that is the point," the bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was representing the Centre, during the arguments on a batch of pleas challenging the validity of the electoral bonds scheme.

The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, I B Pardiwala and Manoi Misra, said the moment an electoral bond was tendered to a political party, the party knows who has given it.

'Yes, that party will know. What the donor does not want is that the other party should not know this," Mehta said, adding, "We have to formulate a policy based on practicality". He said every party knows who their respective donors were and confidentiality was required with regard to the other party.

Electoral bonds scheme



"If this is so, why not make everything open?" asked the bench, which reserved its verdict after hearing arguments for three days.

"As it is, everybody knows about it, the party knows about it. The only person who is being deprived is the voter. Your contention that the voters do not have right to know ... is slightly difficult," the court observed.

During the hearing, the CJI flagged certain points for consideration.

"One, the need to reduce the cash element in the electoral process. Second, the need to encourage the use of authorised banking channel for that purpose, that is the only way you can reduce cash. Third is incentivising the use of the banking channel," he said. "There is a fourth considera-

tion which is the need for

transparency and the fifth

consideration which is that

this should not become a

legitimisation of the quid pro

another system which does not have the flaws of this system". He said earlier there was a cap on donations being made by companies but now a firm having zero turnover can also

Mehta said the existing scheme gives the option to donors to pay transparently.

quo between the power cen-

tres, whether in the states or

in the Centre, and people

who are really in that sense benefactors of that power,"

Justice Chandrachud said,

adding, "You can design

Your lordships have a very heavy responsibility on your shoulders, that is, encouraging clean money to come into the system and discouraging those elements which compelled the people to use the black money," he said, adding the purity of election was supreme.

He said the cap on donation by companies was removed with a view to discouraging creation of shell companies.

6 held for assaulting, urinating on SC youths in Tamil Nadu

 $S_{
m allegedly}$ for assaulting, stripping and urinating on two Scheduled Caste youths from the district, police said on Thursday. Several political parties denounced the atrocities on the SC youths and called for concrete measures to prevent such crimes in the future.

The six persons have been identified as M Ponmani, S Nallamuthu, R Ayiram, B Ramar, M Siva and Lakshmanan, police said. All in the age group of 21 to 25

years, they were said to be under the influence of alcohol when they accosted the youths and asked them to reveal their caste identity, police said. When the two Dalit youths revealed their caste identity, the gang of six assaulted and stripped them and them urinated on them.

The two youths were returning a bath from after Thamirabarani river when they were assaulted, Thachanallur police said.

The police have registered cases against the six accused under various sections of the IPC and also under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

According to the victims, who are currently undergoing treatment at the Tirunelveli Medical College hospital here, the gang



robbed them of two mobile phones, silver jewellery and extorted ₹5,000 from them.

"They appeared to be high on ganja (cannabis). They called us and asked about our caste and native place, when we were getting ready to ride our bike after a bath in the river on Monday. No sooner had we answered than they began attacking us with sticks and knives," the victims said. One of the injured had to con-

tact his office to have ₹5,000

digitally transferred to the gang. Once the money was credited, the perpetrators took the victim's bike to withdraw money from a nearby ATM. However, two of them fled upon seeing the police on patrol and we took advantage of the situation and escaped," the victims told reporters. Condemning the "heinous act", AIADMK Ğeneral Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said the incident proved that castebased atrocities have become rampant after the DMK came

Maratha quota activist **Jarange ends** indefinite fast

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Jarange on Thursday ended his nine-dayold indefinite fast for Maratha quota, but warned of a bigger agitation if no action was taken in two months on giving reservation benefits to the community.

Jarange said he will lead a massive march to Mumbai if no decision was taken within two months.

"Then people of Mumbai won't even get vegetables," he added.

"His announcement at the fast site in his Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district came after 4 state ministers met him and requested him to call off

the indefinite hunger strike. Speaking to reporters in Mumbai later, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde thanked Jarange for calling off the fast. 'I have ended my fast, but the Maratha quota agitation continues. Relay fasts will also continue," Jarange said, and asked the government to decide by December 24.

The ministers present told him to extend the deadline to January 2, but he did not

A delegation of retired high court judges Sandeep Shinde, M G Gaikwad and some officials also met Jarange, who reiterated his demand for reservation for Marathas across Maharashtra.

NIA arrests eighth accused in Pune ISIS module case

PTI NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has made the eighth arrest in the Punebased ISIS module case, an official said on Thursday, describing it as a "significant development" in the ongoing investigation into the activities of the proscribed terror group. The arrested person was idenas Mohammad

Shahnawaz Alam, a resident of Hazaribagh area of Jharkhand. He is believed to be actively involved in promoting terrorist activities of the terrorist organisation, a spokesperson of the federal agency said. "Alam was directly associated with other arrested individuals

in the ongoing Pune ISIS module case. Investigations revealed that Alam played an active role in the reconnaissance and recce



use as hideouts as well as in the conduct of firing classes and training in the fabrication of improvised explosive devices (IED)," the official said. The spokesperson said the

of various locations intended for

accused had managed to escape from the Pune Police on July 19 when he was caught red-handed for attempting a motorcycle theft, along with Mohd Imran khan and Mohd Yunus Saki.

that they were active ISIS operatives, the official said, adding the NIA had declared a reward of Rs 3 lakh for information leading to his capture. The spokesperson said inves-

communal harmony of the

Subsequently, it came to light

tigations into the ISIS Pune module case have shown that the accused persons had plans to commit terrorist acts with the aim to disturb peace and

ISIS agenda. ISIS has been actively pursuing an anti-India agenda and spreading terror and violence

country in furtherance of the

across the country through a series of violent acts, the spokesperson said. The official said NIA has been

carrying out extensive investigations to foil the terrorist outfit's plans to spread terror and violence in the country.

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificate No. 6249/203 issued by The New Arohi CGHS Ltd. Plot 13, Sector 12, Dwarka, New Delhi — 110076 in the name of Dr A K Sharma (Dr Ajay Kumar Sharma) Siv Sh. H C Sharma has been reported lost or misplaced. A request has been made by Dr A K Sharma to the Society to issue a Duplicate Share Certificate. The Society hereby invites claims/ objection in writing from the holder of this certificate having any interest in the property, about issuance of duplicate share certificate, within a period of 15 days from the publication of this notice. In case no claims/ objections are received within the said period the Society will issue the duplicate share certificate as per provisions of Delhi Cooperative Societies Act, 2003. FOR & ON BEHALF OF THE NEW AROHI OU3. FOR & ON BEHALF OF THE NEW AROHI CGHS LTD. – SECRETARY MOB.: 9818795560

Directors of the Company will be held of Friday, 10th November, 2023, Inter-Alia, The information contained in this notice also available on the Company's websit www.cubical90.com as also on the website of the Stock Exchange viz. BSE Limited For Cubical Financial Services Limite

ace: New Delhi (Ashwani Kumar Gupt ate 02-11-2023 Managing Direct

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation 2015, that a meeting of the Board of the consider and approve the Un-Audite Financial Results of the Company for th Juarter ended on 30th September, 2023.

he pioneer

Construction work banned as Delhi air plunges to 'severe'

s air quality entered A"severe" category in Delhi-National Capital Region(NCR), the Centre's pollution control panel on Thursday banned non-essential construction work and the entry of diesel trucks into the Capital. Schools were also advised to go on online for students till class five. Taking note of CAQM advisory, Delhi CM ARvind Kejriwal announced closure of all primary schools for 2 days.

These measures were taken at a meeting of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)to review the air quality situation in Delhi-NCR. It said the pollution levels are only "expected to increase further" owing to unfavourable meteorological and climatic conditions. According to the Meteorological Department (IMD), the national capital would witness

shallow fog in the next three

part of Stage III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) the Centre's air pollution control plan that is implemented in the region during the winter season. Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 402 at 5 pm. Stage III of GRAP involves a complete halt on construction and demolition work except for essential government projects, mining and stone crushing. It also includes a ban on the entry of light commercial vehicles registered outside Delhi and diesel-guzzling trucks, and medium and heavy goods vehicles (except those involved in essential services). Under Stage III, restrictions are also imposed on plying of BS III petrol and BS IV diesel fourwheelers in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar.The CAQM also suggested that Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan may conduct online classes for students up to



Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai has also called a meeting on Friday to discuss implementation of pollution control measures under Stage

It was a hazy day in Delhi on Thursday as the 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 392, which falls in the "very poor" category, and the maximum temperature settled at 30.2 degrees Celsius. At least 18 out of 37 monitoring stations recorded AQI in the "severe" category. The areas where AQI breached the 400-mark are -

Jahangirpuri (433), Mundka (460), NSIT Dwarka (406), Najafgarh (414), Narela (433), Nehru Nagar (400), New Moti Bagh (423), Okhla Phase 2 (415), Patpargani (412), Punjabi Bagh (445), Ř K Puram (417), Rohini (454), Shadipur (407) and Wazirpur (435). Doctors warned about a possible spike in breathing issues. Hospitals in Delhi have reported a rise in cases of prolonged coughing, throat infection, eye irritation and nasal discharge amid worsening air quality that has slipped into the severe' zone in many parts of the city. The pollution situation here has also led to aggravation of existing bronchial asthma condition in many patients, doctors said, while adding that people across age groups are being affected by it. An official from the India

(452), Burari Crossing (408),

Meteorological Department reported that visibility reduced to just 500 metres at the Safdarjung Observatory

improving to 800 metres as temperatures increased during the day.

Cold temperatures create stable atmospheric conditions, known as temperature inversions, where a layer of warm air traps cooler air near the ground, allowing the accumulation of pollutants.

According to government data, Delhi's air quality in October this year was the worst since 2020 with meteorologists attributing it to the absence of rainfall. The capital recorded an AQI of 219 in October, compared to 210 in October last year and 173 in October 2021, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).In contrast to October 2022 (129 mm) and October 2021 (123 mm), Delhi experienced only one rainy day (5.4 mm of precipitation) in October 2023.

The concentration of PM2.5, fine particulate matter that can penetrate deep into the respipiratory problems, exceeded the safe limit of 60 microgramme per cubic metre by six to seven times in these areas. One of the major reasons behind the accumulation of pollutants in recent days is the lack of rainfall during this post-monsoon season so far.

Health professionals have expressed concerns that air pollution is increasing asthma and lung problems in children and the elderly.
"We are recording a surge in the

number of irritative bronchitis infections. It is recommended that people suffering from respiratory issues such as chronic bronchitis and asthma take their medicines regularly and do not go out in the open unless absolutely necessary,' said Jugal Kishore, the head of the medicine department at Safdarjung Considering the spike in indoor pollution in Delhi, he advised people to use air puri-

Police detained our MLAs during pollution drive: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Thursday alleged that party MLAs Jarnail Singh and Haji Yunus, and several volunteers were detained by Delhi Police while they were participating in the Delhi government's 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign. The ruling party also accused the BJP of obstructing its efforts to curb pollution with the help of

A police official from the Northeast district confirmed Yunus was detained. There was apprehension that he would stage a protest against the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the

The 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign aims to encourage



drivers to turn off the ignition of their vehicles while waiting for the traffic signal to turn green. In a post on X in Hindi, the AAP termed the detention of its MLAs "shameful".

"Why do BJP people love pollution? The BJP stoops to a new low in politics every day. The BJP is crushing the AAP's efforts to curb pollution with the help of police. AAP MLA @JarnailSinghAAP and Haji Yunus detained by BJP police for spreading awareness," it said. The party also shared pictures of Singh and Yunus being detained by police. Yunus, the

MLA from Mustafabad, said he

was detained by police from the

Gokalpuri roundabout. "After stopping the Red Light On, Gaadi Off campaign against pollution, Delhi Police

detained (me) from the roundabout. Gokalpuri Currently at the police station with my friends," he said in a post on X. The police official from Northeast district said Yunus and some of his supporters were detained. There was a message that they

could hold a protest against the ED summons to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. As a preventive measure, they were detained," he said. Addressing a press conference, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said it is "unfortunate" that the BJP has deployed Delhi Police to stop the city government's campaign. "The campaign started on October 26 at

ITO. On November 2, it was supposed to be held in all 70 assembly constituencies.

"But our MLA Jarnail Singh was detained... Since morning, councillors, volunteers and MLAs are being detained. If people are wearing black bands, why are they (BJP) afraid," asked Rai, who is also the AAP's Delhi state convener. The Delhi government first launched the 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign on October 16, 2020.

Vehicular emissions make up 80 per cent of nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide in Delhi's air, according to government estimates. A smoky haze blanketed Delhi for the third consecutive day on Thursday with many parts of the city recording 'severe' air

Delhi pollution brings back memories of LA: US envoy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As air quality worsened in the national capital, US Ambassador to New Delhi Eric Garcetti on Thursday said the pollution levels in Delhi bring back the "memories of growing up in Los Angeles." He also recalled how his daughter at school was warned by her teacher against going outside to play, just as he was given warnings due to the air pollution. "On a day like this in Delhi, it brings back memories of growing up in Los Angeles where the air was the most polluted air anywhere in America," Garcetti said.



given warnings by our teachers that you cannot go outside to play, just as my daughter was given by her teacher today as I dropped her off to school," he

Responding to Garcetti's comments, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday claimed the pollution

situation in the national capital "has improved over the

"In 2015, there were only 109 days with 'good' Air Quality Index (AQI). In 2023, this has increased to over 200 days," Rai said, adding, "The first 15 days of November saw 'critical' AQI

The minister also put the blame on the government and said, "The Central government needs to chip in to coordinate between the NCR states. Only Delhi cannot fix the problem of pollution.'

The problem persists even after a meeting between the NCR states and the Centre,"

Kejriwal refuses to appear before ED, BJP holds dharna in protest

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal refused to appear before the ED, the BJP hit out at the AAP national convenor, alleging that he ran away as he did not want to face the truth. Delhi BIP leaders staged a dharna near Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat on Thursday, demanding alleged excise policy scam. Addressing a press conference,

BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra claimed that "It won't be an exaggeration to say that the Delhi liquor scam kingpin has accepted that he was involved in liquor scam and corruption" Patra said that ED issues summons based on facts and evidence but Kejriwal is running away from facing the probe agency's questions because he knows the truth. "Today it is proved that the one who is 'kattar' (outright) dishonest is 'kattar' shameless also," the BJP leader charged, adding "ED doesn't send summons randomly. We firmly believe that ED or any other agency sending summons to Kejriwal was based on some grounds."

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP leaders-Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Ramesh Bidhuri,



Harsh Vardhan, Vijay Goel, Manoj Tiwari and Adesh Gupta other party leaders, staged a dharna near Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat on Thursday, demanding Kejriwal's resignation over the alleged excise policy scam. "There was a scam of thousands of crores of rupees in the excise policy and even the children in Delhi knew that Kejriwal was the mastermind behind it," Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said at the

"BJP has been saying from the beginning that Kejriwal is the real mastermind of this liquor scam and today this has been proved. We also protested against this liquor scam in the Assembly but to fill his pockets, the liquor policy brought by Kejriwal sent Sanjay Singh to jail after former Deputy Chief

Minister of Delhi Manish Sisodia and now he himself is under inquiry," Bidhuri said. Vardhan said that before coming into politics, Kejriwal had taken an oath on his children to not to join politics but still he came into politics and then he started roaming around with a list in which the names of many leaders of the country were there and started talking about not forming an alliance with them. But today he is making alliance with them. Tiwari said that the letter he has written to ED today is proving that no one can be a bigger scamster then Kejriwal. When Manish Sisodia applied for bail

in the Supreme Court, the

court clearly said that loot of Rs

338 crore is being proved in

this entire case, but despite this,

Arvind Kejriwal is saying that

BJP is trying to implicate him.

AAP alleges 'political conspiracy' behind ED summons to Kejriwal

¬he Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday alleged there was a "political conspiracy" behind summons to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and claimed that opposition leaders were being deliberately

Kejriwal, who is also the AAP national convener, on Thursday did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning in the Delhi excise policy-linked case and wrote to the agency demanding the withdrawal of the notice summoning him, claiming it was "illegal and politically motivated".

Addressing a press conference, AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj said, "Today, the Delhi chief minister was asked to appear before the ED. He wrote to the ED, saying the summons does not make it clear in which capacity he is being called -- as a witness or as a suspect, in his capacity as an individual, chief minister or



AAP national convener." "How did BJP MP Manoj Tiwari in his interviews with a news agency say that Kejriwal will be arrested? This means that this is a political conspiracy. There are five states where elections are happening and being the national convener, Kejriwal has to go for campaigning," said Bharadwai, a cabinet minister in the Delhi government.

Bharadwaj alleged that it was a "political conspiracy" by the BJP and claimed that they were targeting leaders from opposition parties. The AAP's Delhi state con-

vener Gopal Rai urged the BJP to stop the "misuse" of investigative agencies. "Delhi Chief

sent a reply to the ED's summons. He demanded that it be recalled. But the ED's reply has not come. Instead, BJP replying to Kejriwal's letter to ED. Today, it has become difficult to differentiate ED from BJP and vice-versa," he alleged. Rai alleged that BJP spokespersons were replying on behalf of the ED. "The BJP dictates notice to ED. Yesterday, the BJP was saying this is a legal procedure. BJP wants to dictate which party should form an alliance with whom. They have conspired to arrest Kejriwal with political ill-will," he said. Reiterating that there is a con-

spiracy to finish the AAP in Delhi, Rai accused the BJP of misusing investigative agen-"There were raids at Cabinet Minister Raaj Kumar Anand's premises. What are you trying to do in the country? You have been given an opportunity to run this country. Agencies don't make you win elections but people do. Please stop doing this," he said.

Women backbone of Parliament: Dhankhar

Women are the backbone of Parliament and the country's economic development, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Thursday asserting that women in legislatures would help the governance in evolution of policies that would lead to the res-

"Giving justice to your gender is automatic justice to my gender," he said as he invited students of Delhi University's Miranda House College to witness the proceedings of the Winter session of Parliament.

The Rajya Sabha chairman was delivering an address on the 'Role of Women in Indian Parliament' to mark the platinum jubilee of the college. He said the role of women in Parliament is enormous and

that their presence by itself will surcharge the atmosphere in legislatures. Talking about women's repre-

sentation in legislature, he said a minimum of one-third of seats each in Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies would soon be reserved for women candidates.

The vice-president said India made history on September 21 when the women's reservation



bill, which has now become a law, was passed in the new

He called the move an "epochal development" and said it will ensure that "Bharat 2047" is on peak. "A special session of Parliament on September 21 in the new building marked history as the women's reservation bill was passed. The day coincided with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday according to

Women are the backbone of Parliament and our economic development. Without their presence, the country cannot run successfully," said Dhankhar. He also offered to invite five interns from Miranda House for a 15-day course on parliamentary procedures.

the Hindu tithi," he said.

The vice president praised Miranda House for holding the first position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings for seven years in a row.

AAP leaders under ED lens

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

 $D_{\text{An and, whose premises}}^{\text{elhi Minister Raj Kumar}}$ were searched by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case on Thursday, joins a long list of senior AAP leaders, including party supremo and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who are under the scanner of central agencies in different cases

Arvind Kejriwal

Kejriwal was called by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning on Thursday in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam. He skipped the ED summons, saying it was "politically motivated" and done at the behest of the BJP to prevent him from campaigning in the poll-bound states. December 2015, Kejriwal had claimed his office at the Delhi secretariat was raided by the

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The CBI denied that Kejriwal's office was searched. The raid in a corruption case was carried out at the chief minister's principal secretary at the Delhi secretariat. After the CBI raid at the secretariat, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor had famously said the investigating agency would find nothing but a few mufflers even if it searched his residence.

Manish Sisodia

Sisodia was arrested by the CBI on February 26 for his alleged role in the excise policy "scam". After he was made an accused in the case, the CBI conducted searches at his official residence, his village and looked into his bank lockers. The CBI case pertains to alleged irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the excise policy 2021-22 of the AAP government, which was

subsequently Sisodia, who was then deputy chief minister of Delhi and held the excise portfolio, resigned from the Delhi cabinet on February 28. The ED arrested him in a money laundering case stemming from the CBI FIR on March 9 after questioning him in Tihar jail. His bail plea was rejected by the Supreme Court earlier this

Satvendar Jain

Jain, then holding important portfolios such as Health, Home, Power and Urban Development in the Delhi government, was arrested by the ED on May 30, 2022 under charges of money laundering linked to a hawala dealings case. Days after his arrest, the ED on June 6, 2022, conducted raids including at Jain's residence as part of "follow-up" in the case. Jain spent nearly one year behind bars before being

granted interim bail by the Supreme Court in May this year in view of his poor health. He is currently recovering after a surgery and his bail has been extended multiple times by

Sanjay Singh

A vocal leader of the party and Rajya Sabha MP, Singh was arrested by the ED last month in the money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam. He was arrested by the agency after hours-long search at his residence in North

Kailash Gahlot

Way back in 2018, Income Tax Department teams raided multiple premises, including the residence of Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot. The searches were conducted as part of a tax evasion probe against two companies allegedly operated and owned by the minister's family members.

Amanatullah Khan Khan, the AAP MLA from

Okhla, has been under the scanner of the CBI and the ED in recent years. ED sleuths knocked on the doors of Khan on October 14 for a search as part of a money laundering probe against him and others. The MLA who was chairman of the Delhi Waqf Board was booked by the CBI in a case of alleged irregularities in recruitment at the board in 2016. In March this year, he was grilled by the CBI in the case for hours.Recently, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena granted the CBI sanction to prosecute Khan in the

Vijay Nair

The ĆBI arrested Nair, a businessman and AAP communications in-charge, in September 27 last year in connection with the Delhi excise policy scam case. Nair was arrested for his alleged role in "cartelisation" and "conspiracy" related to alleged irregularities in the the national capital.

allocation of liquor licence in

Raj Kumar Anand

A dozen premises, including that of the minister in the Civil Lines area of the national capital, were being searched since 7:30 am, they said. The ED teams are escorted by a team of the CRPF. The probe against Anand is being undertaken as per provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMlA). The investigation stems from a

charge sheet filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on charges of false declarations in imports for customs evasion of more than ₹7 crore apart from international hawala transactions, the sources said. A local court recently took cognisance of the DRI prosecution complaint after which the ED filed a PMLA case against Anand and some others, they said. Anand, 57, is the minister for social welfare and SC/ST welfare among others in the Kejriwal-led Government.

INBRIEF

DELHI SWIMMERS BHAVYA, KUSHAGRA WIN GOLD

New Delhi: In a stunning display of prowess at the 37th National Games being held in Goa, the dynamic duo from Delhi's swimming team, Bhavya Sachdeva and Kushagra Rawat, clinched gold medals in their respective categories. Bhavya Sachdeva triumphed in the 1,500 meters



as exceptional swimmers. This recent victory marks the second gold for both athletes, following their earlier gold medals. CLASS 12 STUDENT HIT WITH SHARP EDGED WEAPON

New Delhi: A class 12 student was injured after allegedly being hit with a sharp-edged object when he intervened in a guarrel between juniors outside his government school in north Delhi's Burari, police said on Thursday. The injured student received an injury on his neck. and was admitted to a hospital where his condition is said to be out of danger. Police said victim was on the way back to his home after attending his evening classes on Tuesday.

4 HURT IN NOIDA HOSPITAL LIFT MISHAP

Noida: Four people were injured when a lift came crashing down from the ground floor to the second basement at a private hospital here on Thursday afternoon, police said. All four injured are staff members of the Yatharth Hospital in Sector 110, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) Hridesh Katheria said.

India will soon become aatmanirbhar: Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday described the small scale industry as the backbone of India's economy and said India will soon become aatmanirbhar and a global manufacturing hub with active industry participation. He made these assertions while

inaugurating the three-day 'India Manufacturing Show' in Bengaluru. The show has been jointly organised by Laghu Udhyog Bharti and IMS Foundation and supported by Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence. The central theme of the event is 'Make in India, Make for the World'.

Addressing the industry captains and young entrepreneurs present at the inaugural function, Rajnath described the smallscale industries as the backbone of India's economy and said "Small industries are the motor of the Indian economy. The faster the motor runs, the quicker the vehicle of the economy moves." He also credited the small industries for maintaining stability in the economy.

Rajnath highlighted the important contribution of these industries to the socio-economic development of the country. "Compared to investment made, small industries create more employment opportunities than large industries. They also ensure a more even dispersion of wealth in



Many MSMEs are doing well in exports and are becoming a part of the global supply chain of the world's biggest companies. Heavy industries, too, play a big role in the nation's development, but the country cannot fully progress by ignoring small industries," he said. The defence ministry also underlined the ability of small industries to adapt to the changes and recalled Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy on economy, wherein he encouraged to focus on small industries rather than heavy industries. This is due to stronger connections of small industries with local communities. Even though their production scale is small, they are better tuned to local

needs, he said. Rajnath voiced the importance the government attaches to the small-scale industries and listed out a number of decisions taken to ensure their welfare. These include MUDRA scheme, launched in 2015, under which a provision was made to provide collateralfree loans to MSMEs. The gov-

ernment also provided additional credit worth crores of rupees for MSMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He termed Laghu Udyog Bharti as a bridge between the government and the industry. Rajnath appreciated the fact that small industries of the country are progressing well through Laghu Udyog Bharti. He exuded confidence that India will become self-reliant and a global manufacturing hub in the times to come, if the industries continue to move forward with hard work and dedication.

The sixth edition of 'India Manufacturing Show' will provide a platform to the exhibitors to showcase their technologies, equipment and research and development in different sectors, such as aerospace and defence engineering, automation, robotics and drones to the participants. The aim is to bring together best minds, best technologies and best practices while providing business and knowledge sharing opportunities for its par-

India most important country for US: Garcetti



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

As ties between the two countries are becoming more robust, US Ambassador to New Delhi Eric Garcetti said here on Thursday India is the most important country for the US and their relationship is the most defining relationship of the century.

Garcetti made the remarks at The Energy Transition
Dialogues hosted by Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP)here.

"I used to say it in private but now I can say it in public, when the (US) President asked me consider this post (of Ambassador to India) he said India is the most important country in the world for me. I don't know if any American president has ever said that... President Joe Biden he actually did mean it ... " the Ambassador said.

Garcetti further said he believes the US India-relationship is the most defining relationship of this century. On the G20 summit organised under India's presidency in September, he said it was the best ever in the history.

"The relationship is not just US plus India. It is an exponential relationship.

Look at how we attended our best ever G20 in our history together. Of course led by India and thank you for your mar-vellous leadership," Garcetti

Speaking on the business opportunities, he said there is lot of investment opportunities in the area of renewables in the Indian and the US markets. Companies from both sides can take benefits from opportunities in each other's markets, he

"When it comes to climate, we look for opportunities for Indian companies in the US and vice versa. India's PLI provides tax benefits to companies operating in solar manufacturing electrolysers. Investment need to flow more quickly from both sides," he noted.

Health Ministry on alert after Zika detected in Karnataka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Union Health Ministry is on alert as Zika virus has been detected in a mosquito species in Chikkaballapura district of Karnataka, located close to Bengaluru Urban district. An official from the Ministry said that the situation is being closely watched and all steps will be taken so that the virus doesn't spread. Zika virus is a mosquito-borne viral infection. The symptoms are fever, rash, headache, joint pain, red eyes and muscle pain. Zika can cause birth defects

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Health Department stated that in 68 different places of the



state, mosquitoes were tested for the presence of Zika virus in their bodies. Likewise, samples were taken from six locations of Chikkaballapura dis-

The Zika virus was found in mosquitoes in Talakayalabetta village in Sidlaghatta taluk. The health authorities swung into action immediately after

the development and initiated preventive measures to contain the spread of the virus.

The officers have collected blood samples of 30 pregnant women and seven persons with fever symptoms and sent them for testing to Bengaluru. The samples were collected from the villages located in the five km radius of Talakayala Betta village.

The officers had personally visited Venkatapura, Dibburahalli, Bachchanahalli, Vaddahalli and others and taken stock of the situation. Chikkaballapura District Health Officer Mahesh Kumar had confirmed the detection of Zika virus in Chikkaballapura

Bhutan King to arrive in India today on 8-day visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $B^{
m hutan}$ King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck will begin eight-day visit to India on Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here on Thursday. The visit would provide an opportunity to both sides to review the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation and further advance the "exemplary" partnership,

The King of Bhutan will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is expected to deliberate on various aspects of close India-Bhutan ties. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and senior

officials of the government will call on the King of Bhutan, the MEA said on Thursday.
"The King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, accompanied by senior officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan, will be on an

Maharashtra. "India and Bhutan enjoy unique ties of friend-

official visit to India from November 3 to 10, it said in a statement.

The King will also visit the states of Assam and

ship and cooperation, which are characterised by understanding and mutual trust," the MEA

'Herbal formulations can help control blood sugar 14 days' diabetic properties, which

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

mid an alarming surge in Adiabetes cases in the country, a recent study has suggested that a healthy lifestyle and diet coupled with anti-diabetic properties enriched herbal formulations can help control blood sugar levels in diabetic patient within 14 days. The study, conducted by a

team of researchers from Patna-based Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital on a patient suffering from high levels of blood sugar has been published in the International Ayurvedic Medical Journal (IAMJ). The team, led by Assistant

Professor Prabhas Chandra

PUBLIC NOTICE
THE PADMINI CO-OPERATIVE G/H SOCIETY LTD. 16, Vardhman Star City Mall, Sector-7 Dwarka, New D rietters are returned undelivered. SH. KANWAR JIT SINGH SANDHU (M. 29)

SH. KARWARALI II SIMIF SANDHU (M. 29)
SH. SURESH CHANDER DHALL (M. 40)
SMT. VARSHA SETHI (M. 43)
SHRI SUBHASH CHAND SHARMA (M. 53)
SH. YASH PALL (M. 65)
SH. KISHANI LAL (M. 68)
SH. SHANI LAL (M. 68)
SHRI JALOK GOEL (M. 69)
SHRI JALOK GOEL (M. 70)
SH. JOCK JURESH (M. 69)

SMI. UKMILAGUEL(JW.02)
SMI. UKMILAGUEL(JW.02)
SH. JOGINDER KUMAR (M.80)
SH. SUGSHL KUMAR CUDTA (M.86)
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SH. MARA JAIN (M.87)
SH. SH. PLUSHPA GUPTA (M.113)
SH. RAMBILAGUEL (M.114)
SH. SH. RAMBILAGUEL (M.114)
SH. COL. CHANDER MOGAL (M.154)
SH. R. RAMBILAGUEL (M.173)
SH. RIA RAKESH SHARIKA (M. 230)
SH. SHIR IKA PERBHAKARAN (M. 231)
Tith above members are requested to contact the

1. SHIK IK. P. PRABEHAKARAN (M. 237) a above members are requested to contact the society office 1216, Vardhman Star City Mall, Sector-7, Dwaria, New Delf-swithin 10 days of publication of this public notice along with leverant documentary evidence of membership, otherwis colety will file a proposal in the office of Registrar Co-operative refellion of your name from the membership of Padmin Co-perative Group Housing Society Ltd.

Padmini Co-operative G/H Society Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Before the Central Government Register of Companies, Delhi In the matter of sub-section (3) of section 13 of the limited Liability Partnership Rules, 2009

In the matter of the limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008, Section 13 (3) AND IN the matter of Virtual Axis Studio LLP having its registered office at 624/7-A, Vishwas Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110032

IN Petitioner. Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the LLP proposes to make a petition to Register of Companies, Delhi under section 13 (3) of the Limited Liability Partnershin Act, 2008 seeking permission to change its Registered office from the state of "Delhi" to the state of "Uttar Pradesh". Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the LLP may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by Registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition supported by an affidavit to the Register of Companies, Delhi, within 21 (twenty one) days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the petitioner LLP at its registered office at the address mentioned above. for and on behalf of

Ankit Jain Date: 03-11-2023 Place: Delhi (Designated Partner



a combination of researchbased traditional medicines, including herbal formulation like BGR-34, Arogyavardhani Vati, Chandraprabhavati, cholesterol reducing drugs, lifestyle adjustments and a specific diet for two weeks.

This medicine is prepared by the country's premier research institute, CSIR, after extensive research. Dr Sanchit Sharma, Executive

in the blood.

Director of Aimil Pharmaceuticals, manufacturer of BGR-34 pointed out that since diabetic patients have to depend on lifetime medicines, the outcome of the study holds significance.

helped cut down the sugar level

These herbal preparations also have elements to increase immunity as well as anti-oxidants levels," Sharma added. Researchers said that during the study, patient was also recommended an hour's walk daily. The patient's fasting mg/dl before the start of treatment, came down to 124 mg/dl. Similarly, the sugar level after breakfast decreased from 413 to 154 mg/dl.

All these parameters indicate effective reduction in blood sugar level. Encouraged by the positive results of the treatment plan, the researchers have suggested a comprehensive larger study for its further assess-

In fact, earlier, a study by the AIIMS Delhi found that BGR-34 is effective not only in reducing sugar but obesity as well. Owing to a sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy dietary habits, diabetes is on increase in the country. As per latest data, there are 72.9 million people suffering with diabetes

ICMR launches DISHA portal

as and when we have the

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

he Indian Council of The Indian Council has launched the Diagnostic Services in Healthcare (DISHA) portal to help the public in accessing nearest diagnostic healthcare facilities towards ensuring early detec-tion and proactive manage-

DISHA will empower the consumer or patient with the knowledge to make informed decisions regarding the type of facility, the distance, test availability, test cost and turnaround time, said a scientist from the ICMR.

"This web portal is a dynamic platform which is being

access to required data. The ICMR is in the process of cataloguing diagnostic public healthcare facilities throughout the country and constructing a user-friendly and comprehensive dynamic online map to showcase the availability of relevant laboratory services," she added. The scientist further said that

robust diagnostic healthcare services lay the foundation of an efficient and high-quality healthcare system. Up to 60% to 70% of all critical healthcare decisions are based on the evidence provided by laboratory services.

Access to the information regarding the location and availability of the diagnostic

require the necessary resources to locate the laboratories which provide the required tests. Diagnostic healthcare ser-

a country as vast as ours, we

vices contribute significantly to the delivery of healthcare. The Indian diagnostic healthcare system is vast and complex with numerous stakeholders, and is variably distributed in different geographical areas.

The government has set guidelines for operation and quality of diagnostic public health facilities, however, currently, the country has no information on availability of test's, their costs, and infrastructure to gauge the effective utilization of health ser-

AXIS BANK LTD.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS

THE BORROWERS. IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HERE BUY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGE IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILED THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENT ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/ GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILED. AS THE BORROWERS/ GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT, THE BANK IS CONSTRAINE TO INVOKE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON 13.11.2023 AT 12.30 PM TO 3.30 PM ON "AS IN WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" "WHATEVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".

significant improvement, for

instance, the sugar level which

was 254 mg/dl at the time of

admission, came down to 124

mg/dl.It was found that

Daruharidra, Giloe, Vijaysar,

Gudmar, Methi and Majishtha

DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT

SR. NO.	CUSTOMER NAME	LOAN A/C NO.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING (IN ₹)	DATE OF RECALL NOTICE	GROSS WEIGHT	NET WEIGH
		B.O.: ASHOK VIHAR,				
1	PRATEEK KWATRA	XXXXXXXXXXXX6927	₹ 1,06,751.36	29-09-2023	62.700	59.200
2	PRAMOD KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX3645	₹ 2,11,526.00	20-09-2023	61.000	55.600
3	PRINCE KUMAR GOYAL	XXXXXXXXXXX7519	₹ 2,47,332.00	10-10-2023	110.400	75.700
		B.O.: DARYAGAN	IJ, DELHI [DL]			
4	SACHIN KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX8291	₹ 1,53,920.00	10-10-2023	57.800	54.100
		B.O.: JYOTI NA	GAR DEL DL			
5	RAJEEV KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX6787	₹ 28,296.92	28-07-2023	9.800	9.400
6	SALMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX4354	₹ 1,38,469.00	20-09-2023	48.100	45.500
		B.O.: LAJPAT NAGAR	, NEW DELHI [DL]			
7	ANUJ SARIN	XXXXXXXXXXXX1460	₹ 2,28,223.93	20-09-2023	72.100	70.600
8	ANUJ SARIN	XXXXXXXXXXXXX0513	₹ 2,84,339.00	18-07-2023	85.500	82.100
		B.O.: NAZAFGARH,	NEW DELHI [DL]			
9	SANYOG KUMAR BHARTI	XXXXXXXXXXXX2764	₹ 25,200.00	20-09-2023	7.900	7.800
		B.O.: PALAM,	DELHI [DL]			
10	ARVIND KUMAR SINHA	XXXXXXXXXXXX7234	₹ 31,110.00	30-05-2023	11.200	9.700
11	SHALIN GEORGE	XXXXXXXXXXXX4136	₹ 60,903.00	20-09-2023	18.000	17.400
12	SUDHISH KUMAR RAI	XXXXXXXXXXX4791	₹ 1,40,653.00	29-09-2023	51.700	46.800
		B.O.: PUNJABI BAGH	, NEW DELHI [DL]			
13	DHEERAJ .	XXXXXXXXXXXX1268	₹ 1,42,666.00	28-07-2023	40.500	39.000
		B.O.: PUSHPVIHA	AR,DELHI [DL]			
14	SURAJ .	XXXXXXXXXXXX4698	₹ 2,11,531.79	20-09-2023	77.300	60.80
		B.O.: SECTOR-24, ROH	INI, NEW DELHI [DL			
15	AMIT GARG	XXXXXXXXXXXX4460	₹ 1,77,079.45	10-10-2023	50.200	46.700
		B.O.: SOUTH PAT	EL NAGAR DL			
16	ROHIT KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX7180	₹ 31,853.36	20-09-2023	9.700	9.400
		B.O.: SECTOR 14,	GURGAON [HR]			
17	SANDEEP KUMAR YADAV	XXXXXXXXXXXXX0400	₹ 34,200.00	20-09-2023	11.900	11.500
18	RAVINDER KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXX7920	₹ 56,027.00	20-09-2023	20.800	19.600
19	ANOOP KUMAR JAISWAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX8603	₹ 66,926.02	10-10-2023	27.600	25.100
20	RAVINDER KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX5530	₹ 2.14.748.00	20-09-2023	66.500	64.500
		B.O.: SECTOR 16, F				
21	PRASHANT KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX6910	₹ 2.42.901.00	29-09-2023	64.100	60.900
		B.O.: GREATER				
22	JAYARAM MALIKA	XXXXXXXXXXXXX3891	₹ 36.900.00	20-09-2023	12.510	12.270
		B.O.: NOID				
23	ANNU SRIVASTAVA	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX855	₹ 1.01.472.00	05-09-2023	37.900	34.200
	1	B.O.: VAISHALI, GI				120
24	SIDHARTH VERMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX3907	₹ 37,814.00	20-09-2023	13.000	10.900
25	VARSHA	XXXXXXXXXXXXX1266	₹ 81,929.00	29-09-2023	28.200	26.000
26	DIVYA SHARMA	XXXXXXXXXXXXX4854	₹ 3,87,261.01	20-09-2023	216.200	206.20
27	SUSHANT SINHA	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX0695	₹ 6.29.065.70	20-09-2023	208.000	189.70
	000	B.O.: JEWAR	, ,	20 00 2020	200.000	100.70
28	BHUPENDRA SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	₹ 69.063.00	20-09-2023	18.900	18.200
20	DITOT ENDING ORIGIT	7777777777777777777	\ 03,000.00	20-00-2020	10.000	10.200

HELD ONLINE <u>https://gold.samil.in</u> between 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm. FOR DETAILED TERMS AND CONDITIONS, PLEASE LOG INTO GIVEN WEBSITE HTTPS://GOLD.SAMIL.IN

PLACE: DELHI.

SD/-, AUTHORIZED OFFICER

AllMS Delhi launches rapid cardiac MRI service

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi has launched Rapid Cardiac MRI service, which can measure the degree of iron overload in cardiac muscle in thalassemic patients in as little as eight minutes. The move aims to address gaps in the treatment as it is available free of cost to the patients of the blood-related genetic disorder. The facility has been set up by the AIIMS in collaboration with University College of

London. Prof. Priya Jagia, HoD, Cardiovascular Radiology, pointed out that measuring iron deposition can improve thalassemia patients' treatment outcomes and even cut mortality by 80% while also dou-

bling longevity. Talking to reporters here, she explained that heart problems are a major cause of death for patients with thalassemia, as their hearts are severely affected by iron overload.

"Therefore, people should be aware of the iron buildup in the heart," she said. Giving details of the highly-advanced test, Dr. Jagia further said that "it is an eight-minute sequence in which the patient's iron deposition in the heart is measured using the T2* value, and chelation therapy is administered based on this value.

"The iron in the heart is elim inated by this therapy." Prof. Jagia also advised that if

the patient's iron deposition is found to be high, he/she should return in six months for a cardiac magnetic resonance imaging scan and receive appropriate follow-up. However, if the

deposition is found to be less than 20, the patient can continue with the medication for an additional two years and need not schedule an MRI until after that time.

The most crucial aspect of this test, she continued, is that it only takes eight minutes, compared to the earlier time consuming test which was nearly an hour. The expert asserted that the cost of this test is another important factor that concerns the patient.

"In India, the test costs approximately ₹30,000, but at AIIMS, we are conducting it for free as part of our project with University College of London. The test costs range from ₹50,000 to ₹ l lakh abroad. We will conduct about 2,000 tests as part of the project," she added.

This facility serves patients with thalassemia major who receive monthly blood transfusions, which cause blood to build up in the heart and other organs' muscles. Between the ages of twenty-five and forty, the majority of these patients survive. Thalassemia patients now have longer life expectancies, according to various researches.

So far, blood tests to diagnose iron deposition in the heart was carried out, but sometimes blood tests do not accurately predict the deposition," said Dr Tulika Seth from the Department of Hematology. This deposit may result into heart failure.

Thalassemia is a prevalent hereditary hemoglobinopathy affecting an estimated 4.4 in 10,000 live births worldwide. Doctors say that around 12,000 children are born with the disease every year in India

Stubble fire cases in Punjab come down

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

he purpose behind setting up the Second Generation (2G) bio-refinery plant at the district being set up by the PSU, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) for utilisation of paddy stubble for ethanol production has already started yielding results: Beginning September 15 to November 1 this year, total paddy stubble burning cases in Bathinda in Punjab have come down to 294 as against 880 in 2022.

An official from the Union Environment Ministry said that a project which envisaged investment of ₹1,400 crore has already commenced procurement of biomass and it is expected to accelerate in the next few days.

"The HPCL has been coordinating with the State Government of Punjab, District Administration and Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA) to streamline and resolve issues relating to procurement. Agreements have been established with Self Help Groups (SHGs) of Bathinda and nearby areas for paddy straw procurement. More than 23,000 MT of paddy straw has already been aggregated," said the official.

The HPCL has chalked out a huge plans aiming to procure approximately 1 Lakh tones biomass in this season for use as feedstock for the upcoming 2G ethanol plant which is expected to be commissioned

by December-end.
"The 2G bio-refinery is designed for utilization of

ethanol for blending with petrol under the Ethanol Blending Program of the Central Government," he said, adding that the Commission is monitoring its progress regu-The Commission had also vis-

paddy straw for production of

ited the plant premises in Bathinda and reviewed the progress with CMD, HPCL and District Administration, Bathinda. The designed production

capacity of this 2G ethanol plant is 100 Kilo Litre (KL) Ethanol/ day and for this purpose 570 MT of paddy straw would be utilized per day (2,00,000 MT annually), when the plant operates at its full capacity, said the official. This plant will reduce the

instances of paddy straw burning in Punjab, especially in the Bathinda district, significantly this year as well as in the years to come, he added. The HPCL project is part of the

Government's efforts to encourage production of second generation (2G) ethanol from agricultural residues to provide an additional source of income to farmers and address the growing environmental concerns due to stubble burn-

Company secretaries playing multifaceted role: Dhankhar

Vice-President of India said that the company secretaries are the epicentre of the change in the regulatory regime as they are playing a multifac-eted role today. He was addressing the inaugural function of three-day 51st National Convention of Company Secretaries, being organised by the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) at Deen Dayal Hastkala Sankul (Trade Facilitation Centre) as the chief guest here on Thursday afternoon. The theme of the convention is India @ G20- empowering sustainable future through governance and technology'. The Uttar Pradesh's Governor Anandiben Patel was also present as the guest of honour. Later, Dhankar and Anandiben reached Kashi Vishwanath Temple and offered prayers.

Congratulating the ICSI for choosing an appropriate theme and location for its national convention, the Vice-President said "Company Secretaries are the custodians of corporate governance upholding the compliance and governance of India industry high".

He also highlighted the role of the company secretaries. On the occasion, Dhankhar, along with Anandiben Patel, awarded dif-ferent chapters of ICSI including the Kochi Chapter for national honour. Prior to this, when Dhankhar reached the TFC he was given guard of

Welcoming everyone to the holy city of Varanasi, the Governor Anandiben Patel said, "Company secretaries



Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar addressing convention of Company Secretaries at TFC in Varanasi on Thursday

have a prominent role to play in helping corporates tread the path of progress. I appreciate the Institute for shaping such important professionals of the country and organising events like these that give an opportunity of extensive learning".

Appreciating the ICSI for its commendable contribution in nation building, Dr Manoj Govil, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, said that the government has reposed its faith onto the company secre-tary professionals who are greatly responsible for making India an efficient and transparent nation. "The National Convention will be an opportunity for brainstorming and learning," he said.

Humbled with the presence of the dignitaries, President of ICSI Manish Gupta spoke about the various initiatives taken by the institute towards the growth and devel-

including the new course curriculum and the important subjects introduced to create a strong foundation of the profession. On this momentous occasion, the ICSI unveiled some very important initiatives and publications at the hands of the distinguished guests including 'Convention Souvenir', 'Handbook on Benefits for the Members of ICSI', 'ICSI (Management and Development of Company Secretaries in practice) Guidelines, 2023', 'ESG Conclave' and '3rd

He said that a platform for dialogues between regulators, industry leaders, professionals, and other stakeholders, the 51st National Convention is an opportunity for thoughtful deliberations and engaging discussions. The event witnessed the presence of around 1,500 opment of its stakeholders company secretaries, profes-

Conclave' and '3rd International Conference,

Singapore, in April, 2024'.

sionals, directors, senior government officers, and other stakeholders in person and approximately 10,000 delegates attended the event in virtual

Earlier, addressing the press conference Manish Gupta and other ICSI office-bearers said that the ICSI is a premier professional body set up under an Act of Parliament, that is the Company Secretaries Act, 1980, for regulating and developing the profession of company secretaries in India. It functions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The institute, being a proactive body, focuses on the best and top-quality education to students of the company secretaries course and the best quality set standards for CS members. The institute has over 71,000 members and around two lakh students on its roll

Students stage protest in IIT(BHU)

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

One of the country's presti-gious institutions, Indian Institute of Technology (Banaras Hindu University) witnessed a strong protest on its campus on Thursday in protest against misbehavior of some anti-social elements with a girl student during the night hours. Terming the incident as a 'heinous crime', thousands of students reached Rajputana Hostel and raised slogans against the institute's director and proctor board.

the academic activities in the premises were disrupted badly. In protest against the incident, the students filed an FIR with the Lanka police but no arrests have been made so far. According to the information, during the midnight hours, a girl student wanted to go somewhere for urgent work and when she, along with a male student, was going somewhere, three motorcycle-borne miscreants stopped them near



Students staging a protest at IIT (BHU) in Varanasi on Thursday

Ganga Smriti crossing and the incident. after forcibly separating both the male and female students, they misbehaved with the girl forcing her to remove her garments. It was alleged that the miscreants also videographed

The incident made the students of IIT (BHU) annoyed and around 2,500 students carrying placards in their hands staged a strong protest demanding a ban on the entry of outsiders into the premises

They were also demanding

to tighten the security arrangements there. They said that it was the third incident in recent

kets and enhancing expertise, enabling the creation of customised, empathetic, and effective campaigns. Continuing, Munshi stated that failure is the

senior wardens of Civil Defence of Varanasi were felicitated with citation by the UP Civil Defence Minister Dharmpal Singh at a programme in Lucknow.

For the special contribution in the civil defence, the Deputy Divisional Warden of Collectorate Division Arvind Vishwakarma, Abhishek Jaiswal of Bhelupur Division and Dharmendra Gautam of Kotwali Division of Varanasi were felicitated with the

Students' movement in AU starts gaining momentum

The students movement ... Allahabad University (AU) the students' movement in has started gaining momentum now. The students protesting against the chief proctor started a relay hunger strike from Thursday demanding the filing of an FIR and his arrest. The students said they will continue to protest against the 'repres-

sive policies of the university.

They started their relay fast in front of the Students'
Union building. Hundreds of students from various student organisations holding placards in their hands raised slogans against the university administration.

Vivek, a student, said "our vice-chancellor is behind the chief proctor". At present the university wants to 'suppress' the legitimate demands of the students with the help of sticks and repression. It wants to suppress student politics

and movement. We will not let this happen. Students will fight against this till their last breath. This relay fast will con-

tinue, he added. Research scholar Manish Kumar, who is suspended from the university, said the university administration is continuously 'exploiting' the

He alleged that fees had been increased by 400 per cent. The students, under the leadership of student leader Ajay Yadav Samrat, started a movement against fee hike and the 'dictatorial' attitude of the university. However, student leader Ajay was sent to jail by the police at the 'behest'

tion. This repression was also seen when students were demonstrating peacefully on the campus on October 17. The chief proctor had allegedly beaten up a student. Its video went viral on the social media. Even after this, the police sent the students to jail and took no action against the

of the university administra-**BKU** activists protest at PDA office

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

¬he activists of Bharatiya The activists of Billiam, Kisan Union (BKU) surrounded the PDA office on Thursday. They reached Prayagraj Development Authority office and raised slo gans accusing the officials of harassing' the farmers. Seeing hundreds of farm-

ers arriving together, police force was deployed. There was a traffic jam on the road due to the demonstration. The farmers have also sent a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath complaining about this matter.

Thousands of farmers had reached here under the leadership of state president of BKU Anuj Singh. Anuj Singh said, the poor are becoming homeless due to houses damaged in view of widening of roads for Kumbh 2025. Farmers allege that PDA

vice-president is working arbitrarily. Prayagraj is being 'destroyed' in the name of development. The government has given freedom to the farmers that

they can sell their land for agriculture or residential purposes but the authority is 'snatching' this right from the farmers. He said if the demands are not met then this protest will continue at the PDA gate. TWO ARRESTED FOR

MAKING **SPURIOUS** LIQUOR: Two brothers were arrested by a joint team of Jhunsi police and Excise on the charges of manufacturing spurious liquor. The team seized 10 cartons

of illicit liquor, 37 open plastic bottles, 31 other bottles, 130 fake QR codes, urea, one SUV, one bike, utensils etc from their hideouts.

Those arrested were Dhirendra Kumar Patel (29) and his younger brother Arun Patel (20) of Chowkhauda village. The police claimed that as many as 10 criminal cases were pending against Dhirendra in different police stations of the district while two were registered against Arun in Saraymamrez and Tharwai

The duo had been operating the unit for the past three

materials and fake holograms from Varanasi.

VIRAL FEVER CASES: The officials of district malaria office (DMO) claimed that the cases of viral fever were on the decline in the city.

"Sangam city has been witnessing a declining trend of dengue cases for the past week. The cases will be over within a fortnight," DMO (Prayagraj) AK Singh told the media. However, he said officials are monitoring the situation close-

Sangam city has recorded 315 confirmed dengue cases between June 1 and October 30. In 2022, Sangam city had recorded 1,465 confirmed cases while the figure in 2021 was

Ramlila committee begins retelling timeless epic drive given the heaviest railway

When curtains draw on Ramlila by all committees everywhere, including in Sangam City, Shri Shri North Central Railway Ramlila During the vigilance awareness Committee begins its act, campaign launched at IFFCO

Being performed by railways employees and their wards since 1967, this Ramlila is staged on the premises of DRM office of Prayagraj Division of NCR. This time, it began from Sunday and will conclude on November 5.

But the delayed start is for good reason. During the 10day Navratri festival that ends with Dussehra, members of this committee are already in over-

passenger rush. They are able to begin, just in time to make sure it gets over before Diwali, when, again their railway job becomes most demanding.

OATH ADMINISTERED:

of honesty and integrity was administered by Rakesh Kapoor, Joint Managing Director, IFFCO, to all officers and employees under the leadership of Senior Executive Director (Unit Head) Sanjay Kudesia and Chief Vigilance Officer Ajay Kumar Mishra through Zoom Webinar. A resolution was taken to further strengthen honesty in IFFCO.

A seminar was organised for IFFCO employees at IFFCO

Cordet, in which Additional Income Tax Commissioner, Prayagraj, Shiv Kumar Rai, was the chief guest. He said it is necessary for any institution or department to adopt preventive vigilance. He said alertness

is necessary for vigilance.

A contractor seminar was tre. Senior Executive Director Sanjay Kudesia said its objective is to solve contemporary problems through dialogue. In it Chief Vigilance Officer Ajay Kumar Mishra said we are promoting e-procurement for transparency in the system. Many problems of contractors were resolved in the seminar. An online quiz was conducted by Vigilance headquarters for the employees, essay competition on the role of information technology in eradicating corruption and discussion on how effective is the role of education in eradicating corruption were organised. General Managers Sanjay Vaishya and MD Mishra, Joint General Managers respectively AP Rajendran, PK Singh, Sanjay Patel, Ratnesh Kumar, Arun Kumar, Arvendra Kumar, SK Singh, HOD Human Resources Shambhu Shekhar, IFFCO Officers' Association president Anurag Tiwari and general secretary Swayam Prakash, IFFCO Employees' Union president Pankaj Pandey and general secretary Vinay Yadav, PRO Sonu Tiwari and a large number of IFFCO employees participated in the programmes.

launches visiting faculty programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Under the Institution of Eminence (IoE) scheme of the Union Ministry of Education, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is strengthening its academic and research collaborations by establishing new partnerships with prestigious institutions. In this endeavour, BHU has launched the 'Darbhanga Naresh Rameshwar Singh Visiting Faculty Programme'. This initiative is designed to promote close academic and research connections with leading institutions, especially those ranked within the top 20 in the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings.

The Darbhanga Naresh Rameshwar Singh Visiting Faculty Programme extends a unique opportunity to faculty members from top-ranking institutions to serve as visiting faculty at BHU for a full academic year. These visiting faculty members are expected to impart one complete course per semester and interact with students and faculty members for collaborative contributions to BHU's academic environment. Each visiting faculty will be assigned a teacher from the host department at BHU, who will facilitate the visiting faculty's integration into the academic and research community and provide local support.

will be considered on 'deputation' status and will be designated as Rameshwar Singh Visiting Professor, Rameshwar Singh Visiting Associate Professor, or Rameshwar Singh Visiting Assistant Professor.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain expressed that the scheme aims to provide a platform where exceptional talents from other prestigious institutions collaborate with BHU's faculty members to generate new knowledge. This initiative not only enriches the diverse academic and research atmosphere at BHU but also paves the way for mutual growth and excellence.

Prof Sanjay Kumar, Coordinator, IoE BHU, said that the programme is dedicated to the memory of the eminent figure, Rameshwar Singh, the former ruler of Darbhanga, who left an indelible mark on the establishment of BHU. Notably, Raja Rameshwar Singh made substantial contributions as one of the initial donors, provided leadership for raising funds from other princely states, and assumed the role of BHU's first Chancellor. His unwavering support, both as a benefactor and in presiding over the Hindu society entrusted with BHU's formation, is commem-

orated through this scheme. **IM-BHŪ ORGANISES**

These visiting faculty members INTERACTIVE SESSION: An interactive session was organised at the Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University (IM-BHU), with the topic being 'New Advertising Paradigm for Promoting Wellbeing of Rural and Urban Markets'. The session was addressed by Taral Jatin Munshi, Director of Kaladisha Private Limited and

Search Marketing India. IM-BHU Director Prof SK Dubey and Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) Prof HP Mathur, welcomed the speaker by presenting a bouquet of flowers. While addressing the session, Munshi mentioned that with technological advancements, the gap between rural and urban markets is decreasing, leading to improvements in extensive marketing opportunities. Significant changes are also

occurring in advertising strategies to reduce this gap. He explained that the expansion of mobile technology has given traditional advertising a new direction. This expansion has given birth to new possibilities, where a new amalgamation of experience, communication, and marketing is taking place. It is bringing about better access to local products and services, as well as changes in the right direction for marketing. New advertising strategies have aided in reviewing marfirst step towards success, and he defined failure as the first attempt in life.

 $\bar{\text{He}}$ very well explained the meaning of a true marketer and also marketing is not only advertising a product. He then encouraged the audience with various examples from his life on how to turn failure into success. This session was organised by the Student Wellbeing Initiative Committee of the institute. Dr Shashi Srivastava, Student Advisor, IM-BHU is the chairman of this committee. Institute faculty Dr Ram Shankar Uraon, Dr Vishal Kumar Laheri and Dr Abhijeet Biswas were also present during the session.

FELICITATED: Three

Director, Civil Defence citation.

Traffic awareness rally flagged off when they were hit by a bus



DC Dr Muthukumarasamy B and DIG RP Singh kicking off the traffic month by lighting the ceremonial lamp on Wednesday

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The traine November-23 was kicked Traffic Divisional Commissioner Muthukumarasamy B , DIG RP Singh along with SP Abhinandan by lighting the ceremonial lamp at the Police Lines on Wednesday. The DC said awareness programmes will to be conducted throughout the month but the real success of the drive depends on people's cooperation. He exhorted the people to follow traffic rules and use helmets while driving two-wheelers,

do not drive in an inebriated state or very fast and use the seat belt while driving four-wheelers. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP/City) Nitesh Singh said throughout the month the traffic awareness programmes will be organised in urban as well as rural areas. He said under them essay competitions, drawing competition, painting, nukkad natak, speech competition etc will be organised and school children as well as teachers will be involved along with NGOs and social organisations. The common people will be made aware through the

traffic awareness van. The programme concluded with the flagging off of a traffic awareness rally which included NCC cadets, PAC band, school children, police personnel and others. The programme was convened by traffic sub-inspector Vipin Pandey and his team and attended by the ASPs, COs, traffic staff and other officials concerned. MISHAP: One youth died

while another is struggling for life under Adalhaat police station on Wednesday. Two youths were going on a motorcycle on on the Varanasi-Shaktinagar highway at night

near Patelnagar Mill area. On getting the information, the police reached the spot and sent the injured to the community health centre (CHC) Ahraura while the doctors declared one of them as dead and the other was referred to the Trauma Centre, Varanasi. The police is trying to identify the victims has taken the bus into possession.

NATIONAL

ADALAT: District judge informed that the National Lok Adalat will be organised on December 9th. He said that it will be organised at the civil court campus, family court, motor accident tribunal, outdoor courts at Madihan and Chunar and at all tehsil headquarters. He asked the nodal officers as well as officers concerned to publicise about the lok adalat so that maximum litigants could avail themselves of the opportunity. Secretary DLSA Lal Babu Yadav told the litigants as well as lawyers that if anyone wants to avail the facility of lok adalat may contact the the DLSA office direct-CAUGHT: The

Vindhyachal police on Wednesday caught a juvenile offender on the charges on rape. On September 3 one person had lodged a named FIR alleging his minor daughter had been enticed away.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Bond of secrecy

The SC ruling on the 'opacity' of electoral bonds can be a game-changer for political donations

n any democracy, electoral transparency and accountability are paramount. However, a facet of political funding has remained shrouded in secrecy – elec-■ toral bonds. Their 'opaque' nature has now come under the Supreme Court's radar. Electoral bonds were introduced in India in 2017 with the purported aim of promoting "clean and transparent political funding" by the Narendra Modi Government. The idea was to allow donors to contribute funds in a traceable manner while maintaining their anonymity. The bonds could be purchased from authorised banks (SBI) and donated to a particular political party. However, the system has been under the cloud for its "lack of transparency". The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and the CPI (M) in April 2019 filed petitions challenging the scheme's transparency and the apex cort is now hearing the matter. A primary concern is that the bonds shield the donor's identity, leaving no trail for public scrutiny. This opac-



ity raises doubts about donors' identity and the interests governing their decision. The Government defends electoral bonds, arguing it protects the privacy of donors who may face potential discrimination due to their political affiliations. It contends that the scheme balances the right of donors with the need for transparency as parties are required to disclose their funding details to the Election Commission. But the petitioners argue that electoral bonds undermine the principle of transparency, saying it allows for "opaque financing" and potentially opens the door for illegal/foreign funding. Prashant Bhushan, representing ADR, told the

top court that donations through electoral bonds until 2021-2022 for the BJP were Rs 5,271 crore and Rs 952 crore for the Congress.

The ongoing case has profound implications for the future of political funding and electoral transparency. If the court upholds the scheme as it is, it would continue allowing political parties to receive anonymous and unlimited funds. Conversely, if the scheme is found in violation of democratic principles, it could push the Government to enact reforms that demand greater transparency in political financing. The nation's people deserve to know who funds the parties as it is likely intricately linked to the issue of corruption in high places: Individuals or corporations could buy a high worth of electoral bonds and donate it to a particular party with the understanding that it would stand to curry favour when the latter had power by framing or tweaking policies that help the donor's business interests. Moreover, the party in power could discreetly ask for donations from individuals or corporations to help them in awarding contracts or favouring them over business rivals. After all, it is not for nothing that a party in power gets roughly five times more donations than the main Opposition party!



A lady from Christian community decorates the grave on "All Souls Day", in Mumbai

Navigating the Qatari issue



The Government must open backroom engagement channels and not dial-up nationalistic sentiment to secure the release of eight Indian ex-Navy officers

ith among the world's largest reserves of natural gas and oil reserves, the tiny Sheikhdom of Qatar punches above its weight, on the global highway. Besides being home to the swanky Doha skyline, and hosting prestigious events e.g., the recently concluded FIFA World Cup et al, it has retained the status of the 'safest country in the world, for the fifth time in a row in 2023! Located at the peninsula of the restive and ultra-sensitive Persian Gulf, its sovereign security in a region of violent conflicts is additionally guaranteed by the Al-Udeid Air Base - the largest military installation of the United States in the Middle East. Operations as far and wide as Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq are coordinated from this nerve centre.

It has leveraged its outsised relevance and Arab nativity to mediate many international conflicts. It was in the news for the complex agreement with Iran and the United States that led to the release of five long-term American detainees, in exchange for the release of \$6 billion frozen under sanctions. It mediated the Sudanese conflict among the Darfur parties. It was also host to the shadowy 'Doha Talks' between the Afghan Taliban and the US Administration that preceded US evacuation from Afghanistan. Now, it is deeply involved in negotiations between Hamas and Israelis to secure the release of hostages, cross-held. Optics of enhanced Qatari footprint and relevance beyond having to lurk in the traditional shadows of Saudi Arabia drive its ambition and purpose.

To achieve this sought-after 'voice', Oatar has deployed and used its hugely successful and influential Al Jazeera media, as a tool of soft diplomacy. Recently, US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken had to request the Qatari Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, to 'turn down the volume'. implicit in the request was the popular positing of a narrative that could be viewed as offering an alternative to the unilaterally accusative and simplistic 'terror'



ing Sheikhdoms who are wary of the 'openness' of Al Jazeera whose reportage especially hurt in the days of the 'Arab Spring'. Many in the Arab WHILE STILL FROM World believe that through Al Jazeera and other provocative A LOWER COURT, actions e.g., cosying up to the likes of Hamas, Hezbollah THE IMPORT AND and Taliban, or to sectarian SIGNIFICANCE OF rival Iran (even though Qatar is essentially Sunni) and the SUCH A VERDICT equally maverick Turkey, adds WOULD NOT BE to its unique unpredictability and unreliability. LOST ON ITS Qatar's manoeuvring of the

narrative often affords a bun-JUDICIAL SYSTEM, dle of deliberate contradictions, that defies so many stereotypes of a typical Arab PRESUMABLY FELT Sheikhdom. Like most affluent Sheikhdoms that attract a lot **EMPOWERED TO** of immigrant workforce from ISSUE THE SAME, the Indian Sub-Continent the tiny state with a 2.7 million KNOWING THE population has only 0.3 million local Oataris, and more than **REACTION - THIS** 0.7 Indian nationals, as its workforce. This substantial IS DISCONCERTING Indian diaspora along with growing bilateral trade and commerce, lends considerable

radar as far as Kashmir is concerned, respecting the strong Indian position on the same – it has gone tangential with the recent news of the court of first instance, pronouncing the death penalty onto eight former Indian naval personnel who are accused of spying for a 'third country' (supposed euphemism for Israel). Delhi is outraged at the audacity of the judgement and has promised to 'exploring all legal options'. It is cautiously wordsmithing its reaction to suggest reassuring caution to the families back home, but at the same time buying time and reason to navigate and understand the Qatari intrigues that led to such a verdict.

the import and significance of such a verdict would not be lost on its judicial system, which presumably felt empowered to issue the same, knowing the reaction - this is disconcerting. Since there were no bilateral issues besetting the two nations, could it be acting on behalf of another country (say, Pakistan?) or could it be part of a larger leverage for the ensuing Israel-Hamas discourse: Unlikely, but with Qatar you can never say never. Thankfully, Qatar does have a

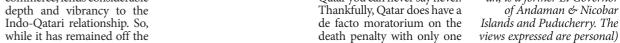
While still from a lower court,

(convicted for killing a Qatari national) in 2021, and then the prior one, as back as 2003. This unexpected verdict on former Indian Naval personnel belies the strategic bonhomie between the two navies conducting joint naval exercises, Za'ir Al-Bahr (Roar of the Sea). Also, in the unlikely situation that Delhi is not able to secure the release of its citizens, it is not unusual for Qatari authorities to practically convert the death penalty to life imprisonment, as they have done so, often. Lastly, as Qatar is striving to project itself as a progressive, preferred and engaging regional power herein, the optics of a medieval-style mass execution would not reflect well with its sovereign credentials and perceptions. Therefore, time and space must be afforded to Indian Ministry of External Affair mandarins to do backroom engagement and not dial-up hyper-nationalistic and intimidatory rhetoric or even unfounded aspersions (as has become the won't) of the

execution of a Nepali citizen

highly counterproductive. (1 ne writer, a military veter an, is a former Lt Governor of Åndaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The

Qatari state, as that could be



WHICH

Why a beeline to overseas universities?



Over the years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of Indian students opting to go abroad for higher studies

tudents in large numbers are fascinated by the idea of going to a university outside their home country. Students who get into a good institution in India get best education at home itself. But not all are so lucky. Due to the surreal cutoff in the highranking universities, many deserving candidates are left out. To them studying abroad is the only option available even though it drills a hole in their pocket. Indeed, graduating from a reputed university in the West opens up many career options but it also comes with its own set of challenges and costs.

Better academic opportunities, career prospects and availability of financial aid and scholarships are driving students to go abroad for higher studies. As per information available from the Ministry, there were approximately 1.5 million Indian students pursuing education abroad as of January 2023. There are several factors behind this exponential surge. Studying abroad or in a home country has its pros and cons. Studying in my home country is much cheaper. Besides, one could save costs on

accommodation, travel, food etc. But the downside is that staying with family gives a comfort that hardly encourages you to become independent. The students who go abroad to study are indeed more confident and independent. When students study overseas they also work part-time to support their living. This helps in boosting their confidence and hones up interpersonal skills. Of course, an international degree along with work experience will have a significant impact on the career graph. The institutions abroad offer better programmes, facilities and resources. Students are taking advantage of the latest technology, research opportunities and top-notch faculty. This opens

up a broader range of subjects,

and fields to choose from. Employers often prefer to hire those candidates who have completed their education at prestigious institu-

tions abroad. With more and more Indian students coming out of school every year, there aren't enough quality colleges and universities to accommodate them. Attractive post-study work rights in many countries, easy availability of education loans, and scholarship options are some of the other reasons why more Indians are going abroad to study. Many countries are keen to welcome international students and are working tenaciously to clear the visa backlog.

The availability of scholarships and financial aid has made studying abroad more doable. Since many universities offer financial assistance to international students, it can significantly reduce the cost of tuition and living expenses.

Most Indian students prefer studying in English-speaking countries, such as the US, UK, Australia and Canada. The US and UK, for instance, had record-breaking visa issuance for Indian students

in 2022-23. The reason for these countries' popularity is the demand for top-notch universities, specialised courses and better post-study work rights. However, many non-English speaking countries like France have also stepped up their efforts to invite more Indian students to their universities by giving them advantages that are lucrative and cost-effective. France for instance is at the forefront of such countries. Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens, Country Director of the French Institute in India, says, "Apart from the fact that France and India have an agreement for the Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications, which eases admissions in each other's institutions, President Macron has also announced an ambitious goal of welcoming 30,000 Indian students to France by 2030." So, with many foreign universities targeting Indian students and promising job search and finance facilities, it is no wonder the students are looking West for higher education. (The author is a develop-

ment writer and a social worker; views are personal)

SOCIAL MEDIA IS A MENACE

Sir-Social media is indeed a doubleedged sword, and it's challenging to imagine life without it. However, when children can't resist enticing apps, it's time to take notice. In the United States, a coalition of 33 states has filed lawsuits against Meta, the company behind Facebook (FB), Instagram, Messenger, and WhatsApp. Meta stands accused of intentionally designing features on Facebook and Instagram to entice children into engaging with these platforms, ultimately profiting at the expense of children's mental health through harmful content. These allegations are not unfounded, as concerns about children's addiction to various apps, including Facebook and Instagram, have reached alarming levels.

Today's school education heavily involves mobile phones and internet use, making it challenging for parents to distinguish between beneficial and harmful content. Apart from the potential dangers of undesirable influences, psychological issues like anxiety, insomnia, and depression are rampant among voungsters glued to social media. As a result, their intellectual abilities, selfesteem, and academic performance may suffer. Age-appropriate apps are essential, and parents should actively engage in guiding their children's social media use.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

SUMMIT ON AI

Sir—The two-day summit in England, which commenced shortly after US President Joe Biden signed an executive order on artificial intelligence (AI) security, drew leaders and scientists from 27 countries. It is becoming increasingly evident that the risks to humanity's survival from AI outweigh the potential benefits. Consequently, industrialists who stand to profit from AI are not only embracing technology controls but also advocating for government oversight.

The falling rupee

THE EDITOR



he Indian rupee is currently at an all-time low of 83.33 against the US dollar. Foreign funds continue to exit stock markets, while rising oil prices, compounded by geopolitical uncertainties in the Middle East, have bolstered the demand for dollars. The US dollar has also strengthened on the dollar index against a basket of six major currencies, rising 0.20% to

Higher yields on US bonds are causing hot money to flow out of Indian stock markets, posing challenges for the Indian rupee. While the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is actively managing rupee volatility by releasing US dollars from its reserves, this can only continue for a limited time. In recent weeks, India's foreign exchange reserves have been steadily declining, falling by \$2.36 billion to \$583.53 billion during the week ended October 20, according to RBI data released on Friday. This decline in the Indian rupee suggests that India is facing economic troubles, and in the coming months, the rupee may depreciate to Rs 90 to Rs 100 against the US dollar, which could have disastrous consequences for the Indian economy

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Some individuals falsely claim that any country can become a "technology superpower" through AI. However, notable figures like Geoffrey Hinton, often referred to as the "Godfather" of artificial intelligence, resigned from Google, warning that the technology he was developing could pose an existential threat to humanity. This revelation prompted countries worldwide to take AI dangers more seriously. Visionaries like billionaire business magnate Elon Musk and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI CEO Sam Altman attended the conference in England to emphasise the future risks of AI that could potential-

ly outweigh its benefits.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

IPHONE ALERT

Sir-With upcoming state assembly elections and the 2024 general elections on the horizon, the timing of these threat notifications is alarming. We

should not let public cynicism or judicial inaction deter us from demanding an independent, transparent technical analysis and clear disclosures from the Government of India regarding its spyware purchases and deployments. This issue strikes at the heart of Indian democracy.

In the past, we witnessed Pegasus, a mythical winged divine horse and a well-known figure in Greek mythology. It's almost as if we are fortunate to witness the mythical horse in action in Parliament and on TV screens, as it defies logic and reason. Now, it's the case of Apple, the forbidden fruit of Adam and Eve. The notification implies that state actors and stage actors are sounding false alarms.

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

INDIA MAY HAVE A BIGGER ROLE IN W ASIA

West Asia is in turmoil and may need Indian intervention to stabilise it



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

he ongoing pounding of the Gaza strip by Israel, as a retaliation to the terror act by the militant group Hamas towards Israeli citizens, is slowly but shifting the geo-political alignments across the globe. It now seems India has a far greater role to play, than what was being originally perceived. US President Biden has reiterated that the Hamas terror act was a means to sabotage the India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC). The ambitious IMEEC infrastructure project was formally announced during the recently concluded G20 summit in New Delhi, which saw the US, India, UAE, Saudi Arabia Italy France, Germany and the European Commission come together to create a a dual infrastructure project through and eastern trade corridor from India to the Gulf and a northern corridor connecting the Gulf to Europe.

The presence of an inland railway network primarily in the Gulf region, complementing the shipping lines culminating in ports dotting the region, has been conceived to promote greater integration of Israel with the rest of its neighbourhood, primarily Saudi Arabia and UAE, while also promoting greater regional integration, and creating an alternative to China sponsored BRI (Belt and Road initiative).

The IMEEC has its roots in the Abrhams Accord, a US-led exercise to bring stability and peace between not-so-cordial nations in the Middle East, and firmly bringing Israel into the picture. This was followed by the grouping of 4, the I2U2 comprising India, Israel, the US and UAE. The blueprint for IMEEEC was drawn by the National Security Advisors representing I2U2, given the security threats at work in the volatile region. The IMEEC is also the US's way of getting its way back in the region, where for decades it has served as the police and peace and kingmaker. The pulling out of American boots on the ground from the Middle east necessitated a newage alliance with a bias for the economic imperatives of the participating countries while building key Infrastructure for clean energy.

The war on the Gaza strip could effectively topple this, carefully placed chessboard as the Arab world is surely losing patience with Israel's actions towards a fellow Muslim country. Israel is angry today, and justifiably so as, as the death of more than 1000 of its innocent civilians, and several hundred taken into captivity by Hamas militants requires a just equitable reaction. However, the visuals and news of the death of humanitarian workers, journalists, children and elderly serving in the conflicted Gaza strip are testing the patience of the world population, many of whom would not be cued onto the intricacies of fragile foreign relations diplomacy and. impact it has on their daily lives.



This is where India comes in, which is careful to justly condemn any acts of terror carried out by Hamas against Israel while trying not to sour its recently established warm relations with the Arab world. One of the first victims could be the eight decorated Indian Navy men, who have been declared to be spies. While India is working at the highest levels through diplomatic and other backtrack channels to secure the release and safety of its citizens, the timing and action dictated by Qatar cannot be missed. Secondly, Saudi Arabia whose crown prince was on a state visit to India highlighting the depth of the carefully nurtured bilateral relationship with India, is also starting to echo the Arab world's demand for a ceasefire. and saving lives of thousands of civilians in the Gaza Strip.

There are others like UAE another of India's carefully curated allies in the region, which has been maintaining a balanced reaction to the ongoing conflict, but it may not last long, given the domestic political pressures. If the conflict spills over for a longer war resulting in many more thousands of Palestinians being killed, India may need to recalibrate its relationship with the region.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

A global call for peace in Gaza



Diplomacy, backed by the principles of justice and compassion, should be the cornerstone of international engagement



ne of the challenges that the world faces today is the challenge of transforming the pervasiveness of violence in all its forms into a culture of peace; a peace that goes beyond the mere absence of war, to include living with justice and compassion, human rights and responsibilities and celebration of diversity. Mahatma Gandhi's peaceful, unconventional, non-violent strategy to achieve peace, is akin to the principles of Global Citizenship. Mahatma Writing for the "Young India" on June 18, 1925, Gandhi once stated "It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. It is not nationalism that is evil it is the narrowness, selfishness and exclusiveness which is evil.' In the current global scenario, the world

continues to grapple with the pervasive challenge of wars and conflicts that persist in various regions. The principles advocated by Mahatma Gandhi for achieving peace through non-violent means resonate strongly in the face of such challenges. The transformation from a culture of violence to one of peace, as envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi, remains an ongoing struggle. The emphasis on global citizenship, characterized by a commitment to justice, compassion, human rights, and the celebration of diversity, aligns with the ideals necessary to overcome the current landscape of conflict. The Mahatma's insight that nationalism, in itself, is not inherently evil underscores the importance of embracing a broader perspective that transcends narrowness, selfishness, and exclusiveness. In confronting present-day conflicts, fostering a sense of global interconnectedness and shared responsibility is essential for promoting lasting peace and addressing the root causes of discord in the internation-

The ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip that has caused enormous loss of lives calls for



ISRAEL HAS BEEN **BOMBARDING GAZA AND HAS NOW BEEN** WAGING GROUND **OPERATIONS** AFTER HAMAS' **SURPRISE** ATTACK THAT KILLED AT LEAST 1,400 ISRAELIS

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, views

action from the international community to open the doors towards the negotiation table between the conflicting parties (Israel and Hamas) to put an immediate end to the war – which at this stage seems an illusion, but the efforts shouldn't be halted. In a media report with the BBC, Gaza on October 29 announced that more than 8,000 had been killed in the Palestinian territory since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7. "The death count linked to the Israeli aggression is past 8,000, half of whom are children," the health ministry told the news agency AFP.

Israel has been bombarding Gaza and has now been waging ground operations after Hamas' surprise attack killed at least 1,400 Israelis. "This is the second stage of the war whose goals are clear – to destroy Hamas' governing and military capabilities and to bring the hostages home," Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told reporters late on Saturday, October 28.

A look at the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, one finds that it has long been a source of turmoil. The Israel-Palestine conflict traces its roots to the late 19th century when nationalist movements gained momentum in the Middle East. The clash of historical narratives, religious claims to the same land, and geopolitical interests has perpetuated this conflict for decades. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and subsequent wars have only intensified the hostilities.

The recent Gaza war has left a trail of destruction, with civilian casualties and infrastructural damage

painting a grim picture, further underscoring the urgent need for international intervention to establish lasting peace. The densely populated Gaza Strip, home to nearly two million Palestinians, witnessed relentless airstrikes, artillery fire, and ground operations. Civilians, including women and children, bore the brunt of the violence, leading to a staggering loss of life and widespread destruction of infrastructure. Images of homes reduced to rubble, hospitals overwhelmed - and bombarded - and families torn apart evoke a sense of urgency for the international community. World leaders have to find a sustainable resolution to this conflict.

in the happening for many in the world, nonetheless, Manatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, justice, and compassion resonates with the principles of global citizenship. Gandhi's teachings underscore the idea that peace is not merely the absence of war but a state of harmony that encompasses justice, compassion, and respect for human rights. Mahatma Gandhi had earlier written in "Young India" on May 21, 1925, that "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary. The evil it does is permanent." Therefore, a paradigm shift, in the approach of world powers and leaders in working on negotiations for the settlement of the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip is of utmost requirement. World leaders must adopt a mindset that transcends national boundaries and prioritizes the well-being of all people, regardless of their origin.

Gandhi's perspective on nationalism provides a nuanced understanding of the delicate balance between national identity and global cooperation, which is interconnected

While there seems to be no end to this disruption and loss of innocent human lives in the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, it becomes all the more necessary for the world powers to navigate this balance delicately. While recognizing the legitimate aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians for selfdetermination and national identity, it is essential to transcend narrow interests and exclusivity. The pursuit of peace should take precedence over political posturing, While it seems like another illusion and global cooperation should be the guiding principle.

The urgency of the Israel-Palestine crisis demands a proactive and concerted effort from world powers to stop war. While historical alliances and geopolitical considerations often shape the stance of nations, the humanitarian cost of inaction cannot be ignored. The international community must prioritize peace over anything else. Diplomacy, backed by the principles of justice and compassion, should be the cornerstone of international engagement.

The celebration of diversity, respect for human rights, and a commitment to global cooperation should guide the efforts of nations seeking to mediate and facilitate a just resolution to this violence. The lessons of history show us that even the most entrenched conflicts can be resolved through dialogue, compromise, and a genuine desire for peace. It is a collective respon-

Naveen Patnaik's 'Pandian' move checkmates opponents

The Odisha CM has appointed VK Pandian as chairman of 5-T initiative and Nabin Odisha to implement his dream projects, ahead of elections

n a move that stumped his critics and political oppo-Inents, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik appointed his most trusted lieutenant and now-retired IAS officer VK Pandian as the chairman of his flagship 5-T initiative and Nabin Odisha, sending waves across the state's political circles. Having been at the receiving end of the opposition's ire over the growing influence of the Tamil Nadu-born officer in the state's governance, the 'gentle giant' of Indian politics, Patnaik stunned everyone by this appointment by its nature, speed and tim-

While Patnaik's good relation and rapport with the BJP central leadership ensured Pandian's VRS was accepted



PRASHANT KUMAR

(Prashant Kumar is a free-

lance journalist, views are

personal)

in no time and the notice period waived off — despite letters against the officer by BJP state leaders, his decision to make the 2002 batch Odisha Cadre officer his man Friday at this moment marks his political brilliance, with the state assembly elections scheduled early next year.

How VK Pandian became the go-to man for Naveen Patnaik:

An officer known for his simplicity and rare magnanimity, his journey into the good books of CM Patnaik started during his stint as the Collector of Ganjam district. It was his vision and action on the ground, ensuring justice and work for people apart from setting up a special facility for HIV-infected orphans in the district that Patnaik over his absence,

put him in direct sight of the chief minister. His initiatives in the district won several national awards His successive stints in vari-

ous districts and unique initiatives there cemented his position as a person who was connected with grassroots and portrayed him as someone who had the vision to solve issues of people on the ground. He was then picked up by Patnaik as his private secretary in 2011 and there has been no looking back for him since then. He was the man who would deliver CM's dreams and promises on the ground very, very effectively. His proactive involvement in the delivery of schemes was also criticised by the opposition who targeted



largely accusing him of renting the kingdom to his secretary while he was constantly napping — CM Patnaik never paid heed to any such accusations and his image as the leader remains intact.

CM Patnaik knew Pandian as someone who could deliver just about anything. From effective communication to coordination between the departments to chalking input strategies to make Odisha a state that powered

revamp of Indian Hockey has seen Odisha as its biggest support system thanks to the great policies of the state. From sports to making Puri the world's best heritage site with all world mass amenities and ensuring a far better experience for devotees at the Shree Jagannath Temple in the town, Pandian is the man who's been overseeing the key initiatives of the Patnaik government.

Pandian over the past few sports and sports stars. The years rose the ranks as a peo-

ple's officer. His work in education and the healthcare system made him a crowdfavourite. Revamping the schools of the state and making the health facilities sound by ensuring good public hospitals and facilities, Pandian's work in these two core sectors is talked about a lot among the masses of the state. Now, with him being given a cabinet minister status and the post of chairman, 5-T, the murmurs are abuzz about his induction into the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) party. The murmurs stem from the fact that it was he who, under the directions of CM Patnaik, set out to touch base with people across all 30 districts, listening to their grievances

This drive by Pandian raised many eyebrows in the state. The opposition parties took turns attacking Patnaik over his absence and non-seriousness in governing the state, but it cemented Pandian's place as someone who could drive the future political narrative of Patnaik. For now, in Pandian's appointment, Naveen Patnaik has shut the mouth of his opposition before the all-important Lok Sabha elections and the assembly elections due in the state. He has also been able to successfully give a message out to youth by Pandian's appointment. How lethal and politically beneficial does this step of Patnaik turn out to be, only and giving solutions on the time will tell.

Sunak hails

'Bletchley

to tackle

Declaration'

risks from AI

London (PTI): Prime Minister

Rishi Sunak, who is leading the

talks on Thursday at the AI

Safety Summit convened by the UK, hailed the Bletchley

Declaration as a "landmark"

agreement between 28 countries,

Countries at UK summit pledge to tackle Al's potentially 'catastrophic' risks

Delegates from 28 nations, including the US and China, agreed on Wednesday to work together to contain the potentially "catastrophic" risks posed by galloping advances in artificial intelligence. The first international AI Safety Summit, held at a former codebreaking spy base near London, focused on cuttingedge "frontier" AI that some scientists warn could pose a risk to humanity's very existence. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the declaration was "a landmark achievement that sees the world's greatest AI powers agree on the urgency behind understanding the risks of AI helping ensure the long-term future of our children and grandchildren."

But US Vice President Kamala Harris urged Britain and other countries to go further and faster, stressing the transformations AI is already bringing and the need to hold tech companies accountable

— including through legislation. In a speech at the US Embassy, Harris said the world needs to start acting now to address "the full spectrum" of AI risks, not just existential threats such as massive cyberattacks or AI-formulated bioweapons.

"There are additional threats that also demand our action, threats that are currently causing harm and to many people also feel existential," she said, citing a senior citizen kicked off his health care plan because of a faulty AI algorithm or a woman threatened by an abusive partner with deep fake photos.

The AI Safety Summit is a labour of love for Sunak, a tech-loving former banker who wants the UK to be a hub for computing innovation and has framed the summit as the start of a global conversation about the safe development of AI. Harris is due to attend the summit on Thursday, joining government officials from more than two dozen countries

India, Japan, Saudi Arabia — and China, invited over the protests of some members of Sunak's governing Conservative

Party.

Getting the nations to sign the agreement, dubbed the Bletchley Declaration, was an achievement, even if it is light on details and does not propose a way to reg-ulate the development of AI. The coun-tries pledged to work toward "shared agreement and responsibility" about AI risks, and hold a series of further meetings. South Korea will hold a mini virtual AI summit in six months, followed by an in-person one in France a year from now. China's Vice Minister of Science and Technology, Wu Zhaohui, said AI technology is "uncertain, unexplainable and lacks transparency." "It brings risks and challenges in ethics, safety, privacy and fairness. Its complexity is emerging," he said, noting that Chinese President Xi Jinping last month launched the country's

Global Initiative for AI Governance. 'We call for global collaboration to share knowledge and make AI technologies available to the public under open source terms," he said

Tesla CEO Elon Musk is also scheduled to discuss AI with Sunak in a conversation to be streamed on Thursday night. The tech billionaire was among those who signed a statement earlier this year raising the alarm about the perils that AI poses to humanity. European Commission President Ursula von der Leven, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and executives from US artificial intelligence companies such as Anthropic, Google's DeepMind and OpenAI and influential computer scientists like Yoshua Bengio, one of the "godfathers" of AI, are also attending the meeting at Bletchley Park, a former top secret base for World War II codebreakers that's seen as a birthplace of modern comput-

SUNAK WELCOMES KAMALA HARRIS



10 Downing Street in London, Wednesday. Harris is on a two day visit to England to attend the Al Summit at Bletchley Park.

including India, on the shared responsibility to address the risks associated with artificial intelligence. In the lead up to the two-day AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, Sunak

had already announced the world's first AI Safety Institute to be set up in Britain to examine, evaluate, and test new types of AI to inform national and international policymaking. The summit is aimed at

focussing on international priorities for artificial intelligence. Besides his discussions with

government representatives from around the world on day two of the summit, Sunak will also hear from companies at the forefront of AI, academia and civil society, focused on the concrete action needed to ensure AI safety. Those attending include major AI business leaders like OpenAI, Anthropic, Google DeepMind, Microsoft and Meta. Tech billionaire and X chief Elon Musk is scheduled for a special one-on-one session with

"I believe there will be nothing more transformative to the futures of our children and grandchildren than technological advances like AI. We owe it to them to ensure AI develops in a safe and responsible way, gripping the risks it poses early enough in the process," said

"The first-ever global AI Safety Summit led by the UK has already seen major AI powers sign up to the landmark Bletchley Declaration, agreeing on the shared responsibility to address the risks and urgently work together on frontier AI safety and research.

Diplomacy to pause fighting and ease siege intensifies

Rafah (Gaza Strip) (AP) Israeli troops advanced toward Gaza City on Thursday, as the Palestinian death toll rose above 9,000. With no end in sight after weeks of heavy fighting, US and Arab mediators intensified efforts to ease Israel's siege of the Hamas-ruled enclave and called for at least a brief halt to the hostilities in order to aid civilians. US President Joe Biden

suggested a humanitarian "pause" the day before, as an apparent agreement among the US, Egypt, Israel and Qatar, which mediates with Hamas, allowed hundreds of Palestinians with foreign passports and dozens of wounded to leave Gaza for the first time. Dozens more left on Thursday. Israel did not immediate-

ly respond to Biden's remarks, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has previously ruled out a cease-fire.

Arab countries, including those allied with the US and at peace with Israel, have

with the war. Jordan recalled its ambassador from Israel and told Israel's envoy to remain out of the country until there's a halt to the war and the "humanitarian catastrophe" it is causing.

More than 3,700 Palestinian children have been killed in 25 days of fighting, and bombings have driven more than half the territory's 2.3 million people from their homes, while food, water and fuel run low. Israeli troops pushed into

Gaza in larger numbers over the weekend after three weeks of heavy airstrikes that have demolished entire neighbour-The war, the fifth and by

deadliest in Gaza, began when Hamas launched a bloody October 7 rampage into Israel, killing hundreds of men, women and children. Some 240 were taken captive.

The US has pledged unwavering support for Israel as it



A Palestinian man carries a dead child that was found under the rubble of a destroyed building, following Israeli airstrikes in Jabaliya refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, Wednesday. In just 25 days of war, more than 3,600 Palestinian children have been killed in Gaza, according to Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry. The advocacy group Save The Children says more children were killed in Gaza in October 2023 than in all conflict zones around the world combined in 2022

Gaza and crush its military capabilities, even as the two allies seem to have no clear plan for what would come next.

White House officials said a pause in fighting would allow for more aid to be sent in and potentially facilitate the release of hostages. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expect-

ed back in the region on Friday.

The departure of
Palestinians through the Rafah
crossing into Egypt on
Wednesday came after weeks of
talks. It was first time people talks. It was first time people left Gaza other than four hostages released by Hamas and another rescued by Israeli forces. Israel has also allowed more than 260 trucks carrying food and medicine through the crossing, but aid workers say it's not nearly enough.

At least 335 foreign passport holders left Wednesday and approximately another 100 left Thursday, according to Wael Abu Omar, a spokesman for the Palestinian Crossings Authority. Seventy-six Palestinian patients, along with

their companions, were also evacuated, he said. The US has said it is trying to evacuate 400 Americans with their families. Egypt has said it will not

accept an influx of Palestinian

refugees, fearing Israel will not allow them to return to Gaza after the war. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remain in the path of the fighting in northern Gaza, despite Israel's repeated

calls for them to evacuate to the territory's south, which is also being bombarded. Israeli troops appear to be advancing on Gaza City along three main routes: from the northeast, from the northwest along the Mediterranean coast, and from the south after reach-

south highway. Israeli officials have provided only vague statements about troop movements.

ing the territory's main north-

Airstrikes on Tuesday and Wednesday destroyed apartment buildings in the Jabaliya refugee camp near Gaza City, but the number of dead and

Israel said the strikes killed militants and demolished Hamas tunnels. Palestinian militants fired

antitank missiles, set off explosive devices and hurled grenades at Israeli troops during an overnight battle, the Israeli military said Thursday. It said soldiers returned fire and called in artillery, as well as strikes. The report could not be independently confirmed. Casualties on both sides are

expected to rise as Israeli troops advance toward the dense residential neighborhoods of Gaza City. Israeli officials say Hamas' military infrastructure, including tunnels, is concentrated in the city and accuse Hamas of hiding among civilians. At least 9,061 Palestinians

have been killed in the war, mostly women and minors, and more than 32,000 people have been wounded, the Gaza Health Ministry said Thursday, without providing a breakdown between civilians and

Chaotic scenes among Afghans returning from Pak

from Pakistan, where security forces are detaining and deporting undocumented or unregistered foreigners.

The crackdown on illegal migration mostly affects Afghans because they are the majority of foreigners living in Pakistan, although the government says it is targeting everyone who is in the country illegally. Three aid organizations —

the Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council and the International Rescue Committee - said many people fleeing the Pakistani crackdown arrived in Afghanistan in poor condi-

"The conditions in which they arrive in Afghanistan are dire, with many having

Islamabad (AP): Major inter- endured arduous journeys national aid agencies on spanning several days, exposed Thursday warned of chaotic to the elements, and often and desperate scenes among forced to part with their posportation," the agencies said in a statement.

Between 9,000 and 10,000 Afghans are crossing the border every day from Pakistan. Previously it was around 300 a day, according to agency teams on the ground. Returning Afghans have

nowhere to go and the agencies said they fear for people's survival and reintegration in a country overwhelmed by natural disasters, decades of war, a struggling economy, millions of internally displaced people and a humanitarian crisis. Salma Ben Aissa, the

International Rescue Committee's country director in Afghanistan, said returnees face a bleak future, especially if they lived in Pakistan for

General elections in Pak on Feb 11

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

 $P^{\text{akistan's general elections}}_{\text{will be held on February }11}$ to elect a new government, the top electoral body on Thursday told the Supreme Court, ending uncertainty over the polls and strengthening the country's posiks with the IMF for the release of USD 710 million second tranche of a loan. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) told the Supreme Court about the date during a hearing of a set of petitions calling for holding elections within 90 days after the dissolution of the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures. Last month, the ECP announced that elections would be held in January 2024 but stopped short of announcing a date.

A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and Justice Athar Minallah took up the pleas moved by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and others. The ECP had announced earlier that 54 days were needed to hold elections

after the completion of the delimitation exercise by November 30, and the apex court bench asked the lawyer of the election body to clearly state the stance on the holding of elections in the country. In response, Sajeel Swati said that the final list of constituencies will be pubother arrangements including the drawing of constituencies will be completed by January 29. "Hence we decided that elections will be held on Feb 11, which is the second Sunday," the lawyer said. The ECP also informed the court that the ECP would consult with President Arif Alvi on Thursday. Later, the chief justice in his order stated that the election date given would have to be implemented. "SC wants polls to be held without any arguments," the top judge said.

The ECP announcement coincides with the review talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the release of USD 710 million second tranche of a USD 3 billion loan to the cashstrapped country to stabilise its debt-ridden economy.

PTI ■ BEIJING

'No indication of Imran being poisoned in jail'

Islamabad (PTI): Imran Khan's personal physician on Thursday indication that Pakistan's jailed former prime minister is being subjected to 'slow poison' in

Dr Faisal Sultan made the comments after meeting with 71year-old Khan in Adiala Jail, where the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran chairman is being held in connection with the cipher case.

The physician told reporters that Khan's health and diet were both satisfactory and the ousted premier voiced no complaints on the issue, the Express Tribune newspaper reported. "Perhaps he (Khan) had expressed some concerns regarding his health earlier and those are now being misquoted," said Dr Sultan, clarifying that no such symptoms were detected in the physical examination now.



Secretary of State Antony Blinken, right, meets with Saudi Arabia's Minister of Defense Khalid bin Salman on Wednesday, at

King Charles III meets with family of rebel leader hanged by British

AP ■ NAIROBI

ring Charles III on Wednesday held a private meeting with the family of the executed leader of the Kenyan rebellion against British colonial rule, a day after the monarch expressed "greatest sorrow and the deepest regret" for the violence of the colonial era. The family of Dedan Kimathi, who was hanged by the British administration, and relatives of other well-known Kenyan free-

dom fighters didn't immediately comment a change from their past outspo ken calls for an apolo

and compensation from Britain, along with any information on the whereabouts of Kimathi's body. The British High Commission said only that the meeting was an "opportunity for the king to hear firsthand about the violence committed against Kenyans during their struggle for independence." Attendees included the chair of the Mau Mau War Veterans Association. The issue remains painful

for many Kenyans, and police dispersed a couple dozen people protesting at the foot of a monument to Kimathi in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. "All the land under British should be given back to the Kenyan peoole," said Juliet Wanjira with the Mathare Social Justice Center, calling also for the British military training mission in Kenya to leave. Charles, who with Queen Camilla arrived on Monday in what is his first state visit to a Commonwealth

country as monarch, on Tuesday cited the "abhorrent and unjustifiable acts of violence" committed against Kenyans as they sought independence. However, he didn't explicitly apologise for Britain's actions in its former colony as many Kenyans wanted. Charles on Wednesday also visited a war cemetery, laying a wreath in honour of those who fought alongside the British in the two world wars. He handed replacement medals to four war veterans who had lost theirs. Among the four was Cpl. Samwel Nthigai Mburia, who claims to be 117. The other three are privates John Kavai, Kefa Chagira and Ezekiel Nyanjom Anyange.

Mburia, who fought in Damascus, Cairo and Jerusalem, said he got rid of his medal long ago for fear of being associated with the British colonizers but was now happy to get a replacement from the king.

homage. The remains of Li, 68, were cremated at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery in Beijing, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. China's national flags at

 $F^{\text{ormer Chinese premier Li}}_{\text{Keqiang, who died of a}}$

sudden heart attack on October

27, was cremated on Thursday

here after President Xi Jinping

and other senior ruling

Communist Party leaders paid

Tiananmen Square, the seat of the country's power as well as all government buildings and foreign diplomatic missions, flew half-mast as a mark of respect for the departed leader.

President Xi, accompanied by his wife Peng Liyuan and Premier Li Qiang, other leaders of the ruling Communist Party and the government walked slowly up to Li's remains, stood in solemn silence to pay their tributes, and

made three bows. They shook hands with



Li's family members, offering their condolences. Former Chinese president Hu Jintao sent a wreath to express his condolences over Li's passing, the report said.

Other Communist Party and state leaders either paid their final respects at the cemetery or expressed their condolences through various means.

Senior officials from central departments, Li's friends and representatives from his hometown also mourned his passing at the cemetery.

Thousands of people visited Li's childhood home in Hefei in Anhui province to pay their respects.

Former Chinese premier Li Keqiang cremated

Li, who was once a contender for power against Xi, a decade ago died of a heart attack on October 27 in Shanghai. He retired as premier in March this year.

An obituary issued by the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), the Cabinet and Parliament described Li's death as a huge loss. He was extolled as an

"excellent CPC member, a time-tested and loyal communist soldier and an outstanding proletarian revolutionist, statesman and leader of the Party and the state."

Earlier reports said the government has asked student bodies of some Chinese universities not to organise private commemoration activities for Li in an apparent bid to avoid social turmoil.

Li had a reputation as a moderate reformist and won the admiration of the Chinese people for managing the economy which was in a slowdown

mode during his 10-year tenure. Though ranked number two in the ruling Chinese Communist Party hierarchy, Li was side-lined and mostly spent his years in the government focusing on the management of the economy, while Xi has emerged as the most powerful leader after Party founder

Mao Zedong, heading the party, the military and the

Presidency.

In the past, the Chinese government had reportedly taken precautionary measures to avoid similar student protests at Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989, following the death of popular moderate Communist Party chief Hu Yaobang. Thousands were killed during the mass protests.

Li is among very few retired Chinese leaders to have died before reaching the age of 70. Most stay healthy and live well beyond 90, or even 100 and their longevity is attributed to the comprehensive medical care and security privileges provided to party and state leaders even after retirement. The government has

ensured that the protocol for Li's mourning was on par with

former premier Li Peng who

died in 2019.

In China's strictly hierarchical system of formalities, only the top leaders - such as former president Jiang Zemin, who was afforded a state funeral in December last year - are entitled to full honours, including a memorial meeting which is televised across the country.

Political commentator Chen Daoyin, a former professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, said Beijing is doing everything it can to reign in the potential political risks of Li's unexpected death.

"A proper funeral protocol is a key part of addressing the concerns of liberals. So far, it has allowed people to pay tribute to Li Keqiang freely and there has been no apparent censorship while keeping a watchful eye on the universities," Chen said.

US sanctions more foreign firms

The United States on Thursday imposed ▲ a new round of sanctions on 130 firms and people from Turkiye, China and the United Arab Emirates in an effort to choke off Russia's access to tools and equipment that support its invasion of Ukraine.

The sanctions imposed by Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control target third-party firms and people alleged to assist Moscow in procuring equipment needed on the battlefield, including suppliers and shippers. In addition, the State Department imposed diplomatic sanctions targeting Russian energy production and it metals and mining sec-

Thursday's sanctions targets include Turkish national Berk Turken and his firms, which are alleged to have ties to Russian intelligence. The Treasury Department said Turken's network arranged payments and shipping details designed to bypass sanctions and move goods from Turkiye to Russia.

A series of United Arab Emirates firms alleged to have shipped aviation equipment, machines for data reception and more also were sanctioned. And UAEbased ARX Financial Engineering Ltd. was sanctioned for allegedly being involved in

2 KILLED AS RUSSIAN ARTILLERY KEEPS ON BATTERING UKRAINE'S KHERSON

year-old woman in the yard of her home and a 60-year-old man in southern Ukraine's Kherson region on Thursday, local authorities said. The deaths were the latest civilian casualties in Moscow's recent ramped-up bombardment of the front-line area. Kherson is a strategic military region located on the Dnieper River near the mouth of the Black Sea. Unconfirmed reports say attacking Ukrainian troops have gained a foothold on the Russian-held side of the river during the strategies. ing Kyiv's monthslong counteroffensive. The two civilians died when Russian artillery targeted Kherson region villages, according to Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin.

finding ways for Russian rubles to be sent from sanctioned Russian bank VTB Bank and converted to US dollars.

Turken and a representative from ARX were not immediately available for comment on Thursday.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Russia "is dependent on willing thirdcountry individuals and entities to resupwhich also damaged residential and public buildings, authorities said. On Wednesday, one person died in Russian shelling that caused extensive damage in the Kherson region's capital city of the same name. Prokudin called it "an apocalyptic scene".

A 91-year-old local woman was killed in her apartment last weekend in what Prokudin described as a "terrifying" nighttime barrage

The Kherson region is a key gateway to the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 and is now home to a lot of Moscow's war logistics operations and rear supply depots. AP

ply its military and perpetuate its heinous war against Ukraine and we will not hesitate in holding them accountable".

'Today's actions demonstrate our further resolve in continuing to disrupt every link of Russian military supply chain, and target outside actors who would seek to support Russia's war effort,"

China and Southeast Asia nations to conclude non-aggression pact faster

Chinese and Southeast Asian diplomats renewed a vow to finalise a nonaggression pact for the South China Sea in three years, two regional diplomats said on Thursday.

The pledge came during a meeting last week in Beijing, where they expressed alarm over recent confronta-

tions in the disputed waters.
The Philippines has protested what it says are increasingly dangerous and provocative maneuvers by China's coast guard and navy ships in recent months. On October 22, two Chinese ships blocked and separately collided with two Philippine vessels near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea.

Following the collisions, the United States renewed a warning that it's obligated to

defend the Philippines, a longtime treaty ally, if Filipino forces come under an armed attack anywhere in the contested waters. The Philippine government summoned a Chinese diplomat in Manila for a strongly worded

Association of Southeast Asian Nations diplomats separately expressed their concerns over the recent confrontations in the three days of talks hosted by Beijing.

China and the Philippines provided contrasting versions of the high seas encounters in a "tense exchange" and separately showed videos of the standoffs, the two diplomats told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the

The Beijing talks were the latest round of negotiations by China and ASEAN to prevent a larger armed conflict in the South China Sea that could pit China against the United States.

A July meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers with their Chinese counterpart in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta said the talks, which have dragged on for years and faced delays, could be concluded in three years' time, the two diplomats said.

China and four of

ASEAN's member states -Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam along with self-ruled Taiwan have been locked in a decades-long territorial standoff in the disputed waterway, a key passageway for global trade that is believed to be sitting atop vast undersea deposits of oil and

The contested territory has long been feared as an

become a sensitive front in the US-China rivalry in the region.

Last week, a Chinese fighter jet came within 10 feet of an American B-52 bomber flying over the South China Sea and put both aircraft in danger of a collision, the US Indo-Pacific Command said. Both countries blamed each other for the alarming inci-

Washington lays no territorial claims in the South China Sea but has said that freedom of navigation and overflight and the peaceful resolution of the disputes were in the United States' national interest.

It has challenged China's expansive territorial claims in the region and Beijing has angrily reacted by warning the US to stop meddling in what it calls a purely Asian

tional community, but "some

countries are restricting Japanese

seafood without scientific bases".

patiently explain to those coun-

tries bilaterally to request lifting

'We must continue to

Putin signs bill revoking Russia's ratification of N-test ban treaty

Moscow (AP): President Vladimir Putin on Thursday signed a bill revoking Russia's ratification of a global nuclear test ban, a move that Moscow said was needed to establish parity with the United States.

Putin has said that rescinding the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, also known as the CTBT, would "mirror" the stand taken by the U.S., which has signed but not ratified the nuclear test ban. Both houses of the Russian

parliament voted last month to revoke Moscow's ratification of the bill. The CTBT, adopted in 1996, bans all nuclear explosions anywhere in the world, but the treaty was never fully implemented. In addition to the U.S., it has yet to be ratified by China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel, Iran and Egypt. There are widespread concerns that Russia may resume nuclear tests to try to



discourage the West from continuing to offer military support to Ukraine. Many Russian hawks have spoken in favour of a resumption of the tests.

Putin has noted that some experts argue for the necessity of conducting nuclear tests but said he had not formed an opinion on the issue.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said last month that Moscow would continue to respect the ban and will only resume nuclear tests if Washington does first.

North Korea has likely sent missiles and shells to Russia, says Seoul

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea has likely supplied several types of missiles to Russia to support its war in Ukraine, along with its widely reported shipments of ammunition and shells, South Korea's military said Thursday. The assessment was released a day after South Korea's spy service told lawmakers that North Korea recently provided more than a million artillery shells to Russia amid deepening military cooperation between the two countries, both key US

In a background briefing for local journalists, South Korea's military said that North Korea is suspected of sending an unspecified number of short-range ballistic missiles, anti-tank missiles and portable anti-air missiles to Russia, in addition to rifles, rocket

launchers, mortars and shells. The contents of the briefing were shared with The Associated Press.

Last week, South Korea. the US and Japan strongly condemned what they call North Korea's supply of munitions and military equipment to Russia, saying that such weapons shipments sharply increase the human toll of Russia's war in Ukraine. Any weapons trade with North Korea would be a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, which Russia, a permanent U.N. Security Council member, previously

Both Russia and North Korea dismissed the weapons shipment accusations as base-

Outside speculation about North Korean arms shipments flared after North Korean

leader Kim Jong Un traveled to North Korea has been operat-Russia in September to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military facilities. The U.S. and its allies accuse North Korea of seeking high-tech Russian technologies to modernize its arsenal of nuclear weapons and missiles in return for its shipments of conven-

In a private briefing with lawmakers on Wednesday, the National Intelligence Service South Korea's main spy

agency — said that more than a million North Korean artillery shells have been sent to Russia since August via ships and transport planes. The NIS said the shells roughly amounted to two months' worth of supplies for the Russians, according to lawmaker Yoo Sang-bum, who

attended the NIS briefing. anti-air
The NIS assessed that Russia.

ing its munitions factories at full capacity to meet Russian munition demands and has also been mobilizing residents to increase production.
The NIS said North Korea,

Russian technological assisattempt in October, without giving any reasons.

North Korea also seeks to receive nuclear-related technologies, fighter jets or related aircraft equipment and assistance on the establishment of anti-air defense networks from

The tsunami-damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant began its third release of treated and diluted

for its part, is likely receiving tance over its plan to launch its first military spy satellite into space. North Korea's two recent attempts to launch a spy satellite ended in failure due to technical issues. The North failed to follow through with its vow to make a third launch

South Korea's military said

of the restrictions," Kishida said. radioactive wastewater into the sea on Thursday after Japanese "And it is also important to firmofficials said the two earlier ly show Japan's position at international meetings" and bodies such as the World Trade releases ended smoothly. The plant operator dis-charged 7,800 tons of treated Organisation. water in each of the first two Japan's government set up a relief fund to help find new marbatches and plans to release the

Fukushima nuclear plant

starts 3rd release of treated

radioactive wastewater

same amount in the current kets and reduce the impact of batch through November 20. China's seafood ban, while the Tokyo Electric Power central and local governments Company Holdings said its have led a campaign to eat fish workers activated the first of the and support Fukushima, now two pumps to dilute the treated joined by many consumers. water with large amounts of sea-The water is treated to water, gradually sending the remove as much radioactivity as

an offshore release.

Japan in 2011.

missioned.

the plant was crippled by the

massive earthquake and tsuna-

mi that struck northeastern

where hundreds of people staged

protests. China immediately

banned all imports of Japanese

seafood, badly hurting Japanese

seafood producers and exporters.

Kishida told reporters Thursday

that Japan has consistently pro-

vided transparent and scientific

explanations about the discharge

and gained understanding from

many members of the interna-

Prime Minister Fumio

mixture into the Pacific Ocean possible then greatly diluted through an undersea tunnel for with seawater before it is released. TEPCO and the government say the process is safe, but some sci-The plant began the first wastewater release in August and entists say the continuing release is unprecedented and should be will continue to do so for decades. About 1.33 million monitored closely. tons of radioactive wastewater is So far, results of marine stored in about 1,000 tanks at the plant. It has accumulated since

samplings by TEPCO and the government have detected tritium, which they say is inseparable by existing technology, at levels far smaller than the World Health Organisation's standard

TEPCO and the governfor drinking water. In a recent setback, two ment say discharging the water plant workers were splashed into the sea is unavoidable cleaning piping at the water and the plan needs to be decomtreatment facility and were hos-The wastewater discharges pitalised for exposure. The workhave been strongly opposed by ers have since been released fishing groups and neighbouring and were getting monitored, countries including South Korea, TEPCO said. It said none of the

workers ingested any of the The International Atomic Energy Agency has concluded that if the release is carried out as planned, it would have a negligible impact on the environment, marine life and human health. IAEA mission officials

said last month they were reassured by the smooth operation

Yellen calls for more **US-Latin** America trade

Washington (AP): Treasury Latin America to trade more with the United States as part of an initiative that so far has failed to disrupt China's dominance in global manufactur-

Still, US efforts to diversify supply chains with "trusted partners and allies" including select South American nations have "tremendous potential benefits for fuelling growth in Latin America and the Caribbean, Yellen said in a speech delivered on Thursday.

Yellen kicked off an Inter-American Development Bank investment event on the sidelines of the inaugural Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity Leaders' Summit, which will be hosted at the White House on Friday.

The heads of state of Peru. Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica were in attendance.

Yellen, who regularly talks about her friendshoring strategy for increasing supply chain resilience by working primarily with friendly nations as opposed to geopolitical rivals like China, laid out her vision of new US investment in South America at the development bank on Thursday. Latin American business

"will increasingly have the chance to lead in new areas of clean energy, for example, helping create vertical supply chains by using locally extracted lithium in local battery production", Yellen said. "Medical equipment and

pharmaceutical companies can grow and innovate to meet increased demand," Yellen said, and skilled workers can produce automotive chips necessary for electric vehicles.

The Inter-American Development Bank, which is the biggest multilateral lender to Latin America, would support new projects through grants, lending and new pro

The US is the bank's largest shareholder, with 30 per cent of

Storm Ciaran leaves millions without power

Recording-breaking winds in France and across much of Western Europe left at least five people dead and injured several others as Storm Ciaran swept through the continent plunging vast numbers into darkness, devastating homes and causing travel mayhem in several countries.

Winds of more than 190 kph (118 mph) slammed the northern tip of France's Atlantic coast, uprooting trees and blowing out windows.

A truck driver was killed when his vehicle was hit by a tree in northern France's inland Aisne region, Transport Minister Clement Beaune said. Another person has been badly injured at a university in the northern city of Roubaix, and 15 other people were hurt and powerful gusts expected in

San Francisco (AP):

European officials widened a

ban on Meta's "behavioural

advertising" practices to most

of Europe on Wednesday,

setting up a broader conflict

between the continent's pri-

vacy-conscious institutions

and an American technology

giant. Behavioural advertis-

ing, used by Meta's Facebook

and Instagram among many

other tech companies,

involves observing individual behavior such as browsing

habits, mouse clicks and app

usage, then using that data to

build profiles for targeting

European Data Protection

Board represents a sharp

escalation of a tussle that

began in Norway, where pri-

vacy officials imposed a daily

fine of 1 million kroner

(roughly USD 90,000) on

Meta for obtaining that data

without adequate consent.

Those fines have been piling

up since August 14.

The decision by the

European officials

widen ban on Meta's

behavioural advertising



around western and northern France, authorities announced. Seven of the injured were emergency workers.

Dutch airline KLM scrapped all flights leaving and arriving in the Netherlands from the early afternoon until the end of the day, citing the high sustained wind speeds

Meta said it has cooper-

ated with regulators and

pointed to its announced

plans to give Europeans the

opportunity to consent to

data collection and, later this

month, to offer an ad-free

subscription service in

Europe that will cost 9.99

euros (USD 10.59) a month

for access to all its products.

The latest decision "unjustifiably ignores that careful

and robust regulatory

process," the company said in

a statement following the

international section at the

Norwegian Data Protection

Authority, said Meta's pro-

posed steps likely won't meet

European legal standards. For

instance, he said, consent

would have to be freely given,

which wouldn't be the case if

existing users had to choose

between giving up their pri-

vacy rights or paying a finan-

cial penalty in the form of a

Tobias Judin, head of the

European board's action.

the country.

Huge waves slammed into French ports and shorelines, as wind flattened street signs and ripped off roofing. Felled trees blocked roads around western France, according to Associated Press reporters and images on French media and social net-

About 1.2 million French

Quake damages

Indonesia, but

no casualties

Jakarta (AP): An earth-

quake slightly damaged hous-

es and other buildings in

southeastern Indonesia early

Thursday, causing some panic

felt in several cities and vil-

lages and caused some to

panic, said Daryono, who

heads the Earthquake and

Tsunami Center at Îndonesia's Meteorology, Climatology

and Geophysical Agency. It

was based on land and had no

light damages in several

buildings and houses," wrote

Daryono, who goes by a sin-

gle name, on the social media

social media showed resi-

dents in Kupang, the

province's capital and largest

city, reacting as houses and

buildings swayed just after

dawn. Some witnesses said

ceilings at the governor's and

mayor's offices were dam-

Video circulating on

'The quake has caused

risk of a tsunami.

platform X.

The quake was strongly

but no apparent casualties.

houses in

households were left without electricity on Thursday, electrical utility Enedis said in a statement. That includes about half of the homes in Brittany, the Atlantic peninsula hardest hit by Ciaran. Enedis said it would deploy 3,000 workers to tions allowed.

The wind reached up to around 160 kph (nearly 100 mph) on the Normandy coast and up to around 150 kph (90 mph) inland. Fishing crews put their livelihoods on hold and stayed ashore. Local authorities closed forests, parks and beachfronts in some regions. Local trains were cancelled across a swath of western France, and all roads in the Finistère region of Brittany were closed on Thursday morning.

Beaune urged people to avoid driving and exercise cau-

RAMPUR FERTILIZERS LTD.

CIN: L15136UP1988PLC010084 Regd. Off.: Judges Bareilly Road, Rampur-244901 U.P.

NOTICE OF BOARD MEETING

2015, Notice is hereby given that the meeting of

the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday

the 9th November, 2023, at 4:00 P.M. at its Regd

Office: Judges Bareilly Road, Rampur-244901

(U.P.), inter alia, to consider, approve and adopt unaudited Financial Results for the quarter

ended on September 30, 2023 pursuant to

Regulation 33 of LODR. The said information is

also available on the Company's website at

www.rampurfert.com and the same has been

also sent to CSE and MSE to upload on their

websites i.e. www.cse-india.com, www.msei.in

By order of Board

pursuance of Regulation 47 of SEBI (LODR)

tion when travelling across areas with weather warnings. 'We see how roads can be fatal in these circumstances, he told broadcaster France-Info. In Spain, where the storm

battered much of the country with heavy rains and gale force Madrid said a woman died on Thursday after a tree fell on her. Three other people were slightly injured in the incident

on a city centre street. Parks in

the capital and other cities in

Spain were closed, and several trains and flights were can-One person died in central Ghent, Belgium, when a tree fell on them in a park. Another person was injured during the

Local and national authorities warned residents not to get close to green spaces for fear of falling trees.

same incident.

o punjab national bank

Due to unavoidable circumstances, it was decided to shift existing lockers of BO: Mehrauli Road, Hauz Khas (309300) to BO Now, it has been decided to shift these locker hereby informed that locker operations w.e. 27.11.2023 will be conducted from BO Mehrauli Road Hauz Khas (309300) Inconvenience caused is regretted

Date: 02-11-2023 Anshuman Khaitan (Managing Director)

Branch Office: G-6. Mehrauli Road Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016 NOTICE TO GENERAL PUBLIC

Bhikaji Cama Place (198800), New Delhi. from BO: Bhikaji Cama Place (198800), New Delhi to BO: Mehrauli Road Hauz Khas (309300). All the respected locker holders of BO: Mehrauli Road Hauz Khas (309300) are

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

SSA-12020/8/2022-MIS-SSA/I/323682/2023 Date: 01.11.2023 Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-

Assam invites bids through GeM portal as below. 1.Bid Number GEM/2023/B/4136320 dated 26.10.2023 for supply of

Bid Number GEM/2023/B/4139248 dated : 27-10-2023 for Supply,

Installation, Support & Maintenance of IT Equipments. Interested bidder may visit GeM portal and submit their bid on GeM

portal accordingly. The bid is also available in SSA website: https:/ /ssa.assam.gov.in



Sd/-Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axon Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Dated: 01/11/2023



Place: Rampur Date: 02.11.2023

respectively

Office of the Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh Email: sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Letter No.: 6606(I) /13 P.I.U.-03/2023

National Competitive E-Tender Notice

The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand" for following works. All other information will be available

online from date 09-11-2023 at 5.00 PM onward on website http://www.uktenders.gov.in Name of Work Earnest Cost of Validity Period Contractor's No Money Tender of Category of Completion Tender (in Lac) Registration (months) (day) Construction of (03 no.), 24.00 mtr. Span R.C.C. 5000.00 Category 'A' & higher Bridges, reconstruction of damaged walls & other for Road & Bridge +18% protection work in Tanakpur-Jauljivi Motor road along works, in State Govt./ Indo-Nepal Border in District Champawat of Govt. of India Uttarakhand State. (km. 12.000 to 55.000).

Sensex jumps 490 points, snaps 2-day fall amid global rally on US Fed rate decision

nenchmark Sensex Brebounded by nearly 490 points while broader Nifty closed above the 19,100 level on Thursday, snapping their two days of losses following a rally in global markets after the US Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 489.57 points or 0.77 per cent to settle at 64,080.90. During the day, it rallied 611.31 points or 0.96 per cent to 64,202.64.

The broader Nifty climbed 144.10 points or 0.76 per cent to 19,133.25. In the previous two sessions, Nifty dropped nearly 152 points while Sensex shed

Among the Sensex firms, IndusInd Bank, Tata Steel, Tata Motors, Sun Pharma, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, NTPC, Bharti Airtel, HCL Technologies and Axis Bank were the biggest gainers.

 $S^{\text{tandards for goods and ser-}}_{\text{vices should help in promot-}}$

ing global trade and not act as

non-tariff barriers, Commerce

Secretary Sunil Barthwal said on

He said that standards should

not be considered as non-tariff

barriers but as some kind of

non-tariff measures which can

help in optimal results for both

consumers as well as producers.

"If this becomes the right oil for

the trade system, I think a lot of

trade restrictions will come

down in trade and it will help us

take the world trade to USD 30

trillion by 2025 and USD 2 tril-

lion by 2030 for India," Barthwal

said here at a G20 standards con-

clave organised by Bureau of

Calling for harmonization in the

standards ecosystem, he said

that different countries are set-

ting their own standards and

that has a cost for global trade.

Many times producers and

exporters also face difficulty

not because of the standards but

"because of how they get imple-

an important need to have

coherence in the workings of

standard-setting bodies and col-

laboration in the compliance

Indian Standards.

Standards should

not act as non-tariff

barriers: Comm Secy



Tech Mahindra and Bajaj Finance were the laggards. 'A pause with dovish commen-

tary from the Fed led to a rebound in the global and domestic market sentiment. Further, the fall in US bond yields indicates a prolonged pause in interest rate hikes," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at

ecosystem. "Therefore the task

before us is how to improve not

only standard setting of differ-

ent products but also how to set

up testing ecosystem, how to set

up conformity ecosystem and

how to see that trade does not

suffer because of these stan-

In bilateral treaties, India is

touching upon these issues

because it feels that there should

be a conformity assessment of

"Another impression being cre-

ated in the field of trade...Is that

dards," the secretary said.

standards-setting bodies.

riers," he said.

Geojit Financial Services said. Domestic macros are favourable with positive auto numbers, a surge in GST collection, good factory data and better than estimated Q2 quar-

ter earnings," Nair added. Most sectors contributed to the move wherein realty, metal and energy were among the top

Singapore Airlines' budget arm Scoot on Wednesday announced the commence-

ment of its daily flight services

between Chennai and

Singapore from November 5.

The addition of this direct

flight, which will be operated

by Airbus A320 aircraft will

enhance the international

accessibility of Chennai and

performers, Ajit Mishra, SVP -Technical Research, Religare

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.20 per cent and smallcap gained 0.97 per cent.

NSE Nifty

Previous day close: 18,989.15

All the indices ended with gains, with realty rallying 2.55 per cent, telecommunication jumping

connect domestic business and

leisure travellers to the airline's

network in Asia-Pacific, the

Middle East and Europe, Scoot

The daily service will also pro-

vide convenient access to

major cities via Singapore, it

"We are committed to serving

the growing demand for trav-

el in this market and connect-

ing travellers from the capital

2.42 per cent, metal (1.68 per cent), power (1.60 per cent), capital goods (1.15 per cent), consumer durables (1.13 per cent), commodities (1.10 per cent). In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended in the green while Shanghai settled

lower. European markets were

trading in positive territory.

city of Tamil Nadu to Scoot's

extensive network beyond

Singapore, such as Melbourne,

Hanoi, Bangkok, Seoul and even Guangzhou," Scoot's

General Manager for India

Brian Torey said addressing the

Including Chennai, Scoot now

operates to six destinations in

India, including Amritsar,

Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli,

media here.

Change (+144.10

19,133.25

gains on Wednesday.
"Global stocks rallied as

investors reacted to the possible peak of the Federal Reserve's historic tightening campaign. "In Japan, Prime Minister Fumio

Kishida announced an economic stimulus package worth about \$113 billion that is meant to cushion the blow to household budgets from rising inflation and timed to counter weak ening public support for his government," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.67 per cent to USD 86.12 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,816.91 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark declined 283.60 points or 0.44 per cent to settle at 63,591.33 on Wednesday. The Nifty went down by 90.45 points or 0.47 to

Scoot had a fleet of over 50 air-

craft, comprising widebody

Boeing 787 Dreamliners and

single-aisle Airbus A320 fam-

ily aircraft and it plans to add

the Embraer E190-E2 to its

The airline currently flies to 66

destinations across 15 coun-

tries and territories in Asia-

Pacific, the Middle East and

fleet by 2024.

India, UK negotiations for proposed FTA

going on: Official

Negotiations between senior officials of India and the UK on the proposed free trade agreement are going on with a view to bridge differences on issues related to goods and services sector, a senior government official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"Talks on the 13th round is underway virtually. We have not talked about any deadlines to conclude talks," the official said.

India and Britain launched the talks for Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) in January 2022, with an aim to conclude talks by Diwali (October 24, 2022), but the deadline was missed due to political developments in the UK.

There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which include goods, services, investments, and intellectual property

The investment treaty is being negotiated as a separate agreement between India and the UK. The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its skilled professionals from sectors like IT, and healthcare in the UK market, besides market access for several goods at nil customs duties. On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, automobiles, lamb meat, chocolates, and certain confectionary

Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services (banking and insur-

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23, from USD 17.5 billion in

Switzerland's Zurich Insurance to buy 51 per cent of Kotak Gen Insurance for ₹4,051 cr

Scoot to start daily flight on Chennai-Singapore route

if you look at the Global north Switzerland's Zurich Insurance is set to acquire a and global south, you will find that although tariff barriers have come down, trade flows are 51 per cent stake in Kotak much easier these days but General Insurance for Rs 4,051 crore, its parent Kotak Mahindra Bank said on there is a rise in non-tariff bar-He added that standards are sup-Thursday.

posed to be non-tariff measures The Swiss insurer's investment in the eight-year-old domestic and should look at the interest of consumers so that they get the company will be through a combination of fresh growth right kind of products. "But gradually what we are seecapital and share purchase, as per a regulatory filing by the ing is that non-tariff measures are becoming non-tariff barrilisted lender.

ers...We need to discuss among It will follow up with an addiourselves that how standards tional 19 per cent stake purin three years of the initial iff barriers but some kind of acquisition, the filing said. non-tariff measures perhaps which can result in optimal Kotak General Insurance's output or results for both conmarket share in the non-life

market by premiums stood at 0.52 per cent as of September. Its gross written premium for FY23 stood at Rs 1,148.30 crore, and the share sale values the general insurance company at Rs 7,943 crore on a postmoney valuation.

"India is one of the world's immense potential, and we are pleased to be making a significant commitment with an excellent partner," Tulsi Naidu,

Zurich's chief executive for Asia Pacific, said.

"The combined expertise and resources of the respective firms will enable us to provide innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of our customers," Kotak General Insurance's managing director and chief executive Dipak Gupta said.

Kotak Mahindra group's physical and digital distribution strength and Zurich's global capabilities in digital assets and both B2C and B2B formats will benefit the company, he

the partnership could bring innovation, know-how, and excellent customer experiences to the Indian general insurance

Kotak Mahindra Bank and Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company have entered into a definitive agreement for the stake sale with Zurich Insurance Company. The transaction is subject to regulatory approvals from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Insurance Regulatory and

Commission of India. Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company's chairman Gaurang Shah said the company has invested to create strong fundamental building blocks, and hoped that Zurich will help Kotak General

Development Authority of

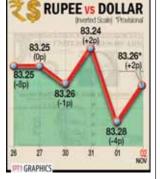
India, and the Competition

Platform for sports enthusiasts

New Delhi: BeBetta, the leading free-to-play sports prediction platform, announced a surge in userbase and downloads, solidifying its position as a premier player in the non-RMG gaming sector. In just one month, the app has attracted a staggering 550K users, catapulting it to the number 6 spot on Google Play in India's sports category. It reflects our engaging and rewarding platform for sports enthusiasts, said Meet Shah, CEO and founder of BeBetta

Ranbir new face of Hauser

New Delhi: Flair Writing Industries Limited's newest TVC for Hauser pens' campaign "An Extra Ordinary pen for Extra Ordinary you" shows Ranbir Kapoor playing a professor who is instilling confidence to his students to perform better. "In a departure from his on-screen personas. we see Ranbir Kapoor stepping into the shoes of a mentor, towards the extraordinary in Hauser pen's latest TVC," said Mohit Rathod, Director, Flair Writing Industries Limited.



Gold rises ₹150; silver **jumps ₹600**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

old price on Thursday Grose Rs 150 to Rs 61,850 per 10 grams in the national capital amid strong cues in overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had settled at Rs 61,700 per 10 grams in the previous trade.
"Gold prices on Thursday was

up Rs 150 following a bullish trade in the overseas markets,' Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Silver also bounced back Rs 600 to Rs 74,900 per kilogram. In the global markets, gold and silver were trading higher at USD 1,984 per ounce and USD 23 per ounce,

respectively Gold traded higher following a drop in US Treasury bond yields and weakness in the dollar after the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) policy meeting, Gandhi said.

Over 80% Indian retailers do not see e-commerce as a threat: Report

 $A^{
m majority}$ of Indian retailers surveyed do not feel ecommerce is threatening their operations, with only 18 per cent saying that their sales have been impacted by online selling platforms, claims a study. The top industries witnessing the highest contribution from offline sales are FMCG & Retail (97 per cent), Food & Beverage (95 per cent), and Consumer Durable & Electronics (93 per cent).

MSME-focused digital lender in India NowGrowth surveyed around 3,000 Indian retailers and shoppers across more than 25 top cities in India, wherein it was found that at-home delivery remains a top priority for shoppers, with 60 per cent of offline retailers receiving customer requests to start home delivery services. Physical stores remain the most

popular mode of shopping for Indians despite the proliferation of online marketplaces. The ability to touch and feel the product is the top reason for the popularity of in-store shopping. Around 54 per cent prefer offline shopping due to the assured authenticity and quality of products.

Approximately half of the respondents are loyal to their local stores, with multiple generations of a family often shopping from the same retailer leading to trust and familiarity. 35 per cent of Indians shop from their local retailer to encourage and support small

More than 70 per cent of Indian shoppers value a family shopping experience in a physical store, with Indian retailers seeing the maximum footfall at their stores during special occasions such as festi-

Tata Motors reports consolidated net profit at ₹3,783 crore in Q2

Tata Motors on Thursday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 3,783 crore for the September quarter, riding on robust performance by its British arm Jaguar Land Rover. This is the fourth successive quarter of positive results for the auto major.

The Mumbai-based company had posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 1,004 crore in the July September period last fiscal. Total consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 1,05,128 crore, as compared with Rs 79,611 crore in the yearago period, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing.

od last fiscal. Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) reported a revenue of 6.9 billion

On a standalone basis, the company reported a net profit of Rs 1,270 crore for the September quarter, it added. It had reported a net loss of Rs 293 crore during the same peri-

pounds in the second quarter, up 30 per cent year-on-year, driven by higher wholesales, better mix, cost reductions and investment in demand genera-

Looking ahead, production and wholesale volumes are expected to gradually increase in the second half of the current fis-

The EBIT margin for FY24 is expected to improve to about 8 per cent as compared to 6 per cent-plus previously indicated, it added.

The British brand continues to expect free cash flow of over 2 billion pounds in FY24 with net debt reducing to less than 1 billion pounds by the end of FY24, it added. "It is pleasing to see all the busi-

nesses deliver on their well-differentiated plans this quarter. With a strong product pipeline, a seasonally stronger H2 and continued focus on cash accretive growth, we are confident of sustaining this momentum," Tata Motors Group Chief Financial Officer PB Balaji said. The automaker said it remained optimistic on demand despite external challenges and anticipate a moderate inflationary environment.

"We aim to deliver a stronger performance in H2 (April-September period), due to a healthy order book at JLR, strong demand for heavy trucks in the commercial vehicle space and new generation products in the passenger vehicle segment,"

Adani buys remaining 51% stake in BQ-publisher Quintillion Business Media

 $B_{ ext{group}}^{ ext{illionaire Gautam Adani's}}$ remaining 51 per cent stake in Quintillion Business Media Pvt Ltd to take full control of the Raghav Bahl-curated digital business news platform for an undisclosed amount.

Adani Enterprises Ltd, the portsto-energy conglomerate's flagship firm, in a stock exchange filing, said its subsidiary AMG Media Networks Ltd "has executed a share purchase agreement for the acquisition of remaining 51 per cent stake in QBML", the firm which operates the business and financial news digital media platform BQ Prime.

It, however, did not disclose the financial details of the transaction.Quintillion was Adani's first bet in the Indian news industry before taking about 65 per cent stake in broadcaster bought a 49 per cent stake in Quintillion Business Media Ltd (QBML) for Rs 47.84 crore. BQ Prime was earlier known as Bloomberg Quint, a former joint venture between US-based financial news agency Quintillion Media. Bloomberg

NDTV in December last year AMG Media had previously

Bloomberg Media and Bahl's exited that agreement in March last year. "The SPA records the terms of the agreement and inter-se rights and obligations and other connected matters in respect of the acquisition of remaining 51 per cent equity shares of QBML by AMNL from Quintillion Media Ltd (QML)," Adani said. QBML will become a wholly

owned subsidiary of AMNL after the acquisition, it added. It set up AMG Media Networks for its foray into businesses of "publishing, advertising, broadcasting, distribution of content.

Record sales in sight for 2023, Mercedes-Benz India bullish on 2024 outlook

PTI NEW DELHI

Set for another record sales this year, Mercedes-Benz India is confident of carrying forward the momentum to 2024 despite supply concerns, company Managing Director and CEO Santosh Iyer said on Thursday. The company on Thursday launched two fresh products -- new SUV GLE priced between Rs 96.4 lakh to Rs 1.15 crore and AMG C 43 with price starting at Rs 98 lakh, completing its planned launch of ten products for

"Overall yes, another record year for us. We still have two months to go but at this stage from a demand perspective (it is) strong. From the supply side, we have to improve from here on and with that we should end the year on a high note," Iyer told PTI in an interview on the sidelines of the launch here.

He was responding to a query on whether the company is set for another record sales in 2023 after witnessing a new high in 2022 when it clocked 15,822 units.

In the January-September 2023 perithe same period last year.

od, the company delivered 12,768 units at a growth of 11 per cent over "We have seen growth in order intake for us but we're going through a dif-

ferent challenge in terms of produc-

tion and supplies. We still have a major issue with our 48-volt battery supplies and most of our cars are mild hybrids and because of that, we are still facing these challenges," Iyer said. He further said, "Therefore, we are not able to deliver the entire bookings that we have, and hopefully the situation improves in the next couple of months.

When asked if Mercedes-Benz India could continue with the growth momentum through next year, Iyer said, "From a macroeconomic view, we are completely positive that the growth story should continue."

However, he said, "The uncertainty over the supply chain has really made pause a bit right now. We have to get out of the current challenge in terms of manufacturing and producing more cars currently before we have a

firm outlook for 2024.' The company has an order backlog of over 3,000 cars, Iyer added. On the expected number of product

launches for 2024, he said it is a bit premature to comment considering the current challenge.

"Even today when we are launching the three variants of the GLE, the delivery of the GLE 450D we are starting only from January next year whereas the other two variants we are able to start now but with limited outlook," Iyer noted.

NOVAK STAYS ON TRACK FOR YEAR-END NUMBER 1 RANKING

ovak Djokovic stayed on track for the year-end No. 1 rank-ing for a record eighth time by beating Tomas Martin Etcheverry 6-3, 6-2 in the second round of the Paris Masters on Wednesday

Djokovic was competing in his first singles match since mid-September when he played for Serbia in the

group stage of the Davis Cup.
"At the beginning of the match, it was a bit difficult for me to find the rhythm," the top-seeded Djokovic said on court, "but at the end of the second set, it was really good."

Djokovic won five straight games to take the opening set with an ace and lead 2-0 in the second set. The Serbian player only faced one break point that he saved with a forehand cross-court winner at 1-0 in the sec-

A six-time champion at the Paris Masters, Djokovic increased his lead to 5-1 before converting his third match point when Etcheverry netted a backhand.

Djokovic can widen the gap with No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz in the race for the year-end top spot after the Spaniard lost to qualifier Roman Safiullin on

Alcaraz is the only player who can overtake Djokovic after Daniil

Medvedev dropped out of contention after he was beaten by Grigor Dimitrov 6-3, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (2) earlier Wednesday

Djokovic had racked up 500 more points than Alcaraz this season before the Paris Masters. Djokovic won't be able to clinch the year-end No. 1 spot in Paris since Alcaraz still gets 10 points for his second-round

There are 1,000 points for the Paris Masters winner and 1,500 points for a perfect run at the ATP Finals.

Djokovic holds the men's record with seven year-end No. 1 finishes, one more than Pete Sampras. Women's tennis great Steffi Graf holds the overall record with eight.

"Of course, my greatest motivation is still love for the game. I really like competing. So, as simple as that," Djokovic had told a news conference on Saturday. "And then, you know, I always have goals, you know, and to win another slam, to be No. 1 again, to finish the year as No. 1. Those are let's say the big goals.

Medvedev was booed off the court after remonstrating with the crowd during the match.

The crowd upset Medvedev in the 11th game of the second set, jeering him as he was about to serve after he had thrown his racket. The thirdranked Russian went back to his chair



and complained to the referee before talking directly to the spectators in French. "If there's one who whistles, you shut your mouths."

I don't play," Medvedev told the crowd. "You don't whistle, I play. So, you shut your mouths."

From that moment, the crowd overwhelmingly threw its support behind Dimitrov, and Medvedev appeared to

Bayern Munich crash out of German Cup

make a rude hand gesture toward some spectators as he walked off the court after the loss

"I play in Bercy much better when there is no crowd at all in attendance," Medvedev joked afterward, referring to winning the Paris Masters title in 2020 during the pandemic in an empty arena. "That's the only time I won the tournament."

Meanwhile, Tommy Paul and Casper Ruud can no longer qualify for the ATP Finals. The 12th-seeded Paul lost to qualifier Botic Van de Zandschulp 6-4, 2-6, 6-3, while eighth-seeded Ruud was defeated by Francisco Cerundolo 7-5, 6-4. Stefanos Tsitsipas, Alexander Zverev, Holger Rune, Hubert Hurkacz and Alex de Minaur stayed in contention for the three remaining spots at the eight-man tournament that will be played in Turin, Italy from Nov. 12-19.

Alcaraz, Medvedev, Jannik Sinner and Andrey Rublev had already qualified for the ATP Finals. In a late match that ended at nearly 2:30 a.M. In Paris, fourth-seeded Sinner beat Mackenzie McDonald 6-7 (6), 7-5, 6-1. Seventhseeded Tsitsipas beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 7-6 (4), 10th-seeded Zverev outlasted Ugo Humbert 6-4, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (5) and sixth-seeded Rune defeated Dominic Thiem 6-4, 6-2. Hurkacz, seeded 11th, beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3, 6-2 and 13th-seeded De Minaur rallied past Dusan Lajovic 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Before the Paris Masters, Djokovic,

Female tennis players united as they seek improvements from WTA, says Swiatek

AP ■ CANCUN (MEXICO)

Iga Swiatek says she and other women's tennis players are more united than in the past as they seek changes on the WTA Tour, including improvements to prioritize the athletes' well-

"We are not happy with some things," Swiatek, a three-time Grand Slam champion who was ranked No. 1 until September, said Wednesday after improving to 2-0 at the WTA Finals by beating U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff 6-0, 7-5 in roundrobin action.

Some players recently outlined WTA CEO Steve Simon and during two meetings with tour leadership. Among the topics were a guaranteed income and coverage for maternity leave and injury absences, along with an objection to a planned change in rules governing mandatory tournament appearances.

"I feel like everything is just based on wanting to have more and more, but not really taking care of our well-being and health," said Swiatek, a 22-yearold from Poland. "There are some things that the WTA could change for us without any impact on the tournaments and the things that they already agreed with the tournaments. In a letter Simon wrote back to the players to address some of their concerns - and obtained by The Associated Press - he said working groups with representatives from the WTA Board,

mendations are expected to be made this month Among the topics, Simon wrote, is late-night matches - a growing source of frustration for play-

tournament council and players'

council "are in the process of

reviewing scheduling and tour-

nament standards" and recom-

He said other areas being looked at include inconsistency in tennis balls over the course of a season; anti-doping and integrity; marketing and social media

Simon wrote that "a great deal is being done and ... There is a great deal of alignment in the areas you have raised and what is being worked on," and promised to provide an update the week of Nov. 13.

"I really feel like we - me and the other players, like, Ons (Jabeur), Coco ... And also some players that didn't qualify for the finals — we're really, really united, and we think the same way," Swiatek young ones, the older ones, we all know that this is kind of not good that we're going to have

more mandatory tournaments.

And so we want to really, really

have an impact. She was asked about the lack of spectators at her victory over Gauff - and Swiatek made clear that she noticed, blaming the late decision to hold the tour's season-ending championship in Cancun (the site wasn't announced until September) and adding that "the marketing

should be better.' The temporary hard court, set up on a golf course, has been criticized by Swiatek and other players, both for its quality and for only being available for pretournament practice right before competition began.

After her victory Sunday, No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka called the conditions "another level of disrespect." That's been a common sentiment during the WTA's marquee event, where the sport's leading players have been outspoken.

"I feel like we can use our voice now," Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova said Wednesday, "just to show people what's happening here.

AP ■ SAARBRUECKEN (GERMANY)

avern Munich crashed out of the **B**German Cup in a 2-1 loss to thirddivision Saarbruecken on Wednesday as coach Thomas Tuchel said defender Matthijs de Ligt suffered a "very painful" knee injury ahead of the weekend's 'Klassiker" against Borussia Dortmund. Bayern seemed set to cruise through the second-round game when Thomas Müller opened the scoring in the 16th minute but Saarbruecken leveled just before halftime and Marcel Gaus won the game with a deflected shot in the sixth minute of stoppage time.

The final whistle sparked jubilation for Saarbruecken, whose substitutes and staff ran onto the field to celebrate in a huddle with the team.

Dutch defender de Ligt went off in the 24th minute. The only other specialist center backs in Bayern's first-team squad are Kim Min-jae and Dayot Upamecano, who has missed the last month with a hamstring injury. That meant midfielder Joshua Kimmich dropping back to partner Kim in

Bayern coach Tuchel said it appeared to be a repeat of a knee injury that de Ligt suffered in September which sidelined him for three weeks. "It's the same knee again, the same capsule (in the joint) again. It's very painful but there is currently no diagnosis yet," he said. Kimmich won't be an option for Saturday's "Klassiker" at Dortmund because he's suspended after a red card last week. Forward Serge Gnabry has been out since September, first with a broken arm, then with illness - but played half an hour off the bench Wednesday - while midfielder Leon Goretzka is recovering from hand surgery. Manuel Neuer played the full game in Bayern's goal in his second appearance after more than 10 months out with a broken leg.

Ahead of the game, there had been concerns over the state of the field. Saarbruecken's last home game Sunday had been stopped at halftime because the surface was waterlogged, sparking an intensive effort to drain it in time for



Bayern has now lost in the second round of the German Cup for three of the last four seasons. It's another cup sensation for Saarbruecken, which reached the semifinals in 2019-20 from the regional fourth tier.

League leader Bayer Leverkusen needed a late flurry of goals to make it into the third round. Coach Xabi Alonso made eight changes to his team in a 5-2 win over third-division Sandhausen,

but had to bring key players like Granit Xhaka and Florian Wirtz on from the bench in pursuit of the win.

The game was heading for extra time with the score at 2-2 before Adam Hlozek headed Leverkusen back into the lead in the 85th minute. Two goals from Amine Adli then made sure of the

"It's about progressing and that's what we did today," Leverkusen midfielder

Robert Andrich said. "In two weeks, no one will ask how we did it. It was a tough game.

A goal from Marco Reus gave Dortmund a 1-0 win over fellow top-tier team Hoffenheim, which had defender Ozan Kabak sent off in stoppage time for a second yellow card. American midfielder Gio Reyna started and played 70 minutes for Dortmund for his longest appearance for the club since March. Reyna returned to action last month after a long stretch out after fracturing his leg while playing for the United States against Canada in the CONCACAF

Nations League final in June. Eintracht Frankfurt beat Viktoria Cologne 2-0. Freiburg, a German Cup semifinalist last season, was upset 3-1 by second-division Paderborn as Filip Bilbija scored twice. Second-division Hertha Berlin won 3-0 against top-tier Mainz whose winless run in all competitions stretched to 10 games. Along with Bayern's defeat, those upsets mean just six teams from the top division will play in the round of 16.

Newcastle ends Man United's defense of League Cup with 3-0 win in latest blow for Ten Hag

AP MANCHESTER

Manchester United's season descended deeper into crisis on Wednesday after a 3-0 home loss against Newcastle ended its defense of the League Cup and heaped more pressure on manager Erik ten Hag. Defeat in the round-of-16 game was United's

eighth loss in all competitions this season and the latest blow for English soccer's most storied club.

'It is below the standards everyone expects from Manchester United. It is not good enough by far," Ten Hag said. "We have to put it right. I take responsibility for it. It is my team and they are not performing. I have to share it with my players, but I am responsible." It is 10 years since United was last competing for club soccer's biggest prizes when it won the Premier League title in former manager Alex Ferguson's final season. The wait to return to its former glories looks as far away now as at any point since then, with its current form pointing toward another season of disappointment.

The League Cup may not be a priority for a club of United's stature, but it provided Ten Hag's finest moment in the job when in February he led the team to the trophy by beating Newcastle at Wembley Stadium and ended its six-year wait for silverware. That is a distant memory as United's season continues to slide. United suffered a 3-0 loss at home to Manchester City in the Premier League on Sunday, and Saudi-backed Newcastle's repeat of that scoreline raises further questions for Ten Hag. The Dutch coach, who won three league

titles with Ajax, was mocked by Newcastle's fans throughout the game as they chanted that he would be fired in the morning. While there has been no suggestion Ten Hag's position is under threat, United's poor form is

of growing concern. After the game he described himself as "a fighter," adding he was confident he would overcome a troubled start to the campaign "At all my clubs I have done it and also last year here I did it as well, but at this moment we are in a bad place," he said. "I see it as a

United had offered little penetration in the first half and went behind in the 28th minute after being caught on the break. Alejandro Garnacho lost possession in Newcastle's half, which gave Tino Livramento the chance to burst forward and find the run of Almiron, who beat Andre Onana from inside the box. The lead was doubled eight minutes later, with United once again guilty of creating problems for itself.

Ten Hag made changes at halftime, notably taking off his captain Casemiro. But

Newcastle extended its lead when Willock swept a low shot past Onana. Newcastle now travels to Chelsea in the quarterfinals.

CHELSEA ADVANCES

Chelsea put its troubles in the league behind it with a 2-0 win against second division Blackburn. Defeat against Brentford over the weekend left the London club in 11th place in the standings and facing a fight to challenge for Champions League quali-fication. But manager Mauricio Pochettino moved a step closer to his first trophy in charge as goals from Benoit Badiashile and Raheem Sterling secured the win against Blackburn at Stamford Bridge

Everton is also finding joy in this competition. While it looks like being another league battle for survival for the Merseyside club, it saw off Burnley 3-0 at Goodison Park and now faces a home match against Fulham in the quarterfinals. Fulham secured its place in the last eight with a 3-1 win against second division Ipswich. KLOPP'S CUP?

Darwin Nunez scored a 70th-minute winner as Liverpool won 2-1 at Bournemouth. Jurgen Klopp's team won the competition in 2022 and is back in the hunt for more silverware after ending last season trophyless. Liverpool is the highest-ranked team left in the cup and next hosts West Ham, which beat Arsenal 3-1. **UNDERDOGS**

There will be a team from outside of the Premier League in the semifinals after third division Port Vale was drawn against second-tier Middlesbrough.



Getafe, Real score 12 goals each in wins over sixth-division clubs in Copa del Rey

AP ■ MADRID

Getafe and Real Betis both scored 12 goals against lower-division clubs in the first round of the Copa del Rey on

Wednesday.
Getafe routed sixth-tier
Tardienta 12-0, with Mason Greenwood scoring a goal in each half and Óscar Rodríguez getting a hat trick.

Betis trounced sixth-tier Hernan Cortes 12-1, with Willian José finding the net four times and Rodri Sánchez scoring a hat trick.

Girona, which shares the lead of the Spanish league with Real Madrid, had a much harder time against fourth-tier club San Roque de Lepe, winning 2-1 with a goal by Sávio deep into second-half stoppage time.

Cadiz went to a penalty shootout against fourth-tier side Badalona Futur, prevailing 4-2 after a 0-0 Fifth-place Real Sociedad need-

ed a second-half goal by Carlos Fernández to defeat sixth-tier

A total of 41 first-round matches were played throughout

Wednesday, a holiday in Spain. Sevilla beat sixth-tier Quintanar 3-0, while Athletic Bilbao overcame sixth-tier Rubi 2-1 with a pair of goals by Adu Ares. Mallorca defeated Boiro 4-0, which was the same score for Celta Vigo's win over Turegano. Rayo Vallecano routed Atletico de Lugones 6-0, with Radamel Falcao scoring twice.

The first round is played in single elimination games at the home of the lower-division teams.

Snyder leads US wrestlers to gold medal sweep at Pan American

AP SANTIAGO

Two-time Olympic medalist Kyle Snyder led the United States wrestling team to four Pan American gold medals on Wednesday, the first day of the event in Santiago. The 27year-old, one of the top athletes competing in Chile, easily won all his bouts to secure his third consecutive continental title.

The star wrestler's teammates came close to dominating just as much, and just like Snyder they are likely to secure a spot in the Paris Olympics next year and fight for medals there, too. The athlete from Maryland was Olympic champion in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and won sil-

ver in Tokyo in 2021. Snyder later said he had his mind in 2024 as soon as he won the final in Chile.

"My next thing is just take a little break and get back on the main train," Snyder told The Associated Press after his title bout. "We've got the holidays, then there's a couple of tournaments, one in January, one February. I need to get ready for the Olympic trials, April 19th and 20th. That's what I'm going to be looking forward to getting ready the most."

Snyder has been affected by injuries during the current Olympic cycle, but still won three world championship medals recently. He is currently riding the longest Olympic and World medal streak in American history; nine in a row since 2015. 'I like coming to the Pan Am

Games. It gets your mind ready to what the Olympics will be like," Snyder said. "This is a fun team. (Loved) playing card games, hanging out with them.' Later, the 24-year-old Mason Parris, a bronze medalist in this year's world championships, beat Venezuela's José Díaz 2-0 in the 125-kilogram category. Despite the tight score, the American faced little risk of losing; his opponent clearly played for a late takedown, but

"I was expecting that. He does



some of that cheap stuff," Parris said about his opponent after his win. "He got a little chippy with me, slapped me on the back of my head a few times. I am just here to compete, I am not here to fight.

When asked about being teammates with Snyder, Parris' face immediately lit up.

"I love wrestling with Kyle. We have a lot of fun, get in really good scrambles. Kyle is a great dude, love talking to him, also talk about his faith. It is great to be closer to him," Parris said. The 29-year-old Zane Richards brought the U.S. Its third gold medal in wrestling with a 10-0 victory over Venezuela's Óscar Tigreros in the 57-kilogram category. The last final of the day had 27year-old Tyler Berger topping Cuba's Franklin Marén 3-0 in the 74-kilogram category. The U.S. Team finished first in

the wrestling medal table in the past two editions of the continent's largest multi-sports event, in Toronto and in Lima. Cuba came out on top in the sport's medal table at the 2011 Pan American Games in Guadalajara.

This tournament helps. The crowd was roudy, not always cheering for us, which makes it fun too. It raises the energy, said U.S. Team coach Joe Russell. "Snyder was a great leader for this team.

KOHLI MISSES 49TH TON BY 12 RUNS BUT INDIA PILE UP 357/8 VS LANKA

rirat Kohli once again missed out on a record equalling 49th ODI hundred but Indian batters made merry on a flat deck to score a mammoth 357 for 8 against Sri Lanka in a World Cup match here on Thursday. Kohli (88 off 94 balls), who previously missed out on equalling Sachin Tendulkar's 49th ODI ton, against New Zealand in Dharamsala, enjoyed a 189run second wicket stand with his heir apparent Shubman Gill, who looked a million dollars during his run-a-ball 92. After a mini-slump, it was Shreyas Iyer (82 off 56 balls), who feasted against a mediocre bowling attack on a placid track, to get some form back before the match against South Africa at Eden Gardens, which will be played on a spici-

Starting briskly with a flurry of sixes, Iyer's innings was instrumental in taking India past 350 after they lost both Gill and Kohli in quick succession. His innings featured six sixes and three fours. Dilshan Madushanka (5/80 in 10 overs), who bowled a peach of a delivery to get skipper Rohit Sharma (4) first up, also denied all three Indian batters, what would have been deserving hundreds. He used the slower cutters and bouncers to good effect during his second and

third spells. Kohli and Gill weathered the storm adequately well to get through the initial overs and piled up a mountain of runs

to put India on top. In the sixth over, Dushmantha



Chameera almost had Kohli's wicket but could not hold on to a return catch on his follow-through which saw the ball popping out.

Beginning with a risk-free approach, Kohli and Gill stitched India's highestever partnership in this World Cup for any wicket, putting on 189 runs from just 179 balls for the second wicket as India took complete control.

Kohli looked primed to equal the leg-

endary Tendulkar's tally of most ODI centuries but met with a soft end, lobbing a straight catch to cover after a masterful 88 from 94 balls which included 11 fours. The ball stopped on him as he was committed on the drive but it hit the upper part of the blade to balloon up. Gill started slowly but produced a compelling knock that brought him close to his first century of the tournament. Gill's

first runs came off the ninth ball that he

faced, but there was no stopping the fluent batter once he pulled Madushanka with command for a four to mid-wicket and followed up with a fabulous backfoot punch on the next delivery.

Gill also looked set for his first ton of the tournament but looking to guide a bouncer from Madushanka, he was cramped for room and caught behind for a run-a-ball 92 featuring 11 fours and

Lanka players wear black armbands in memory of legendary 'Uncle' Percy

Sri Lankan cricket team wore black armbands in memory of their 'legendary cheerleader' and 'superfan' Percy Abeysekera during their World Cup match against India here on Thursday. Abeysekera passed away recently after a prolonged battle with

illness at the age of 87. 'Uncle Percy' as he was fondly known, was present at almost all the Sri Lanka matches from the 1979 World Cup, but he gained popularity after the 1996 World Cup which the country co-

Abeysekera was famous for waving a large Sri Lankan flag during the games, patting the players on their backs and even accompanying the players to and from the dressing room.

Sri Lanka players will wear black armbands during today's game vs India to pay tribute to the late Percy Abeysekera, the legendary cheerleader," said an official statement from Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC).

"Abeysekera was an integral part of the game of cricket in Sri Lanka and did play a pivotal role from beyond the boundary line to support and motivate the players. His towering legacy spans across Sri Lanka's pre- and post-Test eras, and his name will remain etched forever among cricket lovers," the statement

India captain Rohit Sharma recalled him meeting Abeysekera during the recent Asia Cup when he visited the latter's house in Colombo.

'I was lucky to get an opportunity to meet him in Sri Lanka during the Asia Cup and he's been such a great fan of cricket. Of course, (of the) Sri Lankan team but he's probably the first ever fan that I met, who was so genuine and the support from his side towards his team, towards the players was fantastic to see," Rohit said.

Rohit recalled his first-ever trip to Sri Lanka during the 2006 U-19 World Cup but said that he could notice 'Uncle Percy' only during a tour two years later

with the Indian senior side. 'When I first went to Sri Lanka in 2006, actually for (the) U19 World Cup, he was there, but I was a little boy, I had no idea about how things work outside (the) cricket field. I was not too

much into that," he said. 'But when I went with the Indian team for the first time in 2008, I saw him for the first time,

and I saw how passionate he

"I got lucky as well to meet his family, his son, his grandson...Their family is very sweet, I went with (a) few of my team members as well," Rohit recalled. "It's a sad loss to the cricketing fraternity because in my eyes, he was the number one supporter of cricket at that point in time. Obviously, there have been so many fans now, but the first-ever fan, cricket fan I saw, was him. It's a sad moment for all of us,"

the Indian skipper added.



Spinners make Afghanistan favourites against Holland on tacky Ekana surface

They have outlived tags like T'minnows' and 'giant-killers' with their lion-hearted performances but spirited Afghanistan's quest to reach the next level starts in earnest against an equally inspirational Netherlands in a World Cup match between the two teams here on Friday.

Starting as favourites on a tricky Ekana Stadium surface, with a quality spin attack at its disposal, Afghanistan (6 points) will not only look to secure two points against the Dutch (4 points) but also aim to win big and improve the net run-rate in its bid to remain relevant in the race to semi-final.

The manner in which Afghanistan's top-order batted to outclass sides like Pakistan and Sri Lanka, it showed that the victory against defending champions England wasn't a mere flash in the pan. Ashes-winning English batter Jonathon Trott was a gritty customer during his playing days and he has instilled the same doggedness in his wards too, as they have made the heads with their methodical approach and

praiseworthy resilience. Just like Kenya, with a bit of luck, made it to the semi-finals of the 2003 World Cup, Afghans will hope that the rub of the green goes their way, beginning with the Dutch test.

After this game, they take on Australia (November 7) and South Africa (November 10) in what would determine whether they have it in them to go to the next level — the World Cup semifinals. One defeat and it all comes crashing down.

The 'Orange Army', too have been a surprise package of this World Cup, securing upset wins over South Africa and Bangladesh. It has put them ahead of Bangladesh and bottom-rung England in the 10-team standings to keep a slender semifinal qualification hopes alive

although even their biggest supporters know that it would be make it to final four.

On six points each, Pakistan and Afghanistan are two other teams outside top-four who are very much in the mix of a last-four berth. But Afghanistan with a much-inferior net run-rate (-0.718) compared to Pakistan (-0.024) would mean that the Hashmatullah Shahidi-led side have a lot of catching up to do. The bowling has always been their strength but their biggest turnaround this time has been their batting which has clicked as a collective unit, something that came to fore in their clinical chases of 283 (vs Pakistan) and 242 (Sri Lanka) in their last two outings.

While skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi (226) and Azmatullah Omarzai (203) have the rock in the middle, the likes of Rahmanullah Gurbaz (224), Rahmat Shah (212), Ibrahim Zardan (212) and Ikram Akhil (77 in 2 games) have also shouldered a lot of responsibility.

Teams batting second have won nine of 12 ODI matches played at the Ekana, including two in the World Cup The Edwards-led Netherlands bowled out Bangladesh for a lowly 142 to secure yet another upset in the World Cup during their last match at Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

With two fifties to his name, the skipper Edwards will remain their batting mainstay alongside veteran Sybrand Engelbrecht, Colin Ackermann and Logan van Beek the designated finisher of the team. Van Beek's cameo of 23 not out from 16 balls took their total past 200-mark, something that proved handy against the struggling Bangladesh in

Kolkata. Van Beek is also known to be giving breakthroughs in the middle as he would look to dent Afghan's progress with his clever

Having aced the conditions in the World Cup, the marauding South Africa are not intimidated by the next challenge of facing a formidable India, feels Proteas batter Rassie van der Dussen.

South Africa crushed New Zealand by 190 runs on Wednesday to grab the top spot in the standings with a four-match winning streak.

The Proteas will next face India,

the only team unbeaten team in the tournament, in a top-of-the table clash in Kolkata on Sunday, and the batter said they're ready for the challenge. Obviously, playing India in India is a massive event. They've been playing really well. A lot of experience in their team. They've got all bases covered, brilliant bowling attack and obviously the batting as well," said Van der Dussen during the post-match press conference

here before: Rassie van

We've beaten India



we'll be in a really strong position. "The challenge is to under pressure, to stay with that, and that's what we'll look to do. But we've played them here before and we've beaten them here before.

"But again, we'll go into that it's a World Cup, it's not really game knowing that if we do the too much different. We won't be

looking at that too much." South Africa are yet to land a major trophy despite being close on multiple occasions but they have looked in peak form this ODI World Cup, having scored three of the six highest scores in

this edition. in this campaign is we're really just focusing on what we want

it," said van der Dussen, who smashed 133 off 118 balls against New Zealand for his second ton this World Cup.

"In our match review meetings, we keep looking at the numbers with the coaches and so far in this tournament, by most metrics, we're stacking up pretty

"So, at the end of the day, it's almost irrelevant who's in front of you. We know if we play the way we want to play and execute how we want to and take the correct options, especially under pressure, then the result is a yproduct of that.

Their formidable batting unit has been the strength for South Africa, who had the fewest dot aries by any team in this show-

Fit-again Ferguson set for a comeback vs Pakistan and James Neesham also suf-

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Zealand pacer Lockie Ferguson, who missed the match against South Africa due to an injury, is now fit and will be "available" for their key World Cup clash against Pakistan on Saturday.

against Australia last Saturday after experiencing a niggle in his right Achilles and was ruled out of their match against South Africa. Chasing 358, the last edition's runners-up capitulated by 190 runs, marking their third defeat in a row after four consecutive wins. "Lockie Ferguson's scan on his

right Achilles revealed no significant damage and it's hoped he'll be available for Saturday's game against Pakistan in Bengaluru," New Zealand cricket said in a statement.

The Black Caps are grappling with a series of injuries, leaving them in a tricky position as the World Cup enters the business

end. As many as five players, including regular skipper Kane Williamson (thumb), are battliamson injuries. While Ferguson and Mark Chapman (calf) were already nursing injuries, Matt Henry

with the former hurting is ham-"Matt Henry will undergo an MRI scan in the next 24 hours

fered injuries on Wednesday

to ascertain the extent of the injury to his right hamstring," NZC said.

experiencing tightness during his sixth over and did not return. "An update on Matt Henry's scan will be provided once the results have been received and assessed."

X-RAY CLEARS NEESHAM OF ANY BROKEN BONES Giving an update on Neesham,

NZC said: "Jimmy Neesham is nursing a bruised right wrist after he was struck by the ball while bowling in the first innings.

The injury saw Neesham slide down the batting order to number nine, but an X-ray has cleared him of any broken bones." The board also said Chapman and Williamson "will be assessed again in Bengaluru ahead of Saturday's penultimate round-robin match

New Zealand will arrive in Bengaluru from Pune on Thursday afternoon.

Jamieson called in as cover as Henry awaits scan results a tricky situation towards the

Ravaged by a spate of injuries, New Zealand on Thursday included towering fast bowler Kyle Jamieson in their World Cup squad with a cloud of doubt hovering over pacer Matt Henry's availability for a key clash against Pakistan.

The 28-year-old six feet eight inches tall pacer will arrive in Bengaluru late on Thursday ahead of Saturday's game against Pakistan New Zealand have been left in

business end of the tournament with as many as five of their players, including two pacers, battling injuries.

While regular skipper Kane Williamson (thumb), Lockie Ferguson (achilles) and Mark Chapman (calf) were already nursing injuries, Henry and James Neesham joined the list on Wednesday with the former hurting his hamstring.

With Henry awaiting scan results on his right hamstring, New Zealand were forced to fly in Jamieson, who was previously with the squad as cover for Tim Southee.

"The severity of Matt's injury, combined with a short turnaround to Pakistan, meant we couldn't risk being a bowler down for Saturday," Head coach Gary Stead said in a statement. "Matt's been a world class performer for us in ODI cricket for the past two World Cup cycles so we've got our fingers crossed for the scan results later today." Stead said Jamieson was wellprepared to return to India.

"Kyle's on his way over as we speak and we look forward to welcoming him back into the group. He'll likely train with us on Friday with a mind to being available for Saturday's game. "Kyle was able to train for two full weeks with us earlier in the tournament and has since played a Plunket Shield match - so we're confident he'll be able to hit the ground running." New Zealand

have slumped to three successive

losses following four wins, leav-

ing them with 8 points in the

that we couldn't have restricted them to a total that could have been a lot easier to chase on

We're two wins away from making semifinal: Phillips

points table.

An injury-ravaged New Zealand have slumped to their third successive defeat in the World Cup but allrounder Glenn Phillips believes they're two wins away from clinching a semifinal berth.

New Zealand, who are currently on eight points, suffered a massive 190-run loss against South Africa here on Wednesday. "It's just two wins away, and that hopefully puts us in third or fourth place, potentially even second, Phillips, who scored a 50-ball 60, said during the post-

match press conference. "So, I think if we can just keep sticking to our basics, what we do best on the field, everything

will be all right." The Black Caps next face Pakistan (November 4) and Sri Lanka (November 9) in their remaining two matches.

Pakistan kept the door to the semifinal slightly ajar following a seven-wicket win over Bangladesh the other day.

"We try to remain level-headed throughout everything, not ride the highs too high and the lows too low. So, I think for us, it's go about our business as we've done the whole way through, just keeping things simple, sticking to what we do best.

"Obviously, the way England, Australia, South Africa, they all play a very aggressive brand of cricket and we've got our own brand and if we stick to it, we



know that we're fighters, we keep coming back time and time again and when it matters most, we really put the foot down." New Zealand's decision to field first backfired as Quinton de Kock (114) and Rassie van der Dussen (133) made them pay by slamming hundreds, powering South Africa to 357 for 4. In reply, New Zealand folded for 167 in 35.3 overs.

"South Africa are incredibly strong batting first but we've got an incredibly good bowling lineup and there was no reason

there," Phillips said.

"Playing on at the end, I definitely thought it got better as well. So, I think had things gone slightly differently, we could definitely have come a lot closer than we did today."

Phillips also rued the missed chances. "I mean at the end of the day a

couple of tough chances were dropped, a missed run out when his back was turned to the bowler's end. You have no idea where Quinton's actually standing," he said.

"Obviously, he had a little bit more time than he thought, but at the end of the day, it's not like we've been dropping straightforward chances or creating a lot of blunders in the field.

'We've definitely put a lot of pressure on the opposition in the field and we've saved a lot of runs and obviously sometimes people drop catches and that's just the way things go." New Zealand are grappling with

a series of injuries, leaving them in a tricky position as the World Cup enters the business end. Five players, including regular skipper Kane Williamson (thumb), are battling injuries. While Ferguson and Mark Chapman (calf) were already nursing injuries, Matt Henry and James Neesham also suffered injuries on Wednesday with the former hurting his hamstring.

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