

**OPINION 6**  
LOOKING AFTER  
STREET DOGS

**WORLD 9**  
PAKISTAN ELECTIONS TO BE  
HELD ON FEBRUARY 8

**MONEY 10**  
INDIA'S COAL PRODUCTION RISES  
19 PER CENT IN OCTOBER

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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3 LIONS LOOK  
TO ROAR AGAINST  
KANGAROOS  
12 SPORT



## BREATHLESS IN DELHI

### NCR reports worst pollution in decades

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time this season, the air quality reached the "hazardous" category in several areas of Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) on Friday morning. The average Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi was 475, surpassing its peak levels from last year (450) and 2022 (471). At this stage, all emergency measures, including a ban on polluting trucks, commercial four wheelers, and all types of construction, are mandated to be initiated and enforced in Delhi and NCR.

However, the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) has deferred the implementation of stricter measures under the final stage of the air pollution control plan. The commission cited the reason that the restrictions under Stage III were only implemented a day ago. It asserted that it will monitor the situation for a day or two. The CAQM on Thursday had invoked Stage III of the pollution control plan, ordering an immediate ban on non-essential construction work, stone crushing and mining in the region.

Given the gravity of the problem, Lt Governor VK Saxena, who held a high-level meeting with Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai, said the situation in the city is "extreme-



Commuters don masks as the air pollution level in Delhi soared to an unprecedented level on Friday  
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

ly worrying" and appealed to the people to remain indoors as far as possible, avoid unnecessary travel and if necessary, to use public transport.

The LG has directed the environment department to issue advisories for children and elderly people to take extra care and remain indoors as far as possible.

In a series of posts on X, Saxena urged people to stay indoors and advised against exposing themselves, especially children and the elderly, to the hazardous ambient conditions.

The LG has also cancelled his public engagements at Yogmaya Mandir and Urs of Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya.

active in addressing the air pollution problem. He emphasised that it is not just the national Capital, but the entire north India that is breathing polluted air.

The BJP held the city government responsible for turning Delhi into a gas chamber. The BJP has accused Kejriwal of indulging in "political tourism" at a time when the Delhiites are facing severe air pollution.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is almost close to 500 in many areas of Delhi: Punjabi Bagh 499, Major Dhyanchand Stadium 498, Sonia Vihar 493, Pusa 498, Rohini 495, Mundka 498, Bawana 496, Punjabi Bagh 493, Wazirpur 491, Jahangirpuri 497, Wazirpur 498, Burari Crossing 477, Ashok Vihar 447, ITO 447, Alipur 442, Vivek Vihar 460, RK Puram 488, Shadipur 448, Nehru Nagar, 461 and North Campus 477.

The rapid deterioration in air quality, coupled with dense fog, reduced visibility to 600 metres at Safdarjung and 500 metres at Palam.

The air crisis is not confined to Delhi alone; several cities in neighbouring Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh have also reported hazardous air quality.

These cities include Hanumangarh (401), Bhiwadi (379), and Sri Ganganagar (390) in Rajasthan; Hisar (454), Fatehabad (410), Jind (456),

Rohtak (427), Ballabgarh (390), Bahadurgarh (377), Sonapat (458), Kurukshetra (333), Karnal (345), Kaithal (369), Bhiwani (365), Faridabad (448), and Gurugram (366) in Haryana; and Ghaziabad (414), Baghpat (425), Meerut (375), Noida (436), and Greater Noida (478) in Uttar Pradesh. The hazardous pollution levels compelled many to forgo their morning walks, sports and other outdoor activities. Parents are worried lot as health experts say children breathe faster, taking in more pollutants.

As a dense and pungent haze lingers over Delhi-NCR for the fourth consecutive day, the concentration of PM2.5, fine particulate matter capable of penetrating deep into the respiratory system and triggering health problems, exceeded the safe limit of 60 micrograms per cubic metre by seven to eight times at several locations.

The CAQM has also imposed restrictions on the plying of BS III petrol and BS IV diesel four wheelers in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar.

On its part, the Delhi Government has announced the closure of all primary schools for two days in an effort to safeguard young children from health-threatening pollution.

**See P4: Air pollution threat to kids academic life**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses at the inauguration of the World Food India 2023 event at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Friday. India's sunrise food processing sector has attracted ₹50,000 crore FDI in the last nine years, Prime Minister Modi said, as he stressed on reducing post-harvest losses and food wastage. He also said India's food processing capacity has witnessed significant growth in the last nine years leading to 150 per cent growth in exports of processed food. The capacity of the food processing sector too has increased from a meagre 12 lakh tonne to over 200 lakh tonne. More than 80 countries, 200 speakers and 12 partner ministries, departments and commodity boards are scheduled to take part in the second edition of World Food India

## Afghanistan casts a spell



Afghanistan's batters Hashmatullah Shahidi and Azmatullah Omarzai celebrate after winning the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 match against Netherlands at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Friday

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Captain Hashmatullah Shahidi and Rahmat Shah made well-compiled fifties and veteran Mohammad Nabi produced a stifling spell as Afghanistan continued their dream run in the World Cup, registering a smooth seven-wicket victory over Netherlands to keep their semi-finals hopes alive here on Friday. In the battle between two giant-killers of this showpiece, Afghanistan rode on their spinners and brilliant fielding to restrict the Dutch to 179 all out and then chased down the target in 31.3 overs. The win, their fourth in seven games, swelled Afghanistan's tally to eight points and also lifted them to the fifth spot ahead of Pakistan. The Afghans, who defeated defending champions England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in this tournament, however, have two tough matches left against Australia and South Africa and their fate relies on the

results of them. Netherlands, who surprised the world with wins over South Africa and Bangladesh, are all but out of the tournament with two games left. They have four points.

The chase was a cakewalk for Afghanistan despite losing both their openers, Rahmanullah Gurbaz (10) and Ibrahim Zadran (20), inside the 11th over for 55.

Rahmat's (52 off 54 balls) sparkling form continued as he hit his third consecutive fifty and with skipper Shahidi (56 not out off 64 balls) shared 74 runs for the third wicket to set the base for Afghanistan's comfortable win.

Rahmat finally departed when the team was on 129, handing a simple return catch to Saqib Zulfiqar while trying to go over his head. He struck nine delightful boundaries during his knock.

Shahidi, who is also in red hot form, made yet another half-century to lead his side from the front. Along with Azmatullah

Omarzai (31 not out), Shahidi stitched 52 runs for the unbroken fifth wicket stand to ensure a comfortable win for his side. Zulfiqar (1/25), Roelof van der Merwe (1/27) and Logan van Beek (1/30) picked up a wicket each for the Dutch.

Earlier, Sybrand Engelbrecht struck a gritty half-century but failed to push the Netherlands to a competitive total.

Engelbrecht (58 off 86 balls) anchored Netherlands' innings after they suffered a mid-innings collapse. This was after Max O'Dowd (42) and Colin Ackermann (29) shared an attacking 70-run alliance off 64 balls for the second wicket after they elected to bat.

Netherlands lost Wesley Barresi, who replaced Vikramjit Singh, in the fifth ball of the innings, with Mujeeb Ur Rahman trapping him plumb in front of the wicket. O'Dowd and Ackermann then steadied the Dutch ship before they suffered a dramatic middle-order collapse.

Three run outs jolted Netherlands' surge as from 73

for 1 they slumped to 92 for 5 inside 20 overs.

Poor judgement while running between the wickets and some brilliant fielding from Afghans derailed the Dutchmen.

A set O'Dowd fell victim to an unnecessary run out, caught inches short of the crease by Omarzai's direct hit from the deep while searching for a double. O'Dowd struck nine boundaries.

A few overs later, Ackermann too got run out at the keeper's end while going for a non-existent single.

Netherlands' slide continued as wickets fell like ninepins with wicket-keeper Ikram Alikhil involved in four dismissals. Bas de Leede edged one to Alikhil off off-spinner Nabi and a few overs later the Afghan pounced on another nick off Noor Ahmad to send Zulfiqar back into the dressing room.

Alikhil then effected a stumping off Nabi to dismiss Logan van Beek. A wearing Lucknow pitch too favoured the Afghan spinners.

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# Patil sets Dec 24 deadline for resolving Maratha quota

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after he called off his nine-long hunger agitation over the Maratha reservations, Shivba Sanghatana President Manoj Jarange-Patil said on Friday that he had set a deadline of December 24, 2023 for the Maharashtra Government to come out with a concrete solution to the vexed Maratha reservation issue. Jarange-Patil called off his fast on Thursday evening after a Maharashtra government delegation comprising judges, ministers and bureaucrats met him at the Antarwali Sarathi village in the Ambad tehsil in Jalna district where he was fasting and requested him to end the agitation. The doctors attending on Jarange-Patil at the Aurangabad hospital said that he would



have to be at the hospital for the next five to six days. Meanwhile, his family members - wife, daughter and sister - went to the Shri Tulaja Bhavani Temple at Tuljapur in the Dharashiv district and offered prayers to the presiding deity for his well-being and for the fulfilment of the demand of the Maratha community. On a day when the

December 24 the state government for issuance of Kumbhi caste certificates to Marathas so that they can avail benefits under the OBC category... We would like the state government to resolve the issue in a time-bound manner. Since the government delegation that met me yesterday was demanding two months' time, but I have given the state government a deadline of December 24," Jarange-Patil said. In a related development, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde thanked Justice M G Gaikwad (Retd), Justice Sunil Shukre (Retd), Advocate Himanshu Sachdev, and others were part of the delegation that met Jarange-Patil on Thursday and convinced him to call off his hunger agitation. Shinde also thanked Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar and

# Cong embarrasses Shinde by posting his photo with rave party accused

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



In what came as a major embarrassment for Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, the Maharashtra Congress on Friday put out in social media a photograph showing him along with YouTuber Elvish Yadav - who has been booked by the Noida police for the alleged use of snake venom at rave parties - at the recent Ganapati puja held at his official residence "Varsha" in south Mumbai. In a post put out along with a photograph showing Shinde with Elvish Yadav on social media platform "X", leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly Vijay Wadettiwar said: "The presence of drug addicts like Elvish Yadav at the Chief Minister's bungalow... Hospitality by the Chief Minister by giving a shawl and coconut! On the occasion of Ganapati Puja, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde invited Elvish

government in Maharashtra," the leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly said. The Maharashtra Congress reposted Wadettiwar's message and photograph on X. Slamming the Shinde government over the presence of Elvish at a Ganapati puja held at the chief minister's official residence, MPCC chief spokesperson and general secretary Atul Londhe asked: "Has the residence of Maharashtra's Chief Minister become a tourist spot for criminals?" "In the current Eknath Shinde's regime, a YouTuber called Elvish Yadav who organises rave parties using venomous snakes was a special invitee at Varsha for Ganapati aarti," Londhe said. "Now, the Noida police has registered a case against the same Elvish Yadav and his associates for organising the rave party. Live venomous snakes too have been found with them," the Congress spokesperson said.

# Strong quake jolts Nepal, tremors felt in north India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A strong earthquake of magnitude 6.4 jolted Nepal on Friday night with tremors reverberating through parts of north India, including Delhi NCR, the National Centre for Seismology said. The epicentre of the quake was in Nepal at a depth of 10 km, the NCS said. People in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) felt strong tremors and rushed out of their homes. This is the third time in a month that strong quakes have struck Nepal.

# Armless archer Devi sets her eyes on 2024 Paralympics

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ SHRINE BOARD SPORTS COMPLEX, KATRA

After winning three medals for India (two Gold and one Silver) at the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, Sheetal Devi, a sixteen-year-old armless archer hailing from Loidhar village of Kishtwar district in Jammu province has now set her eyes on the 2024 Paralympics in Paris. Several other tournaments are lined up in the coming months. Sheetal is scheduled to participate in the upcoming Asian Para

Archery Championship in Bangkok from November 15. Without taking any break, Sheetal on Friday arrived at her 'Karaboomi' in Katra and started training in the company of fellow archers at the Archery range of the Shrine Board Sports complex. In the last couple of days, Sheetal Devi attended a series of felicitation ceremonies including a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. On Friday this correspondent met her during her maiden practice session in Katra.



In her opening remarks, Sheetal Devi said, when I recently met

Prime Minister Narendra Modi I felt elated. He showered his blessings and motivated us to do our best in the upcoming championships. She said, "I have set my eyes on the Paralympics and all other major tournaments." "I am determined to win more medals for my country and I will do all the hard work to realize my dream." When asked whether she would be visiting her home in her native Kishtwar district, She said, "I will be returning home only next year. I have to attend my training sessions. I speak to my parents

twice a day and stay in touch over the mobile phone." I feel happy for my parents as they are basking in the glory of my recent achievement. Each day a large number of people, including senior bureaucrats and police officers, visit her home to congratulate her parents. Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Devansh Yadav said. Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar assured Sheetal's family of support from the district administration.

Narrating her experience of attending the medal ceremony during the para Asian games, Sheetal said, When I won the gold medal the Indian National Anthem was played and the tricolor soared high over the Chinese skyline. I felt very happy. The SMVDSB Para-archers secured five medals out of seven medals won by Team India in archery events which included two gold and three silver in various archery events at the Paralympics.

# ED: Probe suggests Mahadev App promoters gave ₹508 cr to Baghel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Friday claimed that a forensic analysis and a statement made by a 'cash courier' have led to 'startling allegations' that Mahadev betting app promoters have paid about Rs 508 crore to Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel so far, and that

"these are subject matter of investigation." The alleged agent, Asim Das, has been arrested by the app promoters from the UAE "especially, to deliver large amount of cash for electioneering expenses of the ruling Congress Party". "Asim Das has admitted that the seized funds were arranged by the Mahadev app promoters to be delivered to one politician 'Baghel' for upcoming

election expenses in state of Chhattisgarh," the agency alleged in a statement. "From the questioning of Das and from forensic examination of the phone recovered from him apart from examination of an email sent by Shubam Soni (one of the high ranking accused of Mahadev network) many startling allegations have come forth, namely, that regular payments have been made in the past and so far around Rs 508 crore have been paid by Mahadev app promoters to Bhupesh Baghel, Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh," it said.

be held on November 7 and November 17. The cash was seized from an SUV parked in Hotel Triton and a location at Bhilai in Durg district of the state. Baghel has alleged in the past that central agencies like the ED were working at the behest of the BJP-led central government to target the opposition parties and their leaders. The agency said it has also "discovered" some benami bank accounts of Mahadev app in which Rs 15.59 crore are kept and they have been frozen under the provisions of the PMLA.

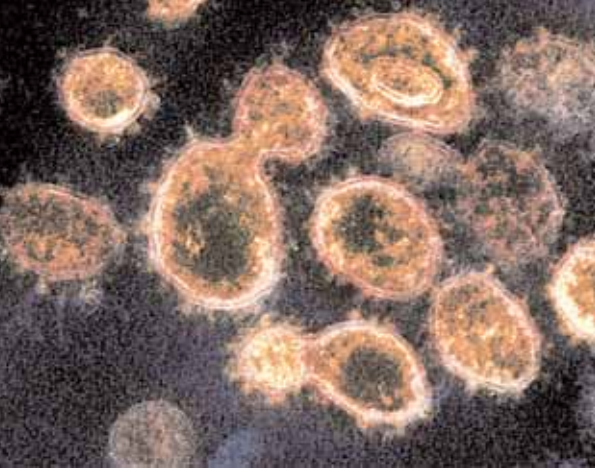
# NIA makes 15th arrest in ISIS inspired blast case in Coimbatore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

One more accused was arrested in connection with the ISIS-inspired car bomb blast in Coimbatore last year, taking the number of those nabbed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the case to 15, officials said on Friday. Suicide bomber Jamesha Mubeen was killed when his vehicle laden with improvised explosive device (IED) exploded prematurely in front of the ancient Arulmigu Kottai Sangameswarar Thirukovil temple at Eswaran Kovil Street, Ukkadam in Coimbatore on October 23 last year.

# 'Deaths due to zoonotic infections expected to rise'

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI



Zoonotic diseases threaten large with a new British Medical Journal (BMJ) Global Health study sounding alarm that human to animal bugs causing deadly infections are likely to kill 12 times as many people as they did in 2020. "If these annual rates of increase continue, we would expect the analysed pathogens to cause four times the number of spillover events and 12 times the number of deaths in 2050 than in 2020," the authors said. Climate and land use changes are predicted to drive the frequency of spillover events, facilitated by population density and connectivity, the researchers explained even as they added that the implications of these findings for future global health are difficult to characterise, given the limited historical data on the annual frequency and severity of zoonotic spillover over time.

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2. JALALABAD URFI CHINGRAWLI, TEHSIL KHURJA, DISTRICT BULANDSHAHUR, U.P. AND DETAILS OF THE PLOT ARE - Khatra no. 95, Gata Sankhya: 886, Khatra no. 94, Gata Sankhya 892, Having area of 0.3372 Hectare, Mr. Sushel Kumar Singh, S/o Mr. Dharmendra Singh, R/o -D.V. Singh Nagar Building/Arc, Typo IV, Police Colony, Sector Mandir Marg, New Delhi -110001 and Mr. Gaurav Dua, S/o Rakesh Dua, R/o House No. 1-3380 Palam Vihar 63, Surpura, Haryana And.

3. JAHANGIRPUR, TEHSIL - JEWAR, DISTRICT - GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, U.P. AND DETAILS OF THE PLOT ARE-Khatra no. 423 Gata No. 13999 and 1345 Having area of 0.3460 Hectare, Mr. Sudhir Yadav, S/o Mr. Satya Pal Yadav, R/o C-3/257 FF, Janakpuri B-15-0, West Delhi, Delhi

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## SALE NOTICE

The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs RITIKA PRINTER TRADERS, CS SCJ 374/2018	Vehicle No. DL7CN1350, Make and Model- TATA INDIGO MANZA, Manu Year- 2011
ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs Romit Manchanda, RC NO. 321/2019, IN OA/996/2017	Vehicle No- UP14DT0022, Make & Model- MITSUBISHI PAJERO 2.8 GL, Manu. Year- 2012
ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs Sandeep Kumar, RC NO. 90/2019, IN OA/43/2017	Vehicle No- UP16BE5195, Make & Model- RENAULT Fluence Manu. Year- 2015
ICICI Bank Vs Sanjay Kumar, CS (COMM) 2884/19	Vehicle No. UP14HT5870, Make & Model- Ashok Leyland Partner, Manu Year- 2019

Auction Date: November 15, 2023 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Place of Auction: Godara Yard, Khatwa No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chowk, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec- 17, Sukhrail, Gurugram -122022

Contact Person- Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)

Terms of Sale The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself/ themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at auction site with original KYC documents to participate in the auction. Successfully bidder shall have to deposit sale amount within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd., Shel Town Plot no. 23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicles.

It has earlier said that the alleged illegal funds generated by the app were shared as bribes to politicians and bureaucrats in the state even as it has summoned many celebrities and Bollywood actors for questioning on the mode of payment and their links with the online betting platform. The ED said it intercepted Das on Thursday on the basis of an intelligence input that a large amount of cash is being moved in Chhattisgarh by the promoters of Mahadev app for the assembly elections scheduled to

be held on November 7 and November 17. The cash was seized from an SUV parked in Hotel Triton and a location at Bhilai in Durg district of the state. Baghel has alleged in the past that central agencies like the ED were working at the behest of the BJP-led central government to target the opposition parties and their leaders. The agency said it has also "discovered" some benami bank accounts of Mahadev app in which Rs 15.59 crore are kept and they have been frozen under the provisions of the PMLA. A police constable, Bheem Yadav, has also been arrested during this seizure, it said. Yadav, the ED claimed, unauthorisedly travelled to Dubai over the last three years and admittedly met Mahadev app promoters Ravi Uppal and Sourabh Chandrakar, participated in the gala functions of Mahadev app. His travel expenses were borne by Rapid Travels of Ahuja Brothers - a money laundering and ticketing company of Mahadev app, the ED claimed. "He was the conduit to receive bribe money from Mahadev app promoters for the benefit of senior officers and politicians of Chhattisgarh," the agency said.

# Three-day RSS meet in Gujarat to discuss Ram Temple inauguration

PTI ■ BHUJ

The inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the programmes associated with it across the country will be discussed during the meeting of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to be held in Bhuj in Gujarat from November 5 to 7, a senior functionary of the outfit said on Friday. The idol consecration of the Ram Temple is slated to take place on January 22 next year. "The annual All India Executive Board meeting of RSS is being held here from November 5 to 7. The Shri Ram Temple consecration ceremony being held in Ayodhya on January 22 and the proposed programmes related to it across the country will be discussed in the three day meeting." All India publicity head of RSS Sunil Ambekar told reporters here. "Programmes to celebrate the occasion will be held in different temples in every city and



village across the country. How the Sangh will participate in this important work will be discussed in this meeting. Information will be given to all the volunteers and a call to society will be made after this meeting," he added. Addressing a press conference, Ambekar said along with the review of the organizational work of the Sangh, the topics taken up in the All India Coordination Meeting held in

Pune in September and issues raised by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat in his recent Vijayadashami address will also be discussed. A new curriculum will be given in the upcoming 'Sangh Shiksha' class in 2024, he said, adding that apart from Bhagwat, top leaders like Dattatraya Hosabale, Dr Krishnagopal, Dr Manmohan Vaidya and heads of affiliate outfits like the VHP, BJP, ABVP, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh will take part. "A total of 381 workers have come from across the country. The entire country is represented in the executive board meeting. The expansion of the RSS will also be thoroughly discussed in view of its 100th foundation year in 2025," he said. Targets set in connection with this expansion of the branch network will be reviewed during the three-day meeting, he added.

able to label the four groups of viruses identified in the studies have been increasing in numbers by almost five and nine per cent, respectively, every year between 1963 and 2019, their analysis found. "If these annual rates of increase continue, we would expect the analysed pathogens to cause four times the number of spillover events and 12 times the number of deaths in 2050 than in 2020," the authors said. Climate and land use changes are predicted to drive the frequency of spillover events, facilitated by population density and connectivity, the researchers explained even as they added that the implications of these findings for future global health are difficult to characterise, given the limited historical data on the annual frequency and severity of zoonotic spillover over time. Thus, to understand the implications, the researchers drew on their own epidemiological database, built on data from a wide range of official sources, to look for trends in spillover events that might shed light on future expected patterns. Their database covered epidemics reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), outbreaks caused by a viral pathogen that killed 50 or more people and historically significant outbreaks, such as the 1918 and 1957 flu pandemics. Looking at over 3150 outbreaks and epidemics between 1963 and 2019, the team identified a total of 75 spillover events occurring in 24 countries. These events had caused a total of 17,232 deaths, more than 90 per cent of which (15,771) across 40 outbreaks - mostly in Africa - were caused by Filoviruses, the researchers found.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIED

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, Palak Sapra D/o Ranju Rani R/o C- 408 sector -22 Noida District -Gautam Budh Nagar U.P. Have Changed my name Palak To Palak Sapra Future for all purposes. My Guardian name is Parveen Sapra S/o Late Dharamchand Sapra. PD(188)A

I, Saatvick Virmani S/o Sumeet Virmani R/o : 59/2, First Floor, New Rohtak Road, Near Liberty Cinema, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, I have changed my name Saatvick Virmani to Saatvick Virmani for all purpose in future. PD(189)A

I Have Changed My Old Names Sangada Ankit Ramesh, Ankit, Ankit Ramesh bhai Sangada, To New Name Ankit Sangada Add: H-404, Amrapali sapphire, Sector-45, Noida, G.B. Nagar, U.P. 201303. PD(190)C

I Have Changed My Old Names Rudra, Rudra Ramesh Bhai Sangada To New Name Rudra Sangada Add: H-404, Amrapali sapphire, Sector-45, Noida, G.B. Nagar, U.P. 201303. PD(191)C

I Have Changed My Old Names Anjana, Anjana ben, Anjana ben Ramesh Bhai Sangada, Lachhun Anjana ben Bhathu Bhai, Sangada Anjana ben, Anjana Sangada To New Name Sangada Anjana ben Ramesh Bhai Add: Add: H-404, Amrapali sapphire, Sector-45, Noida, G.B. Nagar, U.P. 201303. PD(192)C

I Have Changed My Old Names R.S.Sangada, Ramesh Bhai Surtan Bhai Sangada, Sangada Ramesh Bhai S. Ramesh S. Sangada, Ramesh, Ramesh Sangada To New Name Sangada Ramesh Bhai Surtan Bhai Add: Add: H-404, Amrapali sapphire, Sector-45, Noida, G.B. Nagar, U.P. 201303. PD(193)C



# Delhi chokes amid blame game over pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As Delhi's air pollution touched hazardous category, a political slugfest erupted between the AAP and the BJP as the former hit out at the Central government over the rising air pollution advising the Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav to become active while the latter held the Arvind Kejriwal government responsible for turning the national capital into a gas chamber. Criticising the AAP government, the BJP said this Kejriwal government is visionless, idealless and master in spreading lies. Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai called upon his Union counterpart Bhupendra Yadav on Friday to become

"active" in addressing the air pollution problem, emphasising that it's not just the national capital but the entire North India that is breathing polluted air. Addressing a press conference, Rai said the BJP is blaming Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the air pollution problem in Delhi, but he is not responsible for the poor air quality in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. Rai appealed to the Union Environment Minister to become "active", saying, "It doesn't seem like there's a Union Environment Ministry in Delhi."

Citing a study by the independent think tank Centre for Science and Environment, he said 69 per cent of the air pollution in Delhi comes from neighbouring states. "While

we (Delhi) are taking all possible steps to address the problem, no one knows what the environment ministers of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana are doing," he said. He cautioned that the next 15 days are critical for the entire Delhi-NCR and that all state governments should remain vigilant and work together to control air pollution. Rai said the government received feedback that air pollution monitoring teams set up by concerned departments are not working properly on the ground. "Therefore, we have issued directions to all departments involved to prepare mechanisms to monitor the working of these teams," he said.

Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj also hit back at the



BJP over the pollution issue, accusing it of "two-faced and dirty politics", and asked what the Centre has been doing to curb pollution in Delhi. Accusing the Manoharlal Khattar government in Haryana, AAP spokesperson Reena Gupta said that 20 per cent of pollution in Delhi

comes from 11 cities in Haryana, including Hajar, Bahadurgarh, and Gurugram, but Khattar government is asleep.

Holding the Kejriwal government responsible for turning the Delhi into a gas chamber, the BJP has accused Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of

indulging in "political tourism" at a time when the city residents are facing severe air pollution. The "inaction and insensitivity" of the Kejriwal government has turned Delhi into a "gas chamber", said Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva. "The AQI has reached 700 in Anand Vihar. Yesterday alone there were around 1,600 incidents of parali (paddy stubble) burning in Punjab. The next 48 hours are going to be very dreadful for Delhi," Sachdeva said in a statement.

Sachdeva asked the Delhi chief minister about the status of smog towers, air purifiers, and water sprinklers to control the rising pollution. "Unfortunately, Kejriwal is busy with political tourism and there is no one to control air pollution. Delhiites

are complaining of itching and breathlessness and children are falling ill. Only Kejriwal is responsible for all this," Sachdeva said.

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari said because of the heavy pollution, people are falling ill if they venture out and the average life expectancy of residents of the national capital is getting reduced by nearly 12 years. "Indifferent to all this, Kejriwal is busy with political tourism leaving people behind to fend for themselves," he alleged.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the Kejriwal government is visionless, idealless and master in spreading lies. Bidhuri, has advised the Delhi government to take concrete steps to address the crisis of

deteriorating air quality in the capital rather than blaming others. Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely on Friday alleged the Delhi and the central government have "not done enough" to curb pollution in the city and urged the administration to come up with a permanent solution for it. He said the government should focus on the issue of pollution throughout the year and the public transport in Delhi should be improved. "The Delhi government doesn't act when opposition leaders talk about an issue, they act when the situation worsens and that too, they come up with temporary solutions... I believe the government should focus on the issue of pollution all year long," Lovely said.

## Smog tower locked up as City gasp for air

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

India's first smog tower at Connaught Place has been found to be non-functional at a time when the national Capital and its neighbouring areas are battling "severe" air pollution. The tower is locked up. The Rs 20 crore tower was inaugurated by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in August 2021 amid much fanfare. It aimed at purifying air in a 1-km radius around the structure.

Earlier, following the inauguration amid much fanfare, a team of 10 people including engineers, operators and helpers were deployed to manage the smog tower. However, it has been reported that the team was removed seven months ago.

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Friday that the large smog tower installed at Connaught Place two years ago to reduce air pollution in the vicinity has been shut down arbitrarily on the orders of Delhi Pollution Control Committee Chairman (DPCC)



Ashwani Kumar. The minister accused that Kumar, who assumed the role of DPCC chairman in December, "stopped the release of funds to IIT-Bombay and other agencies working on the project, without informing the government". Sharing the smog tower data, Rai had said last year that the giant air purifier could reduce air pollution by 70 to 80 per cent within a radius of 50 metres and by 15 to 20 per cent up to 300 metres.

The smog tower can filter around 1,000 cubic metres of air per second. Around 40 fans were installed at the bottom of the tower to suck in air from

the top. The air would then be filtered and released through the fans at the bottom. The tower comprises 5,000 filters. Electrostatic air filters were installed to filter microparticles, including those that constitute smoke, household dust and pollen.

A Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system was also installed to collect data and monitor its functioning. This tower was established as a pilot project. Later another such tower was set up in Anand Vihar. Since the towers were set up, IIT-Bombay and IIT-Delhi have been studying the efficiency of the smog

towers in providing clean air zones in specific regions and their performance in reducing the levels of PM2.5 and PM10. However, recently the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) suggested that the smog tower be shut down as it was found to be "largely ineffective in tackling air pollution". It also said the site should be used as an environmental and climate change innovation centre. Experts have also argued that smog towers are no answer to Delhi's air pollution woes. In December 2021, data submitted by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) showed a 50-60 per cent reduction in PM 2.5 concentration but only between the inlet and the outlet of the smog tower.

"The report analysis says that the tower will work more efficiently during the peak pollution loading compared to less pollution loading. The data reveals that the particulate pollution remains very high and not much impact is seen... From the final report of smog

tower submitted by IIT-Bombay, it is evident that the impact of smog tower even in the vicinity is very low," it said. In October, Rai had alleged that the Delhi government's first-of-its-kind study to determine pollution sources in the national capital was unilaterally halted on the orders of Kumar. The Delhi cabinet had approved the study proposal in July 2021 and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with IIT-Kanpur in October 2022. The estimated cost was more than Rs 12 crore. The Delhi government had released Rs 10 crore to IIT-Kanpur for the procurement of necessary equipment and setting up a centralised super site for data collection.

However, in February, Kumar made a file note expressing concerns about the "substantial expenses associated with the study" after several meetings with IIT-Kanpur scientists. On October 18, Kumar issued orders to stop the release of the remaining funds to IIT-Kanpur, effectively cancelling the study, Rai had claimed.

## NGT asks chief secretaries of States with poor AQI to take urgent action

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal on Friday directed the chief secretaries of the States where the Air Quality Index (AQI) has dipped to poor, very poor and severe categories to take immediate remedial action.

The green panel was hearing a matter where it had taken cognisance of the online air quality bulletins of the Central Pollution Control Board across different cities from October 20 to November 1.

A bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said, "The chief secretaries of the states where the cities' AQI has dipped to severe, very poor and poor, are directed to take immediate remedial action and submit action taken report before the tribunal on or before the next date of hearing (Nov 10)".

The bench, also comprising judicial member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil Vel, noted that on



November 1, the AQI plunged to "severe" category in various places, including Hanumanagarh, Fatehabad, and Hisar, while Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida, Faridabad, Bahadurgarh, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Rohtak and Sri Ganganagar were in the "very poor" category.

It said the AQI was in the "poor" category in several towns and cities in the states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar and Jharkhand. The bench said, "A serious condition is reflected in various

cities in air quality Bulletins. Hence, immediate action is required for the prevention and control of air pollution in these cities so as to ensure better air quality for the residents."

It issued notices to the chief secretaries concerned, the Chairman, Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), National Task Force through its Head Secretary, and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

## Dos & Don'ts while combating rising air pollution

Following are the precautions medical experts have suggested in the wake of rising pollution in Delhi:

**Dos:**

- Wear a mask when stepping out for work, market or other places
- Wash eyes with water frequently
- Carry wet wipes while stepping out
- People having asthmatic condition should carry inhalers
- Use good-quality air purifiers at home, if one can

**Don'ts:**

- Don't venture out early morning for doing exercises or take a walk
- Keep outdoor activities minimal if having asthmatic, respiratory conditions
- Don't touch eyes with hands while travelling on road
- Elderly people should keep indoor as much as possible
- Don't self-medicate, consult a doctor when necessary

## Anand accused by DRI of hawala payment evading customs: ED

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday alleged that Delhi minister and AAP leader Raaj Kumar Anand has been accused by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) of making hawala payments to China and evading customs duty of Rs 7 crore on imports. The federal probe agency raided the premises of the 57-year-old minister in connection with a money laundering probe. The raid was launched around 7:30 am on Thursday and ended around 5 am on Friday.

The agency said it initiated investigation against Anand and persons and entities linked to him "on the basis of a prosecution complaint filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence" for the commission of offence under various sections of the Customs Act,

1962. "As per the said complaint, Raaj Kumar Anand did hawala payments to China and evaded customs duty amounting to about Rs 7 crore on various imports," the ED alleged in a statement. It said a local court took cognisance of the offence on August 11. Meanwhile, AAP leaders on Friday alleged that the BJP was misusing central probe agencies to "scare and silence" the opposition. Addressing a press conference, Delhi minister Atishi alleged that ED sleuths ransacked Anand's residence and harassed his family members during the raid, but found nothing against him.

At the press conference, Anand said the raid was a "political conspiracy" and that "we are being harassed for following truth and politics of work. We are not scared of ED or CBI and will continue to follow our leader Arvind

Kejriwal." Atishi said the ED raid was conducted in connection with a 19-year-old case which had been pending at the Customs Tribunal for many years.

"The two agencies of the BJP are busy harassing the AAP. The raid at Anand's residence continued for 20 hours, his residence was ransacked and his family members were harassed. Raids were also conducted at places of his relatives and business associates," she said. Anand said that there was a search at his business establishment by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence in 2005 and he was issued a show-cause notice. He said he challenged the notice in a court.

The raids were launched against him on Thursday morning at 13 locations in the national capital region, Kolkata and Uttar Pradesh.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Friday arrested a 21-year-old man for allegedly selling obscene images of Hindu gods and goddesses online in the name of a person he wanted to take revenge on for copying his website and harming his business.

"Accused, Adarsh Saini, was arrested who did all this to take revenge from another man who created a website which resembled his website, due to which he faced a huge loss in earnings," Deputy Commissioner of Police (IFSO) Hemant Tiwari said. Saini allegedly also created an email address to lodge a complaint with various law enforcement agencies including the Delhi Women Commission (DCW), seeking action against the "one who was circulating those morphed images".

"On October 29, the Delhi Commission for Women forwarded a complaint sent to DCW regarding the online circulation of offensive images of Hindu goddesses. An FIR under section 295 of the IPC and relevant provisions of the IT Act was registered by the IFSO (Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations) unit of the Delhi Police's Special Cell," the DCP said.

A detailed investigation was taken up under the supervision of an ACP level officer, DCP Tiwari said, adding initial probe suggested the involvement of a person named Rahul Kumar. "We traced Rahul Kumar in Darbhanga of Bihar. He was examined, but his role was not found in this case. We investigated the matter further and apprehended the mastermind -- Adarsh Saini from Haridwar," DCP Tiwari said. During interrogation, Saini

told the police that he had started a business related to online gaming after completing his BBA.

"He had created a website and used to provide gaming IDs to customers which was his main source of income. Rahul Kumar had also created a gaming website that resembled Saini's and it resulted in a significant loss in Saini's business. He decided to take revenge from Rahul," the DCP said.

Saini allegedly hatched a conspiracy to implicate Kumar in a fake case so he obtained all his details and circulated offensive content online using his name, the DCP said. He also created a fake id in the name of Apurva Verma and used that to file various complaints to law enforcement authorities and the Delhi Women Commission and pursued legal action against Kumar.



where snake venom was made available, police said. Divisional Forest Officer Pramod Kumar Srivastava said five cobras, two sand boas, one python and one rat

snake -- all falling in the category of endangered species -- were rescued during the action. "The charges framed in the case under the Wildlife (Protection) Act are stringent which are non-bailable and can attract a jail term of seven years.

The snake venom seized from the accused has been sent for a lab test to ascertain its quality," Srivastava said, explaining the severity of the crime. The complainants to Noida Police said that they had information that Elvish Yadav shot videos with snake venom and live snakes in his Noida farmhouse and organised

"illegal" rave parties where foreign girls are regularly invited.

According to the complaint, a person from the NGO then approached Elvish Yadav and asked him to get some cobra venom. Elvish reportedly gave the details of his agent and provided his phone number. On being contacted, the agent agreed to provide snake and snake venom, and five people -- Rahul, Titunath, Jayakaran, Narayan, Ravinath -- reached the spot of the decoy party. The NGO people then informed the police and the five persons who brought snakes and snake venom were handed over to the police.

They apparently named Elvish.

Delhi Women Commission chief Swati Maliwal reacted to the news of FIR and posted a photo of Elvish Yadav with Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar. "The CM of Haryana promotes this man from the platform. On one hand, talents like @ S a k s h i M a l i k , @BajrangPunia are beaten on the streets and the Haryana government promotes such people. In its videos you will find obscene comments on girls and abusive language. Leaders can do anything for votes..." Swati Maliwal tweeted.

## Noida police register FIR against Elvish, aides for snake smuggling

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

Youtuber, influencer and Bigg Boss OTT2 winner Elvish Yadav and five of his associates were allegedly booked after 20 ml of snake venom, 9 poisonous snakes were recovered from their possession which they used during rave parties. According to People for Animals (PFA), nine snakes, including five cobra, one python and one two-headed snake, one rat snake were recovered from their possession of those arrested, who had landed at a banquet hall in Sector 51 Noida on Thursday for a party. The

snake venom was taken by people attending the rave parties that also hosted foreign nationals, it's alleged.

Meanwhile, Elvish took to social media to refute the charges against him, dubbing them "baseless, fake and not even one per cent true". "I am ready to fully cooperate with the UP police. I also request the UP police, administration and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath that if my involvement is found, I will take full responsibility," Elvish said, adding he has nothing to do with the case.

Police seized 20 millilitres of snake venom stored in a plastic bottle from the possession

of the accused and it has been sent for testing to ascertain if it is psychotropic in nature to induce a party drug-like effect in the human body. According to a police spokesperson, "Five people were arrested from the banquet hall and nine snakes were rescued from their possession". Those held have been identified as Rahul (32), Teetunath (45), Jaikaran (50), Narayan (50) and Ravinath (45), all residents of Moharband village in south-east Delhi's Badarpur, police said.

An FIR was lodged under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and for crim-



# PM Modi discusses Gaza conflict with UAE President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held telephonic talks with President of the UAE, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and discussed the situation in the backdrop of ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.

Both the leaders expressed deep concern at terrorism, deteriorating security situation and the loss of civilian lives and called for early resolution of the situation.

The two leaders exchanged views on the developments in the West Asian region. Both leaders expressed deep concern at terrorism, deteriorating security situation and the loss of civilian lives, an official statement said.

The two leaders called for an early resolution of the security and humanitarian situation. They emphasized the importance of durable peace, security and stability in the region. They also reiterated their commitment to continue to strengthen bilateral cooperation in diverse areas within the framework of the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic



Partnership.

On October 23, Modi spoke to Jordan's King Abdullah-II and the two leaders shared concerns regarding terrorism, violence and loss of civilian lives. Modi said concerted efforts are needed for an early resolution of the security and humanitarian situation. "Spoke with His Majesty @KingAbdullahII of Jordan. Exchanged views on the developments in the West Asia region. We share concerns regarding terrorism, violence and loss of civilian lives. Concerted efforts needed for early resolution of the security and humanitarian situation," he said in a social media post. Incidentally, Prime Minister

Modi on October 19 spoke to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

During their conversation, Modi said India would continue sending humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians. He also conveyed his condolences on the loss of civilian lives in the Gaza Strip due to the bombing at a hospital. "Shared our deep concern at the terrorism, violence and deteriorating security situation in the region. Reiterated India's long-standing principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue," Modi said after speaking to Abbas. In a post soon after Hamas launched 5,000 rockets at Israel in 20 minutes and began a multi-pronged attack by land,

air and sea on October 7, Prime Minister Modi had said he was "deeply shocked by the news of terrorist attacks in Israel" and expressed India's solidarity with the country in the difficult hour.

Modi reiterated his support for Israel on October 10, when he had posted that Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had called him and given him an update on the deadly conflict. "I thank Prime Minister @netanyahu for his phone call and providing an update on the ongoing situation. People of India stand firmly with Israel in this difficult hour. India strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," Modi posted on X. Speaking at the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit in New Delhi the same week, Prime Minister Modi said terrorism anywhere in the world and in any form was against humanity and emphasised that it was time for peace and brotherhood. Calling for the world to move forward with a human-centric approach, he also said conflicts and confrontations in any part of the world impact everyone and do not benefit anyone.

# Dubey questions Congress MP's defence of Mahua

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on Friday questioned Congress MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy's defence of TMC's Mahua Moitra in the cash-for-query case, suggesting an outsider having access to the parliamentary portal through a member's account can get sensitive documents.

Dubey responded to the point of Reddy, who is a member of Lok Sabha's Ethics Committee, that it was only after Moitra shared an OTP with anyone using the portal through her log-in that a question to be asked in Parliament on her behalf could have been submitted.

Dubey, whose allegation that Moitra took bribes to ask questions in Parliament as businessman Darshan Hiranandani's best is being probed by the panel, noted that members get access to bills often days before they are presented in Parliament. He said Moitra is a member of the Standing Committee on IT, a sector in which Hiranandani

also has an interest.

Classified papers related to the work of the committee on health were also there besides the documents linked to data protection measures, he said, asking if the businessman too did not get access to them.

"This entire matter is suspicious and national interest was compromised for corruption," he linked.

Opposition members of the committee on Thursday walked out of its meeting along with Moitra as they accused its chairperson Vinod Kumar Sonkar of asking her "indecent personal" questions, a charge he said was motivated to shield the parliamentarian from queries into her alleged "unethical conduct".

Moitra, who pleaded innocence to bribery allegations, termed Sonkar's questions to her "filthy" following the walk-out while he defended the queries, saying they were related to businessman Darshan Hiranandani's affidavit in which he admitted to giving her bribes and using her parliamentary login ID to ask questions on her behalf.

# Green engineering need of hour: Murmu



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining the issue of climate change, President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said "green engineering" is the need of the hour while addressing officers of the Military Engineer Services (MES) and asked them to construct eco-friendly and sustainable structures that promote the use of renewable energy. Addressing a group of MES probationers, who had called on the President at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, Murmu said, "The role of an engineer is not just limited to calculations, designing and construction. It is much broader and includes connecting communities, realising the dreams, and shaping the future."

"As young officers who have just entered the service, you must be well aware of the envi-

ronmental challenges and issues of climate change. It is your duty to design and construct such structures which are eco-friendly, sustainable and promote the increased use of renewable energy," she said. Murmu pointed out that the field of engineering is ever-evolving, with new technologies and methods emerging at an astonishing pace.

"You need to be adaptive and ready to embrace change. At a time when our country is setting new benchmarks in various areas at the global level, you should be proud that you are part of a service that is committed to serving the country and its armed forces and is adapting itself to the changes happening at the national and global stage," she added. The president said that MES officers were privileged to have had an opportunity to provide service and support to the country's valiant soldiers.

# Deterrence, diplomacy most impactful for conflict resolution: VP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of ongoing Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday said there was an urgent need to explore innovative approaches to strengthen deterrence and revitalise diplomacy for more effective conflict resolution.

Addressing the Chanakya Defence Dialogue-2023 here, the Vice President also underscored the paramount importance of achieving and upholding peace through a multi-faceted approach, combining ideation, advocacy, outreach, persuasion, and dialogue, while also being vigilant and prepared. Echoing similar views, Army Chief General Manoj Pande said in the seminar India has always stood for respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations as well as peaceful resolution of disputes and adherence to international rules. His observations came in the backdrop of the festering border row with China in eastern Ladakh. In his speech, Dhankhar also



said strength of a nation is most impactful defence and deterrent. Leveraging of nation's soft power and economic prowess have become facets of strengthening security environment. Today's India while cherishing and practicing the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" also subscribes to securing such noble aspirations in strength. Our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi while reflecting "this is an era not of war but of dialogue and diplomacy" defined the wholesome global order. These facets are essence of our civilisation and nectar of India's position. He echoed sentiments much beyond Bharat that is home to one sixth of humanity, the Vice President said.

# Air pollution threat to kids academic life

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air pollution comes with costs: It is not only health hazardous, which is almost a known fact, but also associated with lower academic performance among children, doctors have warned, indicating that improving air quality may benefit the impressionable minds' overall academic achievement and socio-economic attainment across the lifespan.

The doctors said that early childhood exposure to air pollution has been linked with impaired performances in cognitive tests, inattentiveness, and slower development of working memory besides



worse academic performance. Needless to say, fresh air enhances mental clarity and concentration, Dr G C Khilnani, Chairman, PSRI Institute of Pulmonary, Critical care and Sleep Medicine, said as he cited a study in this regard. Published in JAMA Network

open, the study 'Long-term exposure to Fine Particulate Matter and Academic performance among children in North Carolina,' the study involved over 28 lakh students in grades 3 to 8 from public schools in North Carolina from 2001 to 2018, of which 2.8 per cent were Asian students. The study compared standardized test scores in mathematics and reading at the student level and compared with across grades in previous studies. "It was found that each 1 µg/m3 increase in PM2.5 concentration was associated with a lower standardized end-of-grade mathematics test scores and a lower standardized end-of-grade reading test scores."

Dr Gilnani, a member of the Technical Advisory Group of WHO Global Air Pollution and Health, said that the results are yet another eye opener as it offers results showing negative association of long-term PM2.5 exposure with children's academic performance and students in Delhi are no exception. To corroborate his statement, he said that the study, conducted by Yale University(USA), where, even PM2.5 of 10µg/cu mm is considered hazardous, has revealed that academic performance (Mathematics and reading) is adversely affected even with rise of 1 µg of PM 2.5 (While the Delhi average PM 2.5 was 126.5 last year, as per the

Chicago study. Dr Anant Mohan, Professor and Head, Department of Pulmonary, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi sounded alarm as he said that with Delhi NCR experiencing high levels of Air Quality Index (AQI), children are likely to develop asthma and upper respiratory allergies. Dr Mohan pointed out that air pollution hampers growth, extends its influence to the eyes, physiology, brain, and heart. Dr Rajesh Kumar Gupta, Additional Director, Department of Pulmonology, Fortis Greater Noida agreed as he drove home the point that toxin air causes health prob-

lems which can result into a child falling sick that causes him/her to miss school. He said that there has been almost 3 fold increase in the number of patients coming to hospital because of respiratory problems particularly due to toxic air enveloping Delhi. "Children and the elderly are more vulnerable to the air pollution especially those with pre-existing lung, heart or kidney diseases," he added. Yet another nationwide study published in Environmental Epidemiology in 2021 in the US, found that ambient air pollution (PM2.5, NO2, and ozone) was associated with lower academic performance among children.

# 'OTT platforms need to adhere to self-regulatory framework'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The self-regulatory body for OTT platforms on Friday urged its members to avoid unnecessary vulgarity and abusive content as well as sensitise production houses about the same.

Digital Media Content Regulatory Council (DMCRC) chairperson Justice (retired) Mukul Mudgal said OTT plat-

forms need to consistently adhere with the self-regulatory framework and stay within its sacrosanct boundaries. "The council is of the firm view that it is desirable that OTT platforms continue keeping the sensibilities of our diverse society and culture in mind while producing content," Mudgal said. Disney+Hotstar, Zee5, SonyLiv, Jio Cinema, Voot, Manorama Max, Sun Nxt, Discovery+, Yupp TV, Nee Stream and



Fancode are member OTT platforms of the DMCRC. "The platforms have the freedom to tell stories the way they wish to, but it should be done

after due diligence and with responsibility. "This is the essence of content self-regulation," Mudgal said. He advised member platforms to exercise due restraint and responsibility during content creation, self-inspect to strengthen the framework and overall functioning of OTT platforms, and avoid unnecessary vulgarity and abusive content without justification. The DMCRC also asked member OTT platforms to conduct

frequent meetings with content creators and production houses to sensitise them and ensure that content is in due compliance with the self-regulation framework, including the Code of Ethics. It also asked OTT platforms to ensure an accessible system to lodge content-related grievances and build access controls to empower consumers in making content choices with complete awareness and knowledge.

# Army Chief felicitates jawans for Asian Para Games 2023 feat



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Manoj Pande on Friday felicitated medal winners and other sportspersons from the Indian Army for their excellent performance at the Asian Para Games in China.

At an event held at the Manekshaw Centre here, he interacted with 17 players and their supporting staff who took part in the games in Hangzhou and displayed outstanding performance. Eleven sportspersons from the Indian Army participated in the fourth Asian Para Games, of which seven emerged as medal winners. The medal tally includes -- one gold, four silver and two bronze, the Army said.

The Indian Army contingent improved their performance from the 3rd Para Asian Games held in Jakarta where they had won four medals (two Silver and two Bronze), the Army said. The Para sportspersons of Indian Army mainly get trained at the Army Paralympic Node (APN), Kirkee. The APN was raised under the aegis of the erstwhile Directorate General of Military Training at Bombay Engineer Group and Centre (BEG), offical on June 23, 2017, Kirkee said. In April 2022, APN was realigned under the Mission Olympics Wing (MOW). The prime objective of APN is to encourage the participation of serving impaired soldiers to excel in Paralympics sports.

# SC asks AAP MP Chadha to tender unconditional apology to RS chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed AAP MP Raghav Chadha to meet Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar and tender an unconditional apology to him over the select committee row, and said the latter may consider it "sympathetically" on his suspension.

Later in the day The Committee of Privileges of the Rajya Sabha met and discussed the pending complaints of breach of privilege against some MPs, including AAP leader Raghav Chadha. Sources said the committee has sought a report from Chadha by November 7 and the members of the panel will meet again on November 8 to discuss the issue.

The committee is looking into the pending cases of complaints of breach of privilege against MPs Raghav Chadha, Sanjay Singh and Derek O'Brien. During the meeting, the members sought to secure an expeditious processing and finalisation of the committee report in the breach of privilege cases, the sources said. Both Chadha and Singh are currently suspended from the House.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and



Manoj Misra noted the submissions of lawyer Shadan Farasat, appearing for the Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab, that the first-time and youngest lawmaker from "the house of elders" was willing to apologise to the vice president.

"Lawyer Shadan Farasat says that he (Chadha) is the youngest member in Rajya Sabha. Bearing in mind that he has no intention to affect dignity of the house of which he is a member, Farasat submits that petitioner will seek an appointment with the chairperson (of the Rajya Sabha) so that he may place an unconditional apology which may be considered sympathetically," the bench noted in its order. The bench adjourned the hearing on the plea of Chadha, who has challenged his indefinite suspension from the Rajya Sabha, for hearing after Diwali vacation and asked Attorney

General R Venkataramani to apprise it of the developments in the matter then. During the brief hearing, the bench observed that on the last date of hearing, it had said if Chadha was willing to tender an apology, then the chairperson, who is a very distinguished person and a senior constitutional functionary, may take an "objective view". The attorney general and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta agreed to the suggestion. The bench then sought the views of Chadha's counsel. "You have already apologised six times. But would you be willing to seek an appointment with the chairperson and meet the chairperson, tender an apology?" the bench asked. "He is the youngest member in the house of elders. Of course, he doesn't mind tendering an apology..." the counsel for Chadha said.

# Major action to curb film piracy as industry faces ₹20,000 cr loss annually

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday took steps to curb the menace of film piracy, a grievance of film industry being submitted to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry from time to time that suggested a loss of ₹20,000 crore annually.

In this effort, the government appointed nodal officers who have been empowered to issue directions to take down pirated content from digital platforms. This move by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has provided an institutional mechanism to take action against film piracy which is estimated to cause the entertainment industry losses to the tune of Rs 20,000 crore every year. "We have fulfilled a big demand of the industry, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told the media. He said the Government has appointed 12 nodal officers in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Central Bureau of Film Certification (CBFC) with whom complaints related to film piracy can be lodged and action will be taken with-



in 48 hours.

"Piracy is a big menace not only for the film industry, but for the entire world. Now, action against it is just a complaint away," Thakur said. Officials said any original copyright holder or any person authorised by them for the purpose can file a complaint with the nodal officers to take down pirated content from YouTube, Telegram channels, websites or other online platforms. The copyright holder will have to submit proof of ownership such as the certificate issued by the CBFC with the complaint for speedier action. Briefing reporters about the move, I&B Secretary Apurva Chandra said if a complaint is raised by a person who does not hold the copyright or is not authorised by the copyright holder, the nodal officer can hold hearings to decide the genuineness of the complaint before issuing directions to take down the content.

# ₹50,000 cr FDI in food processing sector in last 9 years, says Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that India's food investor-friendly policies are taking India to greater heights, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that the food-processing sector has attracted ₹50,000 crore FDI in the last nine years.

"In the last nine years, the sector has attracted FDI of ₹50,000 crore. This happened because of the government's pro-industry and pro-farmer policies," Modi while addressing the second edition of three-day World Food India at Bharat Mandapam here. At the event he also disbursed seed capital assistance of ₹380 crore to over one lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) under PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme. 'Seed Capital Assistance' will help SHGs gain better price



realisation in the market through improved packaging and quality manufacturing. The Prime Minister also said India's food processing capacity has witnessed significant growth in the last nine years leading to 150 per cent growth in exports of processed food. The capacity of the food processing sector too has increased from a meagre 12 lakh tonne to over 200 lakh tonnes, he said, underscoring the need for mitigating food wastage and post-harvest losses. More than 80 countries, 200 speakers and 12 partner ministries, departments and commodity boards are likely to participate in the event aimed to showcase India as 'food basket of the world' and celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets. The Prime Minister also inaugurated a 'food street' as part of 'World Food India 2023'.



# NEP can usher sweeping changes in education sector: Prof Murthy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence (SSSUHE), Karnataka, Prof Srikanta Murthy said that the New Education Policy (NEP)-2020 policy is clearly a much-needed step in the right direction. "If this policy is implemented properly, it can usher in sweeping changes in the Indian education sector," he said while speaking as the chief guest in the inaugural function of two-day Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) sponsored national seminar on 'NEP 2020: Transforming Pedagogies of 21st Century', organised by the Department of Education and IQAC at Vasanta College for Women (Rajghat), affiliated to Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Friday.



National seminar on NEP-2020 being inaugurated at Vasanta College, Rajghat in Varanasi on Friday.

He said that NEP provides an interdisciplinary college education that includes flexible

study plans. "A major goal of the new policy is to promote research and innovation. In fact the NEP aims to have a gross enrolment ratio in higher education of 50 per cent by 2035. This policy aims to achieve the

target of 100 per cent youth and adults," he said, emphasising that for all-round development of the child proper care should be taken to nurture independent minds using a life skills-based curriculum that ensures

the students have the skills they need to be close to the 21st century.

Special guest Prof Latha Pillai, former NAAC advisor, said the NEP has mainly four parts and the target of completeness of its implementation is the year 2030 so that the world can achieve universal education for all as per the Sustainable Development Agenda adopted in the year 2015 as that the goal of promoting quality continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities can be achieved.

Main speaker Prof Anjali Bajpai, Dean, Faculty of Education, BHU, appreciated the main objective of the NEP 2020 and said one of the main objectives of higher education for the youth is to make them enlightened, aware, knowledgeable and competent about the problems of the society and the country so that they can uplift the citizens by finding strong solutions to the prob-

lems and implementing those solutions.

Earlier, the function began by lighting the lamp and singing 'Kulgeet' by Dr Sanjay Verma and Dr Hanuman Prasad Gupta of the Music department. Principal of the college Prof Alka Singh, while welcoming the guests, said many positive objectives were included in the NEP and its biggest objective is to focus on essential areas like strengthening teacher training, improving the existing examination system and improving the structure of education.

While establishing the topic, seminar coordinator Prof Meenakshi Biswal said the NEP aims to provide higher education to all students with the aim of making pre-primary education (age range three-six years) universal by 2025. The inaugural session was conducted by Dr Preeti Singh while the vote of thanks was proposed by Prof Archana Tiwari.

# ABVP, RSS responsible for uproar in BHU: Rai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Congress state president Ajay Rai, who was going from Varanasi to Shankargarh Dham and Chitrakoot, reached Prayagraj on Friday. Commenting on the uproar going on in BHU, he alleged the



Congress state president Ajay Rai being given a rousing reception by party workers in Prayagraj.

ABVP and RSS people are responsible for the uproar there. The state president was welcomed by a large number of party office-bearers and workers gathered outside the Patel Seva Sansthan located in Alopibagh. Ajay Rai who was going to express condolences on the death of Prakash Mishra, son of former BJP MP from Banda Lok Sabha seat, Bhairav Prasad Mishra, allegedly due to lack of treatment said health services in the state have completely 'collapsed'. On the incident of 'molestation' of a student and on the question of students agitating in Lucknow and Allahabad universities, Ajay Rai said educational institutions have been 'federalised' under the BJP government. City Congress president Pradeep Mishra

connecting them with the history and roots of our nation, enabling them to understand India's continuous journey as a 'Rashtra'. For this purpose, ABVP has developed various initiatives to be undertaken as part of this conference. The ABVP national conference will be held at the DDA Ground, Burari, Delhi, where a tent city named 'Indraprastha Nagar' will be constructed. As part of its 75th organisational journey, ABVP is organising the 'North East Study Tour' under the Student Experience in Inter-State Living (SEIL) Programme. This unique initiative aims to provide students from different states with in-depth knowledge about the cultural, social and family structures of the North-Eastern states of India. Under this initiative, 75 students from different states will travel to understand and learn about the natural diversity of Bharat and its social and family structures, starting from Guwahati, Assam, on November 5. The poster for the 'North-East Study Tour' was launched by ABVP national general secretary Yagywalkya Shukla in Delhi. ABVP's national general secretary, Yagywalkya Shukla said "ABVP's 75-year journey as a student movement has addressed the crucial issues of the youth. The national conference in Delhi will focus on the transformative aspects of the current education sector and highlight topics related to society, youth and education. In this national conference students, teachers and educationists from across the country will engage in meaningful dialogues including implementation of New Education Policy, students' union elections, and ABVP's future plans with respect to these issues."

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The 69th national conference is a four-day event intended to bring together students from all corners of the country. ABVP, marking 75 years of its organisational journey, aims to familiarise the youth with the significant milestones in its organisational journey and the role of ABVP in leading student movements. This gathering of youth from across the nation will showcase the 'unity in diversity' that defines India. ABVP seeks to acquaint students with modernity while

# Filaria treatment centre proving to be a boon: CMO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that the Filaria Integrated Treatment Centre at the Institute of Applied Dermatology (IAD) in the Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital located at Chowkaghat is proving to be a boon for the patients as its provides treatment of severe filariasis (elephantiasis) patients through Ayurvedic, allopathy and yoga methods and the centre. He also said that the centre is making an important contribution towards a filaria-

free India. The CMO expressed these views while visiting the centre and interacted with all the facilities and staff along with the filariasis patients on Thursday. A CMO Dr SS Kanojia and biologist Dr Amit Kumar Singh were also present with him. The CMO said that on the initiative of state government and Union Ministry of AYUSH, the centre is being operated by IAD, Kerala with the financial support of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). "The centre was started on March 15 this year and since then, 120 serious filariasis patients have been admitted

here. Out of these, treatment of 113 patients has been completed while treatment of seven patients is underway," he said, adding that eight health workers including two allopathy nurses, one yoga therapist, four multipurpose paramedical staff and one technical coordinator are supporting an Ayurveda doctor at the centre and at present, 13 bedded wards for men and women are ready at the centre. The CMO has directed the superintendents and in-charge medical officers of all block level health centres to ensure that serious (above grade three) filariasis patients

are immediately referred to the IAD Filaria Integrated Treatment Centre. He said under the direction of IAD Director Dr SR Narhari, this centre is providing better facilities to the patients. For screening, treatment etc related to filariasis, any person can contact the centre through its helpline number 9567283334 every day from 9 am to 5 pm.

**VACCINATION DRIVE:** Special vaccination campaign to protect children from tetanus-diphtheria (TD), diphtheria (whooping cough), pertussis (kali khansi) and tetanus (DPT) pertussis began in var-

ious government and private schools in the district and the same will continue till November 10. The children aged five to 16 years were vaccinated in various schools including Tulsi Niketan School in Lanka and Bhogavir Mahamana Madan Mohan School in Sankat Mochan here on Thursday. CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said the special campaign has been started to vaccinate school going children with DPT and TD, which will be conducted in all government and private sector schools of the district till November 10.

# UPRTOU celebrates silver jubilee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University (UPRTOU) celebrated its silver jubilee at the Atal auditorium of its campus. The event was an opportunity to reflect on the last 25 years and the progress made. Addressing the function, chief guest Prof Bansh Gopal Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Open University, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, said COVID-19 has made us to rethink over our conventional education system. Presiding over the programme, Vice-Chancellor Professor Seema Singh said teachers and employees are the backbone of the university's development. This opportunity for university students and faculty is a significant step towards innovation and prosperity in the field of advanced education and research. Professor Singh emphasised that UPRTOU is progressing by leap and bounds. Learner Information Management System (LIMS) was inaugurated on the occasion which will enhance qualitative growth in the field of education. It will also be helpful for students in their whole educational activities. Teachers and employees who did excellent work were honoured. Two books were

released on the occasion. One new magazine named "Badhte Kadam" edited by Indubhushan Pandey was also released. Family members of teachers and employees were also present and took an active part in the function. A cultural event, called "Cultural Evening Bhashanjali", was organised in collaboration with UPRTOU and Hindustani Academy. The event featured various performances, including Alha singing by Sri Jitendra Kumar Chaurasiya and his team from Mahoba, etc The programme started with garlanding and lighting of lamps on the idol of Maa Saraswati and statue of Maharishi Rajarshi Tandon. Program Director of Silver Jubilee Celebration Professor PP Dubey delivered the welcome speech. The programme was conducted by Prof Shurti and Dr Devesh Ranjan Tripathi. The vote of thanks was proposed by Registrar, Colonel Vinay Kumar Singh.

**DEMOLISHED:** Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) got an advocate's house and 11 shops bulldozed in Jhansi. After this the lawyers started creating ruckus. On the orders of PDA Vice President Arvind Singh Chauhan, 11 illegally built shops located in Andawan Jhansi falling under Zone 5 were demolished.

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# AYUCON-23 to be organised today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The All India Ayurvedic Specialist PG Association (AIASPGA), Varanasi branch, in association with Department of Dravya Guna, Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Science (IMS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) will organise 'AYUCON-23: A National Conference on Mainstreaming of Ayurveda in Primary Health Care' at Seminar Complex, IMS BHU here on Saturday.

Giving this information while addressing a press conference on Friday, organising president Dr Rajendra Prasad, secretary Dr Rashi Sharma and convenor Dr Ajay Gupta said that the theme of the conference, 'Mainstreaming Ayurveda in Primary Health Care', aligns perfectly with the evolving healthcare landscape, where traditional systems of medicine like Ayurveda play a pivotal role. Ayurveda offers holistic approaches to health and well-being that are becoming increasingly relevant in our fast-paced, modern world.

According to them, AYUCON-23 will provide a platform for experts, practitioners, and researchers to exchange knowledge, share insights, and

collaborate in developing strategies to make Ayurveda more accessible and integrated into primary healthcare. The collective wisdom and experience of the speakers, panelists, and participants at AYUCON-23 will undoubtedly lead to innovative ideas and best practices that can be implemented in healthcare settings across the country, they said, adding that the conference will hold the promise of nurturing a synergy between modern medicine and Ayurveda, contributing to the overall health and well-being of our nation's citizens.

They said the AYUCON-23 aims to promote the integration of Ayurveda into primary health care practices, fostering a holistic approach to health care and wellness along with release of e-souvenir and published books. The conference will bring together leading professionals, researchers, and practitioners in the field of Ayurveda and primary health care from around the world. It will provide a platform for sharing innovative research, exchanging ideas, and fostering collaborations that will advance the integration of Ayurveda into mainstream healthcare, they said.

# Mock drill on November 6

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A safety meeting was organised at divisional office of North Eastern Railway (NER) with the 11th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Varanasi, under the leadership of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava here on Friday. In the meeting, a full scale mock drill was planned for November 6 with the NDRF at Mau Coaching Depot Yard to test the response mechanism and rescue operations in adverse situations and to create coordination among stakeholders and check the efficiency of resources by taking remedial measures.

In this meeting Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Operations) Rajesh Kumar Singh, ADRM (Infra) Roshan Lal Yadav, Chief Project Manager Kaushalesh Singh, Chief Medical Superintendent Dr RJ Chaudhuri, Deputy Commandant (NDRF) Prem Kumar. Paswan, Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Sheikh Rehman, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer Pankaj Kesharwani, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Rajat Priya, Senior Divisional



DRM VK Srivastava and other NER officers holding a safety meeting with NDRF personnel in Varanasi on Friday.

Signal and Telecommunication Engineer-II Yashveer Singh, Senior Divisional Safety Officer Balendra Pal, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (SDME) Abhinav Pathak, Assistant Divisional Safety Officer (ADSO) Abhishek Kumar, Public Relations Officer (PRO) Ashok Kumar, Chief Coaching Depot Officer/Mau Manish Verma and others were present. During the meeting, a plan is made to prepare a scenario on a train accident during a mock drill at Mau Coaching Depot with NDRF in which some passengers are trapped inside and inform the Emergency Operation Centre about it. Later, the NDRF control room and all stakeholders concerned are informed of the emergency response. They also plan for rescue of surface vic-

tim by first responders before the arrival of the NDRF team and then from reaching the incident site to initial assessment by the NDRF team and setting up the base of operation, command post, medical post, communication post etc. The team also proposed to undertake relief operations and practice rescuing seriously trapped victims through various rope techniques by making vertical and horizontal cuts in train coaches using cutting tools and equipment. Under this, medical agencies will practice giving first aid and taking the victims to the hospital. Throughout this exercise, emphasis will be laid on the guidelines of the Incident Response System and it will be ensured that they are followed.

# Lecture at BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Retired Divisional Personnel Officer (DPO) of Western Railway Shantanu Ambedkar delivered a lecture on the Railway Servants (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1968 at Technical Training Centre (TTC) in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Thursday. A good number of officers and employees attended the lecture to know about the 'D&AR'. On the guidelines of the Railway Ministry, Vigilance Awareness Week is being organised across the Indian Railways from October 30 to November 5 and under the guidance of General Manager (GM) Basudev Panda, many programmes are being organised in the presence of Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) Pramod Kumar Chaudhary and Deputy Chief Vigilance Officer (DCVO) Dharmendra Kumar. Besides, with the aim of creating awareness against corruption among the students, a debate competition was organised by the Vigilance department of BLW in Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) BLW.

# NCL receives many awards

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) received many awards on the occasion of 49th foundation day of Coal India Limited (CIL), its parent organisation. The NCL got four corporate awards and its nine officers and employees who performed excellently well during the year were also honoured. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Government of India, M Nagaraju, Additional Secretary Vismita Tej, Chairman of CIL PM Prasad, Board of Directors of CIL, CMDs of all subsidiary companies and other senior officials associated with Coal India were present at the foundation day function held in Kolkata recently. NCL has got the star rating in the corporate category - first in the best subsidiary company, second in the corporate performance and in the open mines. Besides, its Nigahi Project has got the first and Krishnashila has got the second prize. On behalf of NCL, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Bhola Singh,

Director (Technical Operations) Jitendra Malik and the General Managers (GMs) of projects received the awards.

During the felicitation ceremony, AK Singh, GM (Civil) and AN Pandey, GM (Jayant) were honoured with the Excellence Award for their work performances. Bhartendu Kumar, GM (Excavation) was awarded for the best head of department from NCL while AN Pandey, GM of Jayant area, for the best regional general manager. Besides, drill operator Phoolmati Devi Bina area was also honoured in the category of Best Female Operator. Along with this, CWS team was awarded the N Kumar Innovation Award and the team included Lalan Prasad, GM (Excavation), Saurabh Tripathi, Manager (Excavation), Sarya Prasad, Senior Electrician, Neeraj Kumar, Fitter Grade-II. The CMD and the Board of Directors of NCL have congratulated the company and its employees for these awards and have expressed confi-

dence that in the future too, NCL will play an important role in achieving the energy self-reliance of the nation by performing excellently in all the important areas including production and transmission. Meanwhile, CIL's foundation day was also celebrated with great enthusiasm at NCL in a programme organised at its headquarters.

On the occasion, NCL Director (Personnel) Manish Kumar, Director (Technical/Project and Planning) SP Singh paid floral tributes at the Martyrs' Memorial located. During this, NCL JCC members Ajay Kumar, Ashok Kumar Pandey, Sarvesh Singh, department heads and employees were also present. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest and Director (Personnel) Manish Kumar congratulated all the employees and beneficiaries on the day. He said that since its inception, Coal India has travelled a long journey in the development of which all its employees have played an important role.

# Cyclothon to be held tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A cyclothon will be organised on November 5 from 6 am under the ongoing Sansad Khel Pratiyogita Kashi-2023. District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam said that the competition will be organised in two age groups in which, the first competition will be for under-18 years of age-group and it will start from Udai Pratap College and end at Sarnath Museum via Police Lines, Pahadia and Ashapur crossing whereas the second one for above-18 age-group and it will start from Sarnath Museum and end at Udai Pratap College via Ring Road, Harhua crossing and Sant Atulanand School. The DM said for the Under-18 cyclothon, the Additional District Magistrate (Administration) will be the nodal officer while Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) will be the assistant nodal officer. The ADM (Protocol) will be the nodal officer of the second cyclothon for above-18 and the DIOS will be the assistant nodal officer.

# Technology of spraying nano urea from drones launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the Agricultural Information System Strengthening and Farmer Awareness Programme, a block level agricultural investment fair/seminar was organised on Thursday at Baldev Inter College, Badagaon. Pindra MLA Dr Awadhesh Singh, who was the chief guest, gave detailed information to the farmers about various schemes being run by the government. The MLA also launched the technology of spraying nano urea from drones and distributed Ayushman cards and mustard minikits to the beneficiaries in which prominent farmers, Krishna Kumar, Toofani Yadav, Nandlal Mishra, Suresh Kumar Sabhajit, Kallu Verma, Lal Bahadur Singh etc were present. Singh said the PM Kusum Yojana is a very ambitious scheme of the prime minister, in which farmers can get solar panels installed by giving 10 per cent margin money



to enjoy free electricity. He asked the farmers that as the harvesting of paddy crop of Kharif season has started they can sell their paddy crops at the government purchasing centres only. He also appealed to the farmers to take crop insurance for more benefits. District Agriculture Officer (DAO) Sangam Singh Maurya, who was presiding over the programme, discussed about sowing of Rabi crops like wheat, gram and pea mustard. He appealed to farmers to treat the seeds before sowing and also to get crop insurance by paying only a 1.5 per cent premium. Assistant Director of Soil Testing Rajesh Kumar Rai urged the farmers to increase organic matter in the soil so that its fertility can be maintained and maximum production can be achieved. The technical information about contemporary farming was given by Rahul Singh, scientist of KVK. The officers of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, NEDA, Health, Export and Mandi departments apart from the Union Bank of India, IFFCO, Kanpur Fertiliser, Kalash Seeds, VNR Seeds and many other leading companies had a detailed discussion about the plans in a seminar organised there.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Fissures showing

The fragility of the INDIA bloc is coming to the fore; is it falling apart already?

In India, where political alliances and blocs play a crucial role in governance, the 28-party INDIA bloc was cobbled together in the pursuit of a common agenda -- to defeat the BJP in 2024 general elections. However, recent developments, including the contentious issue of seat sharing in States and Nitish Kumar's accusation of Congress's selfishness, have raised questions about the sustainability of this alliance. During the past 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 2024. The bloc emerged as a response to the BJP's dominance at the national level. Comprising the Congress, and cobbled together by JDU stalwart Nitish Kumar, the alliance included the RJD, JDU, NCP and others. It has had three successful enclaves where the unity was

on display but now, a few months later and just before the general elections, the bloc seems to be wilting away. Indeed, there were always centrifugal forces at work as it is difficult to reconcile the interests of 28 diverse parties that fight elections against one another. One of the critical issues that has strained the bloc is the allocation of seats in Assembly elections. Moreover, INDIA bloc has not come up with a common minimum programme which is a must for an alliance like this.

Nitish has now openly accused the Congress of selfishness when it comes to seat sharing. The Congress was perceived to be overreaching and



demanding a larger share of seats, which did not sit well with the regional parties. This discord has not only affected the unity of the alliance but also raised questions about the commitment of its members. INDIA's ability to act as a united front against the BJP depends upon working together harmoniously. However, the recent seat-sharing dispute is just one of several instances exposing underlying tensions. Internal rifts based on regional, ideological and personal interests threaten the stability of the alliance. As Nitish pointed out, the "selfishness" reflects a growing sentiment among regional parties that the Congress, being a national player, is more concerned about its own electoral prospects than those of the alliance as a whole. To its credit, one could say the INDIA bloc has successfully circumvented the issue of leadership and the prime ministerial candidates. It was thought by many political pundits that the leadership issue would sink the alliance before it sails off. It would be wise for the Opposition and the nation that there is a credible Opposition talking about people's woes. The players are all seasoned politicians and know they could very well end up as non-entities if they do not fight as one formidable force.

### PICTALK



People from Assam and Meghalaya take part in a fishing competition, in Kamrup

PTI

## 'Minimalism' is a powerful statement

From fashion to everything else, 'minimalism' can be applied in all walks of life; even during the festive season which is all about glitter

In a world filled with noise, clutter, and excess, the concept of minimalism has gained significant traction. Minimalism is not just a design aesthetic; it's a philosophy that can be applied to various aspects of our lives, from fashion to home decor, and even our daily routines. This intentional simplification offers a range of benefits, allowing us to declutter our physical and mental spaces while leading more purposeful and fulfilling lives. Minimalism in fashion is all about embracing the "less is more" principle. It involves a curated wardrobe of high-quality, versatile pieces that can be mixed and matched, reducing decision fatigue and streamlining your daily routine. There are several compelling reasons why minimalism works in fashion. Contrary to the belief that minimalism limits self-expression, it encourages it. With fewer choices, you learn to embrace your unique style and express yourself more authentically. Minimalism is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather a flexible philosophy that can be applied to various aspects



of our lives. By decluttering, simplifying, and focusing on what truly matters, you can lead a more purposeful and fulfilling life. So, consider taking a step towards minimalism, and experience the transformative power of "less is more" for yourself. The psychology behind minimalism delves into the profound impact that simplification and decluttering can have on our mental well-being. Minimalism is rooted in the idea that reducing the distractions and excess in our lives allows us to focus on what truly matters. Psychologically, this practice can lead to reduced stress, enhanced cognitive clarity, and increased emotional well-being. It is indeed a good idea to inculcate minimalism in chil-

dren from a very young age. With the festive season already around the corner, it is stirring enthusiasm among parents to scout the best attire for their children. Harboursing the desire to don their kids in alignment with the ongoing trends, they are continuously on the lookout for stylish yet elegant clothes to ace the look of the children. As a result, to match the fervour of the festivity without overdoing it, minimalist fashion has been gaining a lot of popularity and is expected to influence kids' fashion for the upcoming festive season. Festivals have always been perceived as an occasion to flaunt an exaggerated and glittery collection of attire. But with a paradigm shift in kids' fashion, incessant importance is being given to the comfort of the children. The erstwhile idea of blingy clothes resonating with proportional sequins or oversized embellishments, ruffles, or frills is somewhere disintegrating. Parents are redefining kids' fashion by embracing minimalism fashion, allowing the child to dazzle in the realm of elegance created with minimal embroideries.

Previously, in the pursuit to stand out in the gathering, comfort always took the lowest rung in the preference list. Being carried away by the glamour of the festival, parents very often paid little or no heed to the comfort of their child. Decking them up with heavy clothes had been a common practice that always rose to the occasion to trigger irritation in the child. Here, minimalism brings about the smooth confluence of both elegance and ease to espouse both comfort and style at the same time. Allowing for a range of lightweight, breathable fabrics made of soft materials can work wonders in creating a style statement, while not getting in the way of their fun and recreation. Moreover, dwelling on the idea of keeping it simple and elegant, pastel also forms an intricate part of fashion. It comes with the charm to stir delight amongst the spectators. Capturing the zest of the festive celebration, it can exude an appealing look while remaining understated. (The writer is president, Les Petits; views are personal)



SWATI SARAF

It is amazing how the number of people caring for street dogs in India has increased dramatically during the last couple of decades or so. Twenty years ago, one rarely saw people feeding them or vaccinating them on the streets. Today—much to the chagrin of animal-haters—many in most parts of the country do so. One has no idea about their number. One can, however, say on the basis of visual evidence, social media posts and media reports, that the figure has grown exponentially—and this in the teeth of animal haters abusing, harassing and even assaulting them—including women.

There are several reasons for the increase in the number of such people despite daunting odds. Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989) wrote in *Man Meets Dog*, "The whole charm of the dog lies in the depth of the friendship and the strength of the spiritual ties with which he has bound himself to man." Lorenz should know. An Austrian zoologist, ethnologist and ornithologist, and recipient of the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine along with Nikolaas Tinbergen and Karl Von Frisch, he is regarded as one of the founders of modern ethnology as well as the study of animal behaviour.

It almost seems that most dogs are genetically programmed to give unconditional love to humans who forge a relationship with them. A mutuality evolves as humans respond. Love for animals is an integral part of the wider proneness to love which is central to the emotional content of the human psyche. There is, doubtless, a very large number of people whose capacity to love is crippled by the contingencies of daily existence. Single-minded pursuit of one's own goals in life leaves one with little time or psychic space for tender, unconditional emotional relationships. The capacity for the latter is also undermined by the transactional and/or competitive character of most relationships in society ranging from the buying and selling of essential commodities to rivalry for fame, money and status.

Fear spawns hatred, such as for a

person perceived to threaten one's status, prosperity, safety and the values one stands for. It also leads to hatred for wild animals like lions, tigers, leopards, elephants that can attack one and kill one's livestock. Exploitation is another obstacle. One cannot exploit a person one loves.

People who hate street dogs often do not have the capacity to love, and hate most other people as well. But then people who retain their capacity for loving are as—perhaps more—numerous. Love for animals is latent in their hearts. This is particularly the case with dogs, with whom humans close and loving association dates back to the end of the Ice Age when their presence could be seen in human habitations. Familiarity, however, tends to breed indifference if not contempt. Street dogs, therefore, remained as a ubiquitous background presence in urban set-ups. They were seen but not engaged with. It was the sight of people feeding and caring for them that attracted the attention of many, igniting their inherent love for dogs, and inspiring some of them to do the same thing themselves. Their commitments grew as street dogs responded with



MOST DOGS ARE GENETICALLY PROGRAMMED TO GIVE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE TO HUMANS WHO FORGE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM

deep love and affection. The numbers grew as more and more people followed suit.

Along with the number of people, non-government organisations serving animals proliferated. The Blue Cross of India was formed in 1959 by Captain V. Sundaram of Indian Airlines, his wife Usha and three sons including 15-year-old Chinny Krishna. It was registered in 1964 as a society under the Societies Registration Act and continues with an expanding multiplicity of activities with Dr Chinny Krishna as chair. It has played a seminal role in the introduction of the animal birth control (ABC) programme for dogs in India.

Other organisations also have contributed significantly. These include People for Animals with its India-wide reach, Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA), FRIENDI-COS, All Creatures Great and Small, Animal India Trust, The Welfare of Stray Dogs, with Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) playing an over-arching multi-dimensional role spanning several fields. Thanks to these organisations, the ABC programme has been producing

results, despite being without adequate infrastructure and funds. According to figures tabled in the Lok Sabha on August 2, 2022, by Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister, Parshottam Rupala, the number of India's street dogs declined from 1.71 crore in 2012 to 1.53 crore in 2019. According to Bharati Ramachandran, FIAPO's CEO, the organization had filed applications under the RTI Act to 225 municipal corporations in India for data on the implementation of the ABC programme. One of these, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), released on October 4, 2023, the findings of its latest dog census showing a decline in the street dog population of Bengaluru from the 2019-20 census figure of 309,975 to 279,335 at present. According to a report by Munishwar A Sagar in the Times of India of September 7, 2023, Chandigarh's Street dog population has declined by nearly 26% from 12,922 in 2018 to 9,503 according to the latest survey. Clearly, the ABC programme delivers.

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

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### MARATHA RESERVATION STIR

Sir—Nine days after Maratha activist Manoj Jarang Patil began his fast-into-death demanding reservation to the community under the Kunbi (OBC) category, he withdrew his hunger strike after agreeing to give time until January 2 to the government to complete the procedural requirements and meet his demands. Before breaking his fast, the activist issued a warning that he would "choke Mumbai" if the government failed to provide reservation to all Marathas in two months.

The agitation had turned violent over the past week in various parts of the state, with protesters resorting to torching the houses of MLAs and vandalizing government properties. On Thursday, it was also decided that cases involving violence in Jalna district would be withdrawn in 15 days and those in the rest of the state would be withdrawn in a month. All the political parties should unite and find the solution to the Maratha Reservation as quickly as possible. Every conflict can be resolved with dialogue.

Jahangir Ali | Mumbai

#### BENGALI'S LOVE FOR FISH

Sir—The importance of fish to Bengalis runs deep in their blood. And even people refer to Bengalis as 'maache bhaate bangali'. Sounds interesting, right? But fish in Bengali are just like beer to Germans or apples to Americans. A staple of every Bengali household, a meal without fish in it is no meal or no dish without fish. But it is amazing to note that in the last decade, the number of fish eaters has almost doubled (from 7 kg in 2012 to 13+ kg in 2023) in India. If one spent Rs. 76 for fish among Rs. 1000 in marketing in 2012, then in 2023, people spent Rs. 168 among the said amount in marketing.

Though it is not Bengal, people from Lakshadweep eat per head 346 gm (125 kg per annum) of fish every day, which is over 16 times the national average

#### DELHI AIR POLLUTION WORSENS



Propos "Construction work banned as Delhi air plunges to severe" (Nov 3). The Delhi government banks upon the 'Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)', which is a knee-jerk reaction whenever the air pollution goes beyond tolerable limits and people make hue and cry, but not serious efforts are made to find permanent solutions for it. Air quality in Delhi depends on internal and external pollution sources. Internal sources can be found in GRAP, such as garbage burning, industries and power plants, dust set-

tled on roads, diesel generator sets, about 1.2 crore motorized vehicles, and construction and demolition activities. It is easier, more economical and more effective to control pollution at these sources than after they are released into atmosphere, such as total ban on diesel trucks, pollution suppression measures in construction and demolition activities, use of garbage as raw material and source of energy, stop-registration of new vehicles, increased public transport and persuading people to shift from private transport, retrofitting industries and power plants with pollution control devices, dust-free roads, covering open land surfaces with grass and trees, etc. External pollution sources include stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, Vehicular emissions, industrial pollution, large-scale construction activities, etc. Dialogue with neighboring states and the central government and legal and technological options are the solutions to mitigate pollution from them.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

(around 6.250 kg a year), with Goa (78 kg per head per annum) at first spot among the states.

Interestingly, I am famous as a Bengali fish eater in Faridabad, Haryana, where I have lived for more than five decades, but the state is poor for fish eaters because they live far away from the sea. If so, then why are their counterparts in Tripura an aberration?

Their per capita fish consumption in 2021-22 was 26.05 kg, which helped them earn the third spot on the rung. Haryana, however, is not alone in its lack of appetite for fish.

Even many of its neighbors' too—an average Delhiite eats 0.55 kg of fish a year, while his counterpart in Uttarakhand and Rajasthan consumes 0.9 kg and 0.97 kg, respectively. West Bengal ranked fourth among the fish-eating countries.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

#### TIME TO FIND THE SOLUTION

Sir—It is time to find peace and solutions via smart, constructive discussions in the United Nations, not voting (in the UNO).

UNO has been ineffective in stopping wars. Then what is the use of voting? UNO can become effective by regularly focusing on finding joyful success solutions.

Kofi Annan, during whose tenure as Secretary General (1997-2006), both he and the UNO got the Nobel Peace Prize (in 2001), must be made permanent consultants of the UNO.

If Kofi Annan becomes active in UNO's day-to-day affairs, then UNO can become effective. That implies good days ahead for the excellent world and for UNO too.

PV Madhu Nivriti | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN

### DO YOU HAVE A SWEET TOOTH?

Having sweet plays dirty tricks on the metabolism of an individual



SAKSHI SETHI

Well, thinking of replacing sugar with artificial sweeteners may be a wrong decision... although such sweeteners have no calories, studies have shown that they do contribute to weight gain as they encourage sugar cravings.

In a world, where the quest for healthier alternatives never finishes, where the pandemic of obesity is at its extreme, artificial sweeteners have emerged as a ray of hope. These sweeteners are compounds that are designed to taste like sugar but with very few calories. While sugar is broken down in the body to release energy, these sweeteners are not digested in the same way due to their unique chemical structures. They are food additives made by chemically combining different molecules in a lab intended to serve as sugar substitutes or high-intensity sweeteners and are chemically synthesized substances that are mainly found in soft drinks, candies, snack foods, sugar-free ice creams, alcohol and dairy products.

Did you know that artificial sweeteners are one of the four most toxins to the brain, others include Heavy metals, Fluoride and Monosodium Glutamate (MSG). The most common sweeteners found are Saccharin, Aspartame, Acesulfame potassium, Dextrose, Advantame and Maltodextrin and can cause several symptoms including anxiety attacks, depression migraine headaches and neurodegenerative diseases.

According to the latest research, it has been found that people who eat more Ultra-processed foods- particularly artificial sweeteners and artificially sweetened drinks could be at a high risk of depression. Also, such sweeteners are associated with many diseases including cancer, hormone imbalances, allergies, skin disorders and many more. At times, such sweeteners even make the individual eat more than they would have otherwise consumed with sugar. Although these sweeteners have no calories, they have been shown to contribute to weight gain by encouraging sugar cravings. Researchers have found that they stimulate the appetite, increase sugar cravings and even promote fat storage and weight gain. Moreover, they can alter the gut flora to promote obesity and type 2 diabetes.



Life will be bland without sweets. But that does not mean that one must consume empty calories of sugar and jeopardize their health. Adopting or switching to the use of jaggery; honey; dates or raisins; pure maple syrup; raw honey; coconut sugar; dates and many more as they taste sweet and are good and healthy options as they provide benefits like boosting immunity and a few nutrients. Also, if watched calories, although they are not incredibly low are high on the list when compared to refined sugar and at times make it a wonderful option for diabetics too.

Along with this, one can also take good quality probiotics and maintain a healthy and balanced gut as they prevent fungal overgrowth and relapse, reduce food cravings and maintain healthy hormone balance.

Remember, fooling your brain into thinking one is getting something sweet plays dirty tricks on the metabolism of an individual. Artificial sweeteners do disrupt the normal hormonal and neurological signals that control hunger and satiety and one must be very careful before consuming it. One should normalise a nontoxic lifestyle for kids and themselves, something that they can get to keep alive.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

## Traditional vs digital bank: Survival of the fittest



VINOD YADAV

By investing in cutting-edge technology and streamlining their operations, traditional banks can upgrade conventional banking to bring it at par with the digital banking



The financial world is undergoing a seismic shift as traditional banks and digital banks engage in an epic battle for supremacy. This clash of the titans not only challenges established norms but also raises fundamental questions about the future of banking itself. As technology continues to reshape the financial landscape, it becomes crucial to explore the factors that will determine the survival of the fittest in this ever-evolving industry.

In one corner, we have the traditional banks that have long been pillars of stability and trust. With their physical branches, extensive history, and established customer base, traditional banks hold an inherent advantage in terms of familiarity and brand recognition. In the other corner, digital banks are disrupting the industry with their innovative and convenient offerings. Leveraging technology to provide accessible and cost-effective financial services, they are capturing the attention of consumers who seek speed, efficiency, and enhanced flexibility in their banking experience.

While the strengths and weaknesses of traditional banks and digital banks may be apparent, the battlefield on which they compete is far from simple. Multiple dimensions, such as convenience, cost-effectiveness, customer relationships, and regulatory frameworks, come into play in determining which model will emerge victorious. In this article, we will examine these dimensions and more to gain a better understanding of the survival prospects of traditional banks and digital banks. By analyzing their respective advantages and challenges, we can paint a comprehensive picture of the evolving banking landscape and shed light on the path that lies ahead.

### A Shifting Paradigm

The rise of digital banks has disrupted the status quo and forced traditional banks to reevaluate their strategies. With the proliferation of smartphones and internet

connectivity, customers now have access to a wide range of digital banking services at their fingertips. This has created a paradigm shift in customer expectations, favouring the convenience and speed provided by digital banks. Digital banks have a clear advantage when it comes to convenience. With the ability to perform transactions, open accounts, and access financial services anytime, anywhere, digital banks are meeting the needs of the on-the-go consumer. Traditional banks, on the other hand, often require customers to visit physical branches and adhere to strict operating hours, limiting their convenience factor.

### Cost-effectiveness: Digital Banks Take the Lead

One of the primary advantages of digital banks is their cost-effectiveness. With lower operational expenses compared to brick-and-mortar establishments, digital banks can offer better interest rates, reduced fees, and even zero-fee accounts.

By minimizing overhead costs, these digital innovators can provide more attractive financial offerings to their customers. Traditional banks, burdened by the costs of maintaining physical branches and a large workforce, struggle to compete in this regard. While digital banks offer convenience and cost-effectiveness, traditional banks possess a long-standing advantage in terms of trust and security.

Customers often feel more comfortable entrusting their hard-earned money to familiar, established institutions with a solid reputation. Traditional banks have been around for decades, providing a sense of stability and reliability

that digital banks are still working to establish.

### The Regulatory Factor: Navigating the Complexities

Navigating the regulatory landscape presents another challenge for both traditional and digital banks. Traditional banks are well-versed in dealing with the intricate web of regulations that govern the financial industry, as they have operated within these constraints for decades. Digital banks, on the other hand, face a steep learning curve in adapting to and complying with these regulatory frameworks.

### Final Word

In this battle for survival, adaptation will be the key determinant of success. Traditional banks must embrace digital transformation to meet the changing needs of customers. By investing in technology, streamlining processes, and offering robust digital platforms, traditional banks can bridge the gap between convention and innovation. Likewise, digital banks must address concerns regarding trust and security to gain the confidence of potential customers. Striking the right balance between cutting-edge technology and a human touch will be crucial for their long-term survival.

The battle between traditional banks and digital banks is intensifying, as each model strives to outshine the other. While digital banks have revolutionized the financial industry with their convenience and cost-effectiveness, traditional banks continue to command trust and security. The survival of the fittest will hinge on their ability to adapt and leverage their strengths in an ever-evolving landscape.

The future of banking lies in striking the perfect balance between innovation and tradition. Digital banks have disrupted the industry by providing customers with instant access to financial services and seamless transactions. However, they must address concerns regarding trust and security to gain broader acceptance. Establishing strong cybersecurity protocols, implementing robust identity verification measures, and fostering positive customer experiences will be pivotal in winning over sceptics and ensuring long-term viability.

On the other hand, traditional banks must embrace digital transformation to keep pace with changing customer expectations. By investing in cutting-edge technology, streamlining their operations, and offering intuitive digital platforms, they can bridge the gap between conventional banking and the digital revolution. Moreover, they can leverage their established brand recognition, customer loyalty, and expertise in navigating complex regulatory frameworks to stay competitive in the digital era.

Ultimately, survival in this fiercely competitive landscape will depend on a bank's embrace of innovation, responsiveness to customer needs, and commitment to security. Traditional banks must evolve to meet the demands of the digital age, while digital banks must establish themselves as trustworthy institutions. Those who successfully navigate these challenges and adapt to the changing times will emerge as the fittest and shape the future of banking, ensuring their relevance and success in the years to come.



TRADITIONAL BANKS MUST EMBRACE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TO KEEP PACE WITH CHANGING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

(The writer is Chief Technology Officer at AGTB Bank, UAE. Views expressed are personal)

## Rescuing children from the clutches of mobile phones

While the digital age offers learning and entertainment opportunities, it's vital to safeguard our children from over indulging in it

In the serene town of Poonch, ensconced amid the majestic hills of Jammu Province, modern technology has seamlessly woven itself into daily life. The ubiquitous smartphone is now a vital tool for communication, entertainment, and knowledge, influencing people of all ages. However, the unforeseen repercussions of this digital revolution are particularly pronounced among our youngest generation.

As mobile phones become our steadfast companions, children increasingly fall prey to the irresistible allure of screens. The transformation is striking, and the consequences are alarming, prompting both parents and psychologists to scrutinize its impact on the mental and physical health of young minds.



HARISH KUMAR

(The author is a grassroots writer from the border village of Magnad in Poonch district J&K; views are personal. Charkha Features)

### The Digital Dawn

The story often begins with innocent intentions. Parents introduce smartphones to their children, aiming to offer them a source of entertainment and education. However, what starts as a well-intentioned decision soon becomes an all-consuming pastime for children. Over time, their days become filled with endless scrolling, virtual games, and the creation of video content, a trend that has taken our society by storm.

Dr. Alvaro Bilbao, a renowned psychiatrist, delves into the myriad of issues arising from this screen addiction in his book, "Understanding Your Child's Brain." According to his research, children aged six and under who spend excessive hours on their smart-

phones suffer a decline in memory retention. Such children are also at a higher risk of developing irritability, obesity, depression, anxiety, and attention deficit disorders. Their behaviour is noticeably more volatile, reflecting the emotional turmoil within.

### Digital Dilemma in Every Household

Smartphone addiction transcends urban and rural boundaries, manifesting itself in households across India. While parents in urban areas introduce their children to the digital world as an early initiation into the modern age, those in remote villages often view it as a means to keep their children occupied while they engage in laborious work or house chores. Unfortunately, what appears as a convenience



often translates into long-term problems for the children's physical and mental health. Even youngsters who are barely out of infancy find themselves drawn into the world of technology. Social media, video games, and online content have become a universal fascination for kids who should be more focused on exploring the real world

around them.

### The Saving Grace

However, amid this digital dilemma, there are voices of reason and hope. Kautilya Pandit, affectionately known as the "Google Boy," has become an inspiration. He chooses not to engage with mobile phones, recognizing their detrimental effects. While he acknowledges the

allure of these devices, he emphasizes the importance of introducing children to outdoor activities, serving as a powerful antidote to their smartphone addiction.

Kautilya's message is clear: parents must exercise firmness and restraint. Denying children their smartphones, even during meal times, is the first step to breaking this habit. A few days of adherence to this approach can dramatically change children's habits, proving that this battle can be won. Dr. Bilbao's call to action reinforces the necessity of immediate measures to curb smartphone addiction. Doctors at Delhi AIIMS recommend the following guidelines for parents: Keep children away from mobile phones and TV screens until the age of three; Do not

let children use the internet before the age of six; Do not allow children under nine years to play video games; And do not let children use social media before the age of twelve. In today's digital age, even three-year-olds are adept with mobile phones, leading to health issues at a tender age. It's parents' responsibility to protect their children from this addiction and ensure a future untainted by screens. While the digital age offers learning and entertainment opportunities, it's vital to maintain a balance and safeguard our children's well-being. As our young ones navigate this digital landscape, let's guide them toward healthier choices and preserve the essence of childhood—exploration, play, and the wonders of the real world.



# Netanyahu rules out cease-fire, until Hamas frees hostages

AP ■ KHAN YOUNIS  
(GAZA STRIP)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ruled out a temporary cease-fire in the Gaza Strip, saying he will press ahead with a devastating military offensive until hostages held by the Hamas militant group are released. Netanyahu spoke Friday shortly after meeting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who pressed Israel for a temporary pause in its offensive in order to improve humanitarian conditions in Gaza. Blinken also urged Israel to do more to protect civilians from its attacks. In a statement to reporters on Friday, Netanyahu said Israel is continuing with "all of its power" and "refuses a temporary cease-fire that doesn't include a return of our hostages". Hamas kidnapped some 240 people in its bloody Oct 7 cross-border attack that triggered the Israel-Hamas war. The attack killed some 1,400 people, while over 9,000 people have been killed since Israel began striking Gaza the same day, according to Palestinian health officials.

## Blinken urges Israel to do more to protect Palestinian civilians

AP ■ KHAN YOUNIS  
(GAZA STRIP)

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that more needs to be done to protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza or else there will be "no partners for peace" as he urged Israel to ensure greater humanitarian aid to the besieged territory. Israel, meanwhile, warned that it was on high alert for attacks on its border with Lebanon as fears grew that the conflict could widen. Israeli troops tightened their encirclement of Gaza City, the focus of their campaign to crush the enclave's ruling Hamas militants, who launched a brutal attack on Israeli communities that started the war. But ever since that Oct 7 assault, there have been concerns the conflict could ignite fighting on



A Palestinian looks at the apartment of Khaled Kharousha that was destroyed by the Israeli military in Nablus, West Bank, Friday, Nov. 3, 2023. Israel's High Court of Justice gave the army the go-ahead to destroy Kharousha's apartment, who is suspected of helping his father kill two Israelis in Huwara earlier this year. AP/PTI

other fronts, and Israel and the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah have repeatedly traded fire along the Lebanon border. Tensions escalated further as Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Friday delivered his first public speech since the conflict began. Blinken, in Israel on his second diplomatic mission in the region dealing with the war, reiterated US full support for Israel, saying it had the right to defend itself. He said the US was committed to ensuring that no "second of third front" opens in the conflict, referring to Hezbollah. But he said there had to be a substantial and immediate increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza and, "we need to do more to protect Palestinian civilians" in Gaza.

## Leader of Hezbollah group speaks out for the first time

AP ■ BEIRUT

Celebratory gunshots rang out over Beirut as thousands packed into a square in the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs on Friday to watch a televised speech by Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the militant Lebanese Hezbollah group. It was Nasrallah's first public remarks since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war, sparked by the Palestinian militants' deadly October 7 incursion into southern Israel. The speech came a day after the most significant escalation in clashes between Hezbollah and Israeli forces on the border since the war started and on the same day as a visit to Israel by the top US diplomat. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu to urge protection for civilians in the fighting with Hamas, as Israeli troops tightened their encirclement of Gaza City. In his lengthy remarks, Nasrallah praised the Hamas attack four weeks ago in which the militants attacked farming villages and military posts in southern Israel. More than 1,400 people were killed in Israel in the attack. "This great, large-scale operation was purely the result of Palestinian planning and implementation," Nasrallah said, suggesting his militia had no part in the attack. "The great secrecy made this operation greatly successful." Nasrallah's speech had been widely anticipated throughout the region as a sign of whether the Israel-Hamas conflict would spiral

into a regional war. Since the beginning of the war, Hezbollah, an ally of Hamas, had taken calculated steps to keep Israel's military busy on its border with Lebanon, but not to the extent of igniting an all-out war. The Israeli military said seven of their soldiers and one civilian had been killed on the northern border as of Friday. More than 50 Hezbollah fighters and 10 militants with allied groups, as well as 10 civilians, including a Reuters journalist, have been killed on the Lebanese side of the border. Israel considers the Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite militant group its most serious immediate threat, estimating that Hezbollah has around 1,50,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel, as well as drones and surface-to-air and surface-to-sea missiles.

## House approves USD 14.5 billion in assistance for Israel

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The House approved \$14.5 billion in military aid Thursday for Israel, a muscular US response to the war with Hamas but also a partisan approach by new Speaker Mike Johnson that poses a direct challenge to Democrats and President Joe Biden. In a departure from norms, Johnson's package required that the emergency aid be offset with cuts in government spending elsewhere. That tack established the new House GOP's conservative leadership, but it also turned what would typically be a bipartisan vote into one dividing Democrats and Republicans. Biden has said he would veto the bill, which was approved on a largely party-line vote. Johnson, R-La., said the Republican package would provide Israel with the assistance needed to defend itself, free hostages held by Hamas and eradicate the militant Palestinian group, accomplishing "all of this while we also work to ensure responsible spending and reduce the size of the federal government." Democrats said that approach would only delay help for Israel. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, has warned that the "stunningly unserious" bill has no chances in the Senate. The first substantial legislative effort in Congress to support Israel in the war falls far short of Biden's request for nearly \$106 billion that would also back Ukraine as it fights Russia, along with US efforts to counter China and address security at the border with Mexico. It is also Johnson's first big test as House speaker as the Republican majority tries to get back to work after the month of turmoil since ousting Rep. Kevin McCarthy,

R-Calif., as speaker. Johnson said he will turn next to aid for Ukraine along with US border security, preferring to address Biden's requests separately as GOP lawmakers increasingly oppose aiding Kyiv. The White House's veto warning said Johnson's approach "fails to meet the urgency of the moment" and would set a dangerous precedent by requiring emergency funds to come from cuts elsewhere. While the amount for Israel in the House bill is similar to what Biden sought, the White House said the Republican plan's failure to include humanitarian assistance for Gaza is a "grave mistake" as the crisis deepens. Biden on Wednesday called for a pause in the war to allow for relief efforts. "This bill would break with the normal, bipartisan approach to providing emergency national security assistance," the White House wrote in its statement of administration policy on the legislation. It said the GOP stance "would have devastating implications for our safety and alliances in the years ahead." It was unclear before voting Thursday how many Democrats would join with Republicans. The White House had been directly appealing to lawmakers, particularly calling Jewish Democrats, urging them to reject the bill. White House chief of staff Jeff Zients, counsellor to the president Steve Ricchetti and other senior White House staff have been engaging House Democrats, said a person familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it. But the vote was difficult for some lawmakers who want to support Israel and may have trouble explaining the trade-off to constituents, especially as the large AIPAC lobby and other groups encouraged passage.

## Sunak, Elon Musk discuss AI job threats

PTI ■ LONDON

In a much-hyped conversation between Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Tesla CEO Elon Musk at the conclusion of the AI Safety Summit hosted by the UK government, the duo discussed a range of issues from job threats posed by artificial intelligence to how AI-enabled robots could make good "friends" in the future. In a recording of his discussion at Lancaster House in London on Thursday evening shared on X, Sunak is seen playing chat show host as he throws questions at the tech billionaire about the risks associated with the fast-developing and "transformative" new technology. Musk, the world's richest man, described AI as "a magic genie" that could grant limitless wishes and agreed with the need for a "referee" to monitor the development of supercomputers of the future. "We are seeing the most



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, left, attends an in-conversation event with Tesla and SpaceX's CEO Elon Musk in London on Thursday. AP/PTI

destructive force in history here. There will come a point where no job is needed - you can have a job if you want one for personal satisfaction, but AI will do everything," said Musk in response to a question about AI rendering certain jobs obsolete. "It's both good and bad - one of the challenges in the future will be how do we find meaning in life," he said, on a philosophical note. On balance, however, the founder of xAI said he believed that artificial intelligence would "be a force for good" and used a reference to his son, who struggled to make friends in the real world who would benefit from such smart tech with robotic "friends". "A humanoid robot can basically chase you anywhere; it's something we should be quite concerned about. If a robot can follow you anywhere, what if they get a software update one day, and they're not so friendly anymore," he pondered, highlighting the importance of humans being able to override AI with "some kind of off switch". Sunak agreed and referenced sci-fi films about robots that end with the machines being switched off. "We've learnt over the years that having a referee is a good thing," said Musk, with reference to announcements at the AI Safety Summit about new safety institutes that would test future AI models before they are

released into the public domain. The hour-long discussion, attended by some members of the UK Cabinet and leading tech entrepreneurs, came at the conclusion of Sunak-led discussions on the second and final day of the summit at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire on Thursday. The UK government declared the event a success as participating countries, including India, signed a Bletchley Declaration agreeing to collectively manage potential risks from AI and companies developing frontier AI agreeing on a "ground-breaking" plan on AI safety testing. "Until now, the only people testing the safety of new AI models have been the very companies developing it. We shouldn't rely on them to mark their own homework, as many of them agree. Today, we've reached a historic agreement, with governments and AI companies working together to test the safety of their models before and after they are released," said Sunak.

Washington: President Joe Biden is gathering leaders from 11 other countries across the Americas on Friday in the US capital to discuss the tightening of supply chains and address migration issues. In a preview of the first Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity Leaders' Summit, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Thursday that the two-day event would be a "once in a generation opportunity" to shift more of the global supply chains to the Western Hemisphere. Kirby said the summit would also involve the "shared migration challenge" and the building of "meaningful economic opportunity" among the countries in the region. On a call with reporters, a senior administration official said that top leaders of nine of the 11 countries would be at Friday's summit. The other two countries will have high-ranking officials there. The official insisted on anonymity as required by the White House. Friday's event was announced last year at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles. The focus on trade comes as competition has intensified between the United States and China, the world's two largest economies. Biden, a Democrat, has provided government incentives to build US infrastructure and for companies to construct new factories. But after the coronavirus pandemic disrupted manufacturing and global shipping, there has also been an effort to diversify trade and reduce dependence on Chinese manufacturing.

## Biden to host summit that focuses on supply chains, migration

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## Iran media: 32 killed in drug rehabilitation centre fire

AP ■ TEHRAN

A fire at a private drug rehabilitation centre in northern Iran killed 32 people on Friday, according to Iranian state media, five more than reported earlier. State TV said 16 other people were injured and taken to hospitals in Langroud, a city about 200 kilometres northwest of the capital, Tehran. The TV report said the centre had capacity for 40 patients. It was not clear how many staff members were working when the early morning fire broke out. The earlier broadcast said 27 people died and 17 were injured. A video showed flames and smoke pouring into a dark sky. The fire was later extinguished, and authorities were investigating how it started, the TV report said. The head of Iran's judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, ordered a full investigation. Fatal fires are not rare in the country, mainly because of the disregarding of safety measures, aging facilities and inadequate emergency services. In September, a fire broke out at a car battery factory owned by Iran's Defence Ministry for the second time in less than a week. There were no reports of casualties. IRAN SENTENCES WOMAN TO DEATH FOR ADULTERY An Iranian court has sentenced a woman to death for adultery, state media said. A

report by the IRAN newspaper on Wednesday said the woman worked as a trainer in a gym for females. It said her husband contacted police in 2022 when he found her with another man at their home. The husband discovered from surveillance cameras that she was having relations with other men, it said. Under Iranian law, she can appeal. Iranian courts sometimes sentence people to death by stoning for adultery, which can be reduced to lighter punishments upon appeal. Iran is under international pressure for its extensive use of the death penalty. On Wednesday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Iran was executing people at "an alarming rate".

five deaths on social media and posted photos of vast inland areas inundated by the flooding. The dead in Tuscany included an 85-year-old man found in the flooded ground floor of his home near the city of Prato, north of Florence, and an 84-year-old woman who died while trying to push water out of her home in the same area, according to Italian news agency ANSA. Another victim was reported in Livorno. At least three people were missing Friday in Tuscany, and one person was reported missing in the mountains of Veneto, north of Venice. Other regions were on high-alert and authorities warned that the storm was heading toward southern Italy. Ciarán left at least seven people dead as it swept across Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany on Thursday.

## Storm Ciarán kills 5

Milan (AP): Record-breaking rain produced floods in a vast swath of Italy's Tuscany region as Storm Ciarán pushed into the country overnight trapping residents in their homes, inundating hospitals and overturning cars. At least five people were killed, bringing the storm's death toll in western Europe to 12 on Friday. Italian Civil Protection authorities said 200 millimetres (nearly 8 inches) of rain fell in a three-hour period, from the city of Livorno on the coast to the inland valley of Mugello, and caused rivers to overflow. Video shows at least a dozen cars getting pushed down a flooded road. "There was a wave of water bombs without precedence," Tuscany Gov. Eugenio Giani told Italian news channel Sky TG24 as he tried to describe the downpour. He reported the

based violence at the offices of a women's advocacy organisation called Sauti ya Wanawake, Swahili for "the Voice of Women," to share her own experience working with survivors and learn how the group supports people who have suffered such attacks. She was gifted a Swahili shawl locally known as a kanga. Later, the royal couple visited Fort Jesus, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was built by the Portuguese in the 1500s, and met local artists whose works were on display there. The king and queen were treated to a coastal Mijikenda community ceremonial dance at the fort before boarding a tuktuk — an electric motorised rickshaw — for a photo opportunity before they were seen off by Kenyan President William Ruto at Mombasa's Moi International Airport to conclude the visit. Earlier in the visit, Charles met with families of well-known Kenyan freedom fighters. While at the coast, the king observed a drill by an elite unit of British-trained Kenya marines and visited conservation projects.

Indiabulls Enterprises Limited (CIN: U71290HR2019PLC077579)						
Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30 September 2023						
Particulars	Quarter ended 30-Sep-23	Quarter ended 30-Jun-23	Quarter ended 30-Sep-22	Half year ended 30-Sep-23	Half year ended 30-Sep-22	Year ended 31-Mar-23
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
Total Income from operations	13.82	16.30	26.83	30.12	51.16	87.97
Net (Loss)/Profit for the period (before Tax and Share of Profit / (Loss), Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(2.94)	(0.00)	2.63	(2.94)	2.98	14.76
Net (Loss)/Profit for the period (before Tax and Share of Profit / (Loss) (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items))	(2.94)	(0.00)	2.63	(2.94)	2.98	5.70
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(3.45)	(1.12)	19.90	(4.57)	14.82	4.60
Equity share capital	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve) as shown in the audited Balance Sheet						231.41
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each from continuing operations						
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.18)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.22)	(0.02)	0.11
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.18)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.22)	(0.02)	0.11
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each from discontinued operations						
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.02)	(0.02)	1.01	(0.03)	0.75	0.09
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.02)	(0.02)	1.01	(0.03)	0.75	0.09

1. The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 03 November 2023.

2. Key Standalone Financial Information:						
Particulars	Quarter ended 30-Sep-23	Quarter ended 30-Jun-23	Quarter ended 30-Sep-22	Half year ended 30-Sep-23	Half year ended 30-Sep-22	Year ended 31-Mar-23
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
Total Income	10.52	12.09	28.64	22.61	56.17	84.71
(Loss)/Profit before Tax	(6.23)	(4.50)	8.59	(10.73)	13.70	(368.56)
Net Loss/Profit after Tax	(6.55)	(4.86)	1.88	(11.41)	1.69	(383.46)

3. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Half yearly Financial Results filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Half yearly Financial Results are available on the Company's website (https://www.indiabullsenterprises.com) and on the website of BSE (https://www.bseindia.com) and NSE (https://www.nseindia.com).

Registered Office: 5th Floor, Plot No. 108, IT Park, Udyog Vihar, Phase-1 Gurugram, Haryana 122016 For and on behalf of Board of Directors  
Place : Gurugram  
Date : 03 November 2023  
Vijay Kumar Agarwal  
Executive Director

## King Charles III meets with religious leaders

AP ■ NAIROBI

King Charles III met with religious leaders Friday to promote peace and security in Kenya during the last day of his four-day trip. The king spent a rainy Friday morning touring Mandhry Mosque, East Africa's oldest mosque, before meeting with Christian, Hindu, Muslim and African traditional faith leaders in an Anglican cathedral in Kenya's coastal city of Mombasa. The region has seen an increase in radicalisation and militants kidnapping or killing Kenyans. Kenya celebrates the 60th anniversary of its independence in December after decades of British rule. The two countries have had a close — though sometimes challenging — relationship since the Mau Mau revolution, the prolonged struggle against colonial rule in which thousands of Kenyans died. Although he didn't explicitly apologise for Britain's actions in its former colony, Charles expressed earlier in the visit his "greatest sorrow and the deepest regret" for the violence of the colonial era, citing the "abhorrent and unjustifiable



acts of violence" committed against Kenyans as they sought independence. Protesters demanding the king's apology for colonial abuses and reparations to victims were stopped by police during the first day of the trip. A planned press conference by victims of human rights abuses by British forces training in Nanyuki town was forcefully cancelled by police. Charles' trip is his first state visit to a Commonwealth country as monarch, and one that's full of symbolism. Charles' mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II, learned that she had become the UK monarch while visiting a game preserve in the East African nation — at the time a British colony — in 1952. At Charles' meeting with the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics at the Mombasa Memorial Cathedral, a plaque marking his visit was unveiled. Meanwhile, Queen Camilla met with staff, volunteers and survivors of sexual and gender-

based violence at the offices of a women's advocacy organisation called Sauti ya Wanawake, Swahili for "the Voice of Women," to share her own experience working with survivors and learn how the group supports people who have suffered such attacks. She was gifted a Swahili shawl locally known as a kanga. Later, the royal couple visited Fort Jesus, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was built by the Portuguese in the 1500s, and met local artists whose works were on display there. The king and queen were treated to a coastal Mijikenda community ceremonial dance at the fort before boarding a tuktuk — an electric motorised rickshaw — for a photo opportunity before they were seen off by Kenyan President William Ruto at Mombasa's Moi International Airport to conclude the visit. Earlier in the visit, Charles met with families of well-known Kenyan freedom fighters. While at the coast, the king observed a drill by an elite unit of British-trained Kenya marines and visited conservation projects.



# Elections to be held on Feb 8: Pak CJ confirms

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. The three-judge bench was hearing the pleas moved by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party among others.

Chief Justice Isa said the people of Pakistan deserved elections and expressed hope that all the institutions would play their constitutional roles in holding polls and urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday issued a notification to hold general elections on February 8 and submitted it to the Supreme Court.

Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja met President Alvi at the directives of the Supreme Court on Thursday and later the President's Office issued a statement that the general elections would be held on February 8. The development came hours after the election commission's lawyer told the apex court that elections would be held on February 11.

On Friday, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan submitted ECP's election notification to the three-member bench comprising Chief Justice Isa, Justice Athar Minallah and

Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. The three-judge bench was hearing the pleas moved by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party among others.

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# Bomb blast near police convoy kills 5 in Pak

**PTI ■ PESHAWAR**

A bomb blast near a police convoy killed at least five people and injured 24 others in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday in the latest attack on security personnel in the country. The bomb exploded close to the police patrol in Dera Ismail Khan city. District Police Officer Abdur Rauf Qaisrani said five people were killed and 24 others, including two policemen, suffered injuries.

The police cannot be deterred through such cowardice act and we will continue to fight against terrorism, Qaisrani said. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government condemned the blast and termed it an act of cowardice and jingoism. Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities in recent months, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan after the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November last year.

On October 31, a policeman was killed after unknown militants opened fire on a police camp in Dera Ismail Khan. The same day, two soldiers were killed in an IED blast in the South Waziristan district.

In July, as many as 12 soldiers of the Pakistan Army were killed in separate military operations in the Zhob and Sui areas of Balochistan.

# Pak, IMF negotiate for release of 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of loan

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

Cash-strapped Pakistan and the IMF have kicked off the much-awaited loan review talks for the release of the USD 710 million second tranche of a USD 3 billion bailout package on a generally positive note. Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) mission chief for Pakistan, Nathan Porter, led their sides to the opening round of two-week-long negotiations to discuss the next tranche based on Pakistan's performance in the first quarter that started in July. Porter "appreciated the government's commitment" to meeting the first-quarter targets, the Ministry of Finance said in a statement after the meeting, which has set the stage for a deep dive into forward-looking reforms under a nine-month bailout package, slated to be completed in March next year.

He also "commended the government's efforts and measures taken in some critical areas" and underscored the importance of continuing these efforts to stay on track for ensuring the country's economic stability, the ministry said. According to The Express Tribune newspaper, Porter inquired the Pakistani author-

ities about the next general elections and the functioning of the Special Investment Facilitation Council — the two most crucial issues that affected the country's political and economic landscapes.

Hours after the IMF-Pakistan opening session on Thursday, it was announced that Pakistan's general elections will be held on February 8, ending uncertainty over the much-awaited polls in the cash-strapped country.

The announcement came after the election commission officials met President Arif Alvi at the directives of the Supreme Court. The clarity on the election date will strengthen the hands of the Ministry of Finance during the negotiations, although the IMF has not explicitly attached any such condition.

The meeting was attended by IMF's resident representative in Islamabad, Esther Perez Ruiz, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Chairman Akif Saeed, Finance Secretary Imdadullah Bosal, senior finance ministry officials and several IMF delegates.

Akhtar reported Pakistan's official position on the progress

made so far on the USD 3 billion short-term loan agreement — called the Standby Arrangement (SBA) — and explained the fiscal measures being taken to improve the economic situation, according to the Dawn newspaper.

These measures included a tight control on expenditures, both in terms of restricting the development programme and reducing subsidies and provincial fiscal controls, more than the programme's requirements for the first quarter of the fiscal year, resulting in higher-than-targeted primary surplus and non-revenue collections.

The finance minister and other members of her team also held discussions with the visiting team on overall comprehensive reforms and the measures undertaken by the FBR, resulting in higher-than-targeted revenue collections, not only at the end of the first quarter but even in October, the first month of the second quarter.

During the review talks, the government team also generally updated the IMF's mission chief on the latest situation on the power sector's circular debt, which was also in line with the indicative targets, as required under the structural benchmark. The IMF team

was also updated on the government's strategies to address the circular debt issue as agreed under the SBA, both in the power and gas sectors, particularly the recent decisions for a massive increase in natural gas tariff to a level that there would be no circular debt addition during the current fiscal year.

Also, the petroleum development level targets for the first quarter had not only been achieved but had now exceeded the indicative target for the entire fiscal to achieve an average of Rs 55 per litre levy on petrol and diesel, as its rate had been increased to Rs 60 for both products in the second quarter to help create a cushion for any possible fiscal slippage for unseen factors, the government told the IMF.

Sources said the targets on Net International Reserves (NIR) of the central bank were also generally in line with the first-quarter target of negative USD 14.55 billion, but the second-quarter target of negative USD 13.8 billion NIR could be a challenge, as total disbursements from multilateral and

bilateral sources in the first half of the year are targeted at USD 12.2 billion, including USD 5.45 billion in the first quarter and USD 6.73 billion in the second. Officials said the technical-level discussions with relevant ministries and agencies would begin on Friday, resume on Monday and continue throughout the following week.

During the next week, the IMF team would engage with power and petroleum divisions — being the main areas of past failures and rising fiscal slippages — the FBR, the SBP and key state-owned enterprises besides officials of the Benazir Income Support Programme. Based on these technical discussions, the two sides are expected to take a break over the weekend and start a policy-level dialogue before wrapping up the review on November 16.

The critical discussions would remain on structural reforms, mainly in the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), quarterly national accounts and climate-related public investment management assessment action plans.

# 'US economic relationship with China must consider human rights'

**Washington:** Washington wants to build an economic relationship with Beijing that takes into account national security and human rights and is fair to both sides, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Thursday. In laying out the Biden administration's economic approach toward the Indo-Pacific region, the country's top financial official said Washington does not seek to decouple from China, the region's largest economy and the world's second largest next to the United States. But it wants to diversify by investing at home and boosting links with trusted countries in the region.

"We've put forward a vision of the world grounded in values we share with these allies and partners and in which there is also a healthy and stable economic relationship between the United States and China," Yellen said in a speech hosted by the Asia Society less than two weeks before leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation countries will gather in San Francisco for an annual meeting. President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping plan to hold talks on the sidelines of the meeting to stabilize US-China relations, which have unravelled over a range of issues, including trade, technology, security and human rights issues. In the South China Sea, tensions have escalated between Beijing and Manila over a contested shoal.

In the Taiwan Strait, China regularly flies warplanes near the self-governed island of Taiwan, which Beijing claims to be Chinese territory.

# US to send \$425 million in aid to Ukraine, officials say

**AP ■ WASHINGTON**

The United States is expected to deliver \$425 million in new military aid to Ukraine for its fight against Russia, including about \$300 million in long-term funding to buy laser-guided munitions designed to take out drones, US officials said Thursday.

According to officials, the long-term money will be provided through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which funds contracts for larger weapons systems that need to be either built or modified by defense companies.

In addition, the Biden administration will send about \$125 million in weapons and equipment through presidential drawdown authority, which pulls weapons from existing US stockpiles.

According to officials, the weapons will include munitions for High-Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS), as well as artillery rounds, anti-tank missiles, demolition equipment and cold weather gear.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the aid has not yet been publicly announced. An announcement is expected on Friday. This would be the 50th package of aid pulled from Pentagon shelves and it resembles an aid package about a week ago that was for \$150 million.

The smaller totals for the drawdowns come as Pentagon funding for the Ukraine war shrinks. President Joe Biden has requested nearly \$106 billion in supplemental funding

# Russia steps up its aerial barrage of Ukraine as Kyiv officials brace for attacks

**Kyiv (Ukraine) (AP):** Russia unleashed a wave of nighttime drone and missile attacks across 10 of Ukraine's 24 regions, Ukrainian authorities said Friday as they prepare for another winter of infrastructure bombardment by the Kremlin's forces. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted 24 of Kh-59 cruise missiles launched by Russia.

The attacks caused fires in homes and public buildings, especially in the southern Kherson region which Moscow has increasingly targeted in recent weeks, emergency services said. Authorities reported that two people were injured. "We understand that as winter approaches, Russian terrorists will attempt to cause more harm," Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Telegram after the attacks, employing his usual choice of words for the enemy's forces.

Last winter, Russia took aim at Ukraine's power grid in an effort to deny civilians light and heating and chip away at the country's appetite for war. Ukrainian officials accused the Kremlin of weaponizing winter. The Russian strikes are inflicting "unimaginable levels of suffering" on Ukrainian civilians, according to Ramesh Rajasingham, coordination director in the UN humanitarian office. Andriy Yermak, the president's chief of staff, said Russia had expanded the number of drones it uses in its routine nighttime attacks as winter approaches.

"The battle for the sky is what awaits us," he said on Telegram. Laser-guided munitions designed to take out drones are expected to be part of a USD 425 million package of new US military aid to Ukraine, according to US officials. The coming wet, muddy and cold weather will likely frustrate both sides' efforts to advance on the battlefield, compelling a change in military tempo. Russia and Ukraine will be building up ammunition stockpiles for offensives in 2024, analysts say. Ukraine is relying heavily on plans to ramp up its own weapons manufacturing while Russia buys from North Korea, Iran and Belarus.

that includes money for Ukraine, Israel's war against Hamas, US efforts to counter China, and additional security at the border with Mexico.

Congress has not acted on it yet in the face of growing Republican resistance.

The aid is meant to pro-

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is hereby informed that flat number 07, Block-B-1, Sector-34, Noida was purchased from M/s K K Rubber Pvt. Ltd. in the name of Ravi Minhas, son of Shri Hari Singh Minhas, whose original allotment certificate, possession certificate and transfer letter had received to us has been actually lost. The first information report has been filed, whose allotment letter number is 11/NOIDA/SFF/UDA/H/NS/1/89, Possession Certificate No. 3870/Noida/HA/1993 and transfer letter number 693/Noida/HA/2013. The date is 29.08.2013.

**Amit Kumar (Advocate)**

**सर्वजनिक सूचना**

मैं वसंत खन्ना अकामन 50, दूरा नगर, दिल्ली-110096, (आधार नं 2014 1191 7326), यह घोषणा करता हूँ कि मैं अपने पूर्व होना हस्तांतरण किस्ती दस्तावेज के अर्थात् पुर्न-गडडों के बचने (रुच्य व राश्या) व पुर्न शोभा व उनके बचने व पुर्न आगमन उसके बचने व पुर्न रूपबन्ध खन्ना को अपनी सभी अचल सम्पत्ति व लेनदार व देवदारों से बेखतल करता हूँ और आज के बाद मेरे उत्तराधिकारी का मेरी किसी भी चल अचल सम्पत्ति पर कोई हक व अधिकार नहीं होगा और भविष्य में इसे मेरी किसी भी चल अचल सम्पत्ति पर दावा करने का कोई हक नहीं होगा और अगर वे भविष्य में कोई दावा करते है तो वह मेरे इस प्रपत्र पर के अर्थात् रद्द माना जाये।

यह कि मेरे उत्तराधिकारी/व्यक्ति मेरी पुत्री रानी खन्ना व मेरे पुत्र श्रीपति खन्ना से मारपीट व लड़ाई झगडा व गाली गलौच करते है जो मेरी हर सह से सेबा व देखभाल करते है और उनके खिलाफ 20-25 शिकायत की दर्ज है इसलिए मेरे उत्तराधिकारी पुत्री-गडडों के बचने (रुच्य व राश्या) व पुत्री शोभा व उसके बचने व पुत्री आशा व उसके बचने व पुर्न रूपबन्ध खन्ना का मेरी किसी भी चल अचल सम्पत्ति पर कोई हक ना माना जाये।

शुक्रवर्ती वसंत खन्ना

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. **VEHICLES FOR SALE**

1) SWRJ MAZDA SARTAJ XM REG. NO. DL1MA1554-YOM-2018 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 407201.4

2) 344055172 TLPT11093CH REG. NO. HR55AL0265-YOM 2021 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 995000

UNDER HYPOTHECAATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 20-11-2023 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).

BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELI CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313 OR CONTACT : RAMAN AHUJA KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 8377988238 EMAIL-raman.ahuja@kotak.com

**LOST & FOUND**

I, ASHOK MANOCHA alias ASHOK KUMAR MANOCHA SON OF SHRI W. C. MANOCHA R. O. D-101, PREET VIHAR, DELHI-110092, have inform That I am the Owner of PROPERTY NO.D-101, SITUATED IN THE LAYOUT PLAN OF THE PREET NAGAR CO-OPERATIVE HOUSE BUILDING SOCIETY LTD. COLONY KNOWN AS PREET VIHAR DELHI-110092, the Original Perpetual Sub Lease, GPA, ATS, Will, Building Sanction Plan and Sanction Letter, have been lost/misplaced at Preet Vihar, Delhi-110092 on 31.10.2023. I have also filed a complaint in respect of lost/misplaced of above said documents vide SO No.430 and LR No.1095934/2023 dated 02.11.2023

**ASHOK MANOCHA**

**राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, कुरुक्षेत्र**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (UNDER THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVT. OF INDIA) KURUKSHETRA-136119**

**Advt.No.31/2023**

**Admission to Ph.D. Program in Even Semester of Academic Year 2023-24**

National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra invites online applications from Indian and Foreign nationals for admission in the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree Programmes on Full Time (Institute/CSIR-UGC-NET-JRF, Project), Self Financed Full Time and Part Time seats for Academic Year 2023-24.

Number of Seats, Online Application Form Link, and other relevant details along with Ph.D. Ordinance are available on the Institute website: [www.nitkkr.ac.in](http://www.nitkkr.ac.in) under Admission 2023-> Ph.D. tab.

All interested candidates may fill the Google Form latest by November 30, 2023, 05.00 p.m. If the application is incomplete or any information is found misleading/false at any point during or after the admission process, the candidate's candidature/admission will be cancelled and the application fee will not be refunded in any case.

Please visit Institute website regularly for any announcement or updates in this regard.

**Registrar /lc**

# Kishida visits Manila to boost defence ties

**AP ■ MANILA**

Japan's prime minister began a two-day visit on Friday to the Philippines, where he's expected to announce a security aid package and upcoming negotiations for a defence pact in a bid to boost Tokyo's alliances in the face of China's alarming assertiveness in the region.

After a red-carpet welcome at the Malacanang Palace in Manila, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr was set to hold talks with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on bolstering overall relations, primarily defence ties. China's increasingly aggressive actions in the South China Sea will be high in the agenda, Philippine officials said.

Two weeks ago, China's ships separately blocked then hit a Philippine coast guard vessel and a supply boat near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea.



which the Philippines now largely uses to defend its territorial interests in the South China Sea, before leaving for Malaysia.

"We look forward to the address of a leader of a nation that is a robust trading partner, a strong security ally, a lending hand during calamities and an investor in Philippine progress," Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri said. Kishida's government unveiled plans in December to build up its security and defence - including counter-strike capability - in a major shift from the country's self-defence-only principle adopted after the last world war.

Under the new strategy, Japan will utilize its huge development aid to support efforts by poorer nations like the Philippines to strengthen their security capabilities and improve safety at sea as China flexes its military muscle in the region.

Japan immediately expressed its strong support to the Philippines and the United States renewed its warning that it's obligated to defend its treaty ally if Filipino forces come under an armed attack in the contested waters.

On Saturday, Kishida will become the first Japanese premier to address a joint session of the Philippine congress, underlining how the Asian nations' ties have transformed since Japan's brutal occupation of the Philippines in World War II. Kishida said in a departure speech in Japan that he would outline Japan's diplomatic policy for Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines. "I hope to confirm our pursuit toward a world where the free and open international order based on the rule of law is maintained and human dignity is protected," he said. He's scheduled to visit a Japanese-funded Manila subway project Saturday and board one of a dozen Japanese-built coast guard patrol ships,

**Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited**  
(Formerly "Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited" & "Indiabulls Integrated Services Limited")  
(CIN: L51101HR2007PLC077999)

Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30 September 2023

Particulars	Quarter ended 30-Sep-23		Quarter ended 30-Jun-23		Quarter ended 30-Sep-22		Half year ended 30-Sep-23		Half year ended 30-Sep-22		Year ended 31-Mar-23
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited		
Total Income from Operations	0.06	0.24	33.93	0.30	191.68	185.90					
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(5.74)	(5.50)	32.06	(11.24)	182.79	84.69					
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items))	(5.74)	(5.50)	32.06	(11.24)	182.79	84.69					
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(5.74)	(5.50)	32.27	(11.24)	182.79	84.85					
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	1.35	(0.19)	41.70	1.16	171.66	58.58					
Equity Share Capital	19.74	19.74	19.74	19.74	19.74	19.74					
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the audited Balance Sheet						(242.79)					
Earnings per Share (EPS) before extraordinary items											
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.57)	(0.55)	3.19	(1.12)	18.20	9.44					
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.57)	(0.55)	3.19	(1.12)	18.20	9.44					
Earnings per Share (EPS) after extraordinary items											
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.57)	(0.55)	3.19	(1.12)	18.20	9.44					
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.57)	(0.55)	3.19	(1.12)	18.20	9.44					

**Note to the financial results:**

1) The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 03 November 2023.

2) **Key Standalone Financial Information:**

Particulars	Quarter ended 30-Sep-23		Quarter ended 30-Jun-23		Quarter ended 30-Sep-22		Half year ended 30-Sep-23		Half year ended 30-Sep-22		Year ended 31-Mar-23
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited		
Total Income	0.15	0.18	52.35	0.33	473.91	529.69					
Profit/(Loss) before Tax	(10.64)	(10.32)	49.74	(20.96)	483.93	412.77					
Net Profit/(Loss) after Tax	(10.64)	(10.32)	49.74	(20.96)	483.93	412.99					

3) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Half yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Half yearly Financial Results are available on the Company's website (<https://www.yaari.com>) and on the website of BSE (<https://www.bseindia.com>) and NSE (<https://www.nseindia.com>).

**Registered Office:** 5th Floor, Plot No. 108, IT Park, Udyog Vihar, Phase-1 Gurugram, Haryana 122016

**For and on behalf of the Board of Directors**

**Place :** Gurugram  
**Date :** 03 November 2023

**Kubair Khara**  
**Executive Director & CEO**



# Finance Ministry launches amnesty scheme for filing appeals against GST demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has come out with an amnesty scheme for filing appeals against Goods and Services Tax (GST) demand orders. The scheme, which will be open till January 31, 2024, will be available for entities that were unable to submit their appeals against orders issued by the tax officer on or before March 31, 2023, according to the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).

The CBIC issued a notification with respect to the scheme on Thursday. So far, the GST law allowed an assessee to file an appeal against an assessment order seeking taxes within three months of the tax officer passing such a demand order. This can be extended by one more month. In its last meeting on October 7, the GST Council had approved this amnesty scheme for filing appeals. The entities willing to avail of the scheme will have to pre-deposit 12.5



per cent of the tax demand, against 10 per cent currently. The move will facilitate a large number of taxpayers, who could not file an appeal in the past within the specified time period. AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said the scheme would be a lifeline for those who might have missed the appeal deadline due to administrative errors or unforeseen circumstances. This initiative can also promote enhanced compliance among taxpayers. By offering

a fair and lenient approach to appeal filing, it encourages better cooperation with tax authorities and a willingness to resolve disputes or clarify tax matters. "Additionally, by allowing disputes to be resolved more efficiently, the scheme may reduce the burden on the legal system. This benefits both taxpayers and the tax administration by streamlining the appeal process and potentially reducing the need for prolonged litigation," Mohan added.



## Services sector activity in India hits 7-month low in Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The services sector growth in India fell to a seven-month low in October on softer increase in output and new business, amid competitive conditions and price pressures, a monthly survey said on Friday. The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell to 58.4 in October, from a 13-year high of 61 in September, signalling the slowest rate of expansion since March. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

US boosting growth to its second-highest in the series over its nine-year history," Lima added.

On the price front, services companies in India reported an increase in their expenses in October, which they attributed to higher food, fuel and staff costs.

"Although survey participants passed these additional cost burdens on to clients, permitted by demand strength, the rise in charges could have been the trigger of the deceleration in sales growth. Moreover, a pick-up in inflation expectations in October dampened business confidence," Lima added.

Going ahead, the Future Activity Index fell by more than five points in October, signalling some loss of confidence surrounding the outlook for services output, amid rising inflation expectations.

Meanwhile, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index fell from 61 in September to 58.4 in October, indicating the weakest rate of expansion since March.

"Although India continued to post substantial growth of aggregate business activity, the upturn lost strength in October amid slower increases in manufacturing production and services activity," the survey said.

Prices charged for Indian goods and services rose further in October, thereby stretching the current sequence of inflation to nearly three years.

## India's coal production rises 19 per cent to 78.65 MT in Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's coal output increased 18.59 per cent to 78.65 million tonne (MT) in October. The country produced 66.32 MT in the corresponding month of previous fiscal year. Coal output by state-owned CIL increased 15.36 per cent to 61.07 MT in October this year as compared to 52.94 MT in the year-ago period, the coal min-

istry said in a statement. Coal India Ltd (CIL) accounts for over 80 per cent of the domestic coal output. The production during April-October FY24 increased to 507.02 MT as compared to 448.49 MT during the same period in FY23. The dispatch of coal increased to 79.30 MT last month against 67.13 MT in October FY23. The surge "in both coal produc-



tion and dispatch underscores the nation's advancing energy self-sufficiency and reinforces our determination to meet forthcoming energy demands," the ministry said. Ministry of Coal remains resolute in its commitment to ensuring continuous coal production and distribution, thereby securing a dependable energy supply that bolsters the nation's ongoing development.



## Titan Q2 net profit rises 10 per cent to ₹916 cr, sales jump 25 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jewellery and watchmaker Titan Company Ltd on Friday reported an increase of 9.7 per cent in its consolidated net profit at ₹916 crore in September 2023 quarter, led by sales of jewellery in the domestic market. The company posted a net profit of ₹835 crore in the July-September period a year ago, the Tata Group-managed firm said in a regulatory filing. Titan's sales increased 25 per cent to ₹10,708 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹8,567 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. Its total expenses in the September quarter stood at ₹11,402 crore, up 41.07 per cent year-on-year. During the period, the total income of Titan rose 37.17 per cent to ₹12,653 crore. In the September quarter, Titan's jewellery segment clocked a revenue of ₹11,081 crore, up 38.56 per cent as compared to ₹7,997 crore in the year-ago period. In the jewellery segment, Titan's total income from India operations recorded a strong growth of 21 per cent YoY to ₹8,438 crore; revenue from exports declined by 33 per cent YoY due to lower inventory transfers to overseas subsidiaries.

Titan reported "Rs 1,000 crore-plus of quarterly revenues for the first time" from its 'watches and wearables' segment. The company has a revenue of ₹870 crore from analogue watches, growing 22 per cent YoY. While in the wearables, Titan "continued its fast-paced growth trajectory" as its revenue crossed ₹175 crore, clocking a 131 per cent growth.

The division added 10 new stores in Titan World, five in Helios and five stores in Fastrack during the quarter, it said. Eye care segment revenue increased 13.17 per cent to ₹189 crore as compared to ₹167 crore in Q2 FY23. In the segment, international brands clocked a faster growth of 14 per cent whereas the in-house brand's growth was slower. Now international brands contribute 25 per cent share in the portfolio, the company added.

"Amongst categories, revenues from sunglasses grew 47 per cent YoY whereas frames grew 9 per cent YoY whereas frames growth was nearly flat YoY," it said. Revenue from other segments, which include its emerging business such as fragrance, wallets, Indian clothing brand Taneria etc., rose 11.22 per cent to ₹218 crore in the July-September period. "Taneira's Q2FY24 sales grew by 64 per cent YoY. The brand opened 4 new stores during the quarter, taking the total store count to 51 stores covering 25 cities," it said. Meanwhile, the debenture committee of Titan in a meeting held on Friday approved the allotment of 2.50 lakh NCDs, with a face value of one lakh, having an aggregate value of ₹2,500 crore in two series with maturity periods of 18 months 2 days, and 24 months, respectively, on private placement basis.

## Markets continue to rally for 2nd day on positive global trends

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensx and Nifty ended with gains on Friday in line with positive trends in global markets. Extending its previous day's rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 282.88 points or 0.44 per cent to settle at 64,363.78. During the day, it jumped 454.29 points or 0.70 per cent to 64,535.19. The Nifty went up by 97.35 points or 0.51 per cent to 19,230.60. Among the Sensex firms, Titan, Tech Mahindra, Tata Motors, JSW Steel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India, and Sun Pharma were the major gainers. Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, Nestle, Tata Steel and Bajaj Finance Bank were the major laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled with gains. European markets were trading in the positive territory. The US markets ended with significant gains on Thursday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude rose 0.01 per cent to USD 86.86 a barrel. "The optimism is buoyed by firm global clues, steady macro-economic data and strong domestic corporate earnings. Clues that Fed is unlikely to hike rates in the future and modest decline in oil prices are adding to the optimism," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) continued to be net sellers in the capital markets as they offloaded equities worth ₹1,261.19 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

## Reliance Retail to acquire Arvind Fashions' beauty retail business

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's leading retailer Reliance will acquire the beauty retail business of the Lalbhai family-promoted Arvind Fashion, expanding its play in the fast-growing Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) market. Arvind Fashion on Friday said it has "entered into a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) with Reliance Beauty & Personal Care Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd to sell and transfer the entire equity stake held by the company," it said. Upon completion of the formalities under the said SPA, Arvind Beauty Brands Retail would cease to be a subsidiary of the company, according to a regulatory filing from the Ahmedabad-based company. Over consideration of sales, the company said: "transaction has

been done at an enterprise value of ₹216 crore towards the sale of the entire equity stake and repayment of loans. The Purchase consideration towards the sale of the entire equity stake is ₹99.02 crore." Arvind Beauty Brands Retail had a turnover of ₹336.70 crore in FY23 and contributed 7.60 per cent of the consolidated revenue of Arvind Fashions. Reliance Retail has entered into the fast-growing beauty business with Tira, an omnichannel beauty retail platform. The country's leading retailer competes with brands like HUL's Lakme, Nykaa, Tata and LVMH's Sephora in India's growing beauty and personal care marketplace. Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL) is the holding company of all the retail companies under the RIL (Reliance

Industries Limited) group. According to a joint report by Redseer Strategy Consultant and Peak XV (formerly Sequoia Capital India & Southeast Asia) - the Indian beauty and personal care market is estimated to grow to USD 30 billion by 2027, accounting for 5 per cent of the global market, according to a report. The Indian Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) market -- estimated to be around USD 19 billion in 2022 -- has very low per capita spend in the category but as the country prospers, the growth headroom will materialise strongly, the report said. India is uniquely positioned as one of the most attractive and fastest-growing BPC markets globally, the report said. Shares of Arvind Fashions Ltd on Friday were trading at ₹347.35 at BSE, up 6.71 per cent

## Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone posts 48 per cent growth in cargo handling in October

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) on Friday reported a 48 per cent growth in cargo handling at seaports it operated in October. The billionaire Gautam Adani's firm handled about 37 million metric ton (MMT) of total cargo in October, up 48 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y). "APSEZ records its highest ever monthly cargo volumes of 37 MMT, with approximately 36 MMT contributed by its ports in India.

"For the first time in the company's history, the total cargo volume of our portfolio of ports in India surpassed the 35-MMT mark to touch 36 MMT, which is a good 43 per cent Y-o-Y growth," the company said. According to APSEZ, its Haifa Port in Israel handled over 1.1 MMT of cargo in October, marginally better than the average cargo volume run rate of the last six months. "Overall, in the initial seven months of FY24 (Apr-Oct 2023), APSEZ has handled 240 MMT of total cargo, which is a good 18 per cent Y-o-Y growth,"



the company said, adding that across its ports in India, the recorded volume growth on Y-o-Y basis is around 15 per cent. APSEZ CEO and Whole Time Director Karan Adani said the

improvement in cargo volumes is testimony to the success of three-prong business strategy which encompasses the focus on higher operational efficiencies, integrated business model with an end-to-end service to our customers.

APSEZ said during the initial seven months of FY24 (Apr-Oct '23), the three broad cargo types -- drybulk, liquids, and containers -- have recorded a double-digit Y-o-Y growth. The total containers handled by APSEZ in India increased to 5.5 MTEUs (13 per cent higher Y-o-Y), including 4.2 MTEUs at

Mundra Port alone, it added. The company's logistics business segment has also delivered record performance, with 24 per cent Y-o-Y growth in rail TEUs, taking the total container volumes handled in the initial seven months to 3,28,000 TEUs and 43 per cent Y-o-Y growth in bulk cargo volumes with handling of 10.6 MMTs of cargo. In the initial seven months of FY24, the company said the firm has already docked 5,700 ships and serviced 27,300 rakes, including some of the largest ships ever handled by the respective port.

## Air India to add 30 new planes in next 6 months; fly to 4 more overseas destinations



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India on Friday said it expects to induct more than 30 new planes, add over 400 weekly services and operate to four new international destinations in the next six months. Providing details about its ongoing network and fleet

augmentation efforts, the Tata Group-owned airline said international expansion is planned in North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. Air India said it intends to add more than 400 weekly flights to its domestic and international route network until March 2024, as part of the winter schedule. The winter schedule

2023 is effective from October 29 to March 30 next year. On the back of expected new aircraft deliveries over the next six months, Air India aims to add more than 200 weekly flights on several domestic routes and on the international network, it would operate over 200 weekly flights, of which over 80

weekly flights have already been added. "Between now and March 2024, Air India expects to induct over 30 wide body and narrow body aircraft to its fleet, including six A350s, four B777s and 20 A320 neos," it said in a release. Earlier this year, Air India placed orders for 470 aircraft with Airbus and Boeing. Four new international destinations will be announced in due course. "While modernising our fleet and introducing new products and services is a top priority in Air India's ongoing transformation journey, we are equally focused on densifying and expanding our route network to capture the rapidly growing demand in the market," Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson said.

## Gold rises ₹50; silver plunges ₹600



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price rose ₹50 to ₹61,900 per 10 gram in the national capital on Friday amid a jump in the precious metal's prices globally, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had settled at ₹61,850 per 10 gram.

"Gold prices were slightly up on Friday, up by ₹50 against its previous close," said Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities. However, silver plunged ₹600 to ₹74,300 per kg. In the international markets, gold was up at USD 1,987 per ounce while silver was quoting lower at USD 22.61 per ounce.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

**INDIGO POSTS ₹189 CRORE PROFIT IN SEPT QR**  
New Delhi: IndiGo on Friday reported a net profit of ₹188.9 crore for the three months ended September as the country's largest airline remained in the black for four straight quarters, boosted by higher traffic and increased capacity. InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of IndiGo, had posted a loss of ₹1,583.3 crore in the year-ago period, according to a release.

**ZOMATO SHARES JUMP NEARLY 10 PER CENT**  
New Delhi: Shares of online food delivery platform Zomato on Friday jumped nearly 10 per cent after the company reported a consolidated profit after tax of ₹36 crore for the second quarter ended September 2023, driven by strong revenue growth. The company's stock rallied 8.28 per cent to settle at ₹116.40 on the BSE. The company had reported a loss of ₹251 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. In the second quarter of this fiscal, revenue from operations was ₹2,848 crore. In the year-ago period, it was ₹1,661 crore.

**VIGILANCE AWARENESS WEEK AT POWERGRID**  
Faridabad: As part of Vigilance Awareness Week this year, a programme was inaugurated on 30th October, 2023 at POWERGRID Northern Region-1 headquarters, Faridabad. An Integrity Pledge was administered by AK Mishra, Executive Director, NR-1, to all employees and senior officials. On this occasion, messages of the President, Vice President and Central Vigilance Commissioner were read out by other senior officers to all the employees and emphasized upon maintaining the standards of values of ethics and transparency at the workplace and their life spheres.



# BONMATÍ HELPS GET A WIN OVER SEXISM IN SPAIN

**AP ■ SANT JOAN DESPI**

It's been a whirlwind last few months for Aitana Bonmatí, the newly crowned Ballon d'Or winner, with memorable victories on and off the field. Far from the days of being the only girl playing on her village's soccer team, Bonmatí led Spain to Women's World Cup glory in August after helping Barcelona win the Champions League for a second time, while being named the best player at both competitions. The 25-year-old midfielder was also named the best player in the world along with Lionel Messi.

Amid all the huge successes, it has also been a fraught time for Bonmatí after she and her fellow Spain teammates decided they would not be silent when the now-former president of the Spanish soccer federation Luis Rubiales kissed forward Jenni Hermoso on the lips without her consent during the World Cup awards ceremony, drawing attention away from their greatest achievement.

While Bonmatí says that taking a stand was a source of pride and strength for the players in their struggle for equality, it has taken its toll - even if Spain has been crushing its opponents in the Nations League in the aftermath of the worst of the crisis caused by Rubiales.

"Right now both Barça and Spain are playing great, so perhaps the fight for social causes and equality have brought us together even more, but this is also a question of just being professionals,"

Bonmatí told The Associated Press on Thursday at Barcelona's training grounds in an interview conducted both in English and Spanish. Bonmatí and her teammates for Spain had to rebel against their own federation and refuse to play not once, but twice, over the past year to denounce what they considered to be discriminatory attitudes and practices inside the governing body of Spanish soccer. Leveraging their new status as world champions, they were able to finally force the ousting of Rubiales, and their coach, along with securing improvements in staff, travel and assistance for players with young children. That has also coincided with a strike by players for Spain's women's league to get a higher minimum wage.

"It has all gone so fast, and what all we are thinking about is the time when we can only focus on soccer and leave other issues behind us," she said. "We have enough to think about just with training and winning games for on top of that to have to pay attention to other things that sap our energy, generate stress and are not good for our health. So we are all ready to get back to soccer."

Part of the overhaul of the federation has included the removal of the term "women's" from its national soccer team. Both the men's and women's teams are now called officially Spain's national football teams.

"If you talk about soccer and women's soccer you are differentiating between them and giving more importance to men's soccer by calling it 'soccer,'" she



said. "Soccer is soccer, no matter who plays it." Bonmatí, who was also named the UEFA player of the year, won the Ballon d'Or award after her Spain and Barcelona teammate Alexia Putellas had prevailed the previous two years. Only one Spanish man has won the award: Luis Suárez in 1960.

With Alexia playing limited minutes at the World Cup after missing most of Barcelona's season due to a long injury layoff, Bonmatí took on a key role for both teams as their top playmaker and an improved scoring threat. At the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, she scored three goals and provided two assists while driving Spain's attack that beat England 1-0 in the Aug. 20 final.

Her light frame, combined with great vision, ball handling and passing ability, has drawn comparisons to the great Barcelona midfielders Andrés Iniesta and Xavi Hernández she admired as a child. Former Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola has said that he is "completely in love" with Bonmatí's playing style. For Bonmatí, she is cast in the Barcelona mold because from a young age she based her game on Barcelona's mantra that having the ball is a prerequisite of the best attack, and also the best defense.

"Everyone says that we have a similitude with Guardiola's teams and especially when he was the coach of Barça," Bonmatí said. "I don't want to compare (because) we are different players, but we have the same style. We understand the same style of football."



## Ballon d'Or awards to be co-organised by European governing body UEFA

**AP ■ NYON (SWITZERLAND)**

Soccer's most prestigious individual prize, the Ballon d'Or, will be co-organized by Union of European Football Associations from next year, giving the European soccer body a global event that traditionally outranks FIFA's own world awards. The deal comes seven years after a previous partnership between the French organizers of the award and world governing body FIFA ended.

From 2024, the Ballon d'Or awards and ceremony will be co-organized by UEFA and Groupe Amaury, which publishes France Football and L'Équipe.

France Football magazine created the Ballon d'Or, which was first awarded in 1956 to England winger Stanley Matthews. For six seasons from 2010 the award was known as the FIFA Ballon d'Or, and ceremonies were held in the world governing body's home city Zurich.

FIFA has run its own Best Awards since 2016 and previously had an annual world player of the year award since 1991.

The latest edition of the Ballon d'Or was held Monday in Paris with two World Cup winners taking the awards as best player: Lionel Messi won the men's prize for the eighth time and Aitana Bonmatí took home her first women's award.

"UEFA will contribute its football expertise, market the global commercial rights and organize the annual awards gala," it said in a statement.

The relaunch will add new awards for the best coaches in men's and women's soccer.

"Together, UEFA and Groupe Amaury aim to enhance the stature and global reach of the awards while fostering a sense of unity and collaboration within the football community," UEFA said. The deal will also see UEFA scrap its own player of the year awards, which have traditionally been handed out in August, although it will hand out a player of the season award for each of its club competitions, such as the Champions League and Europa League.

## Diving runner wins Canada's 1st track, bags gold at Pan American Games

**AP ■ SANTIAGO**

Charles Philibert-Thiboutot dived across the finish line to win the men's 1,500-meter race and give Canada its first track and field gold medal at this year's Pan American Games in Chile. Philibert-Thiboutot, 32, cried in disbelief when he saw he had secured the win in 3 minutes, 39.74 seconds, two one-hundredths of a second ahead of fellow Canadian Rob Heppenstall, who earned the silver medal.

American Casey Comber won the bronze medal in a cold and damp National Stadium in Santiago, Chile.

Philibert-Thiboutot said he had "never before" dived across the finish line.

"I saw that Rob (Heppenstall) was leading, I saw we could go one-two and then I remembered that I really wanted to win gold," he said. Earlier this week, Philibert-Thiboutot won the silver in the men's 5,000-meter race.

Heppenstall, 26, didn't sound too disappointed about the result. The two Canadians hugged and held the country's flag together in front of a raucous crowd in Santiago.

"I am finishing 2023 in a high note, one of the best my career, I couldn't ask for a better finish," Heppenstall said.



Shortly after the 1,500-meter race, shot putter Sarah Mitton gave Canada its second track and field gold medal at the Pan American Games. The two golds Thursday gave Canada 37 gold medals with two more days of competition, which is already more than the nation had four years ago at Lima, Peru.

Philibert-Thiboutot had a series of injuries that stopped him from running at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but will be competing in Paris next year. He said the win at the Pan American Games gave him some reassurance he can fight.

## Cameron has blistering start and leads in Mexico with a 62

**AP ■ LOS CABOS (MEXICO)**

Cameron Percy of Australia had only one birdie over his last five holes and still matched his best score on the PGA Tour, a 10-under 62 that gave him a two-shot lead in the World Wide Technology Championship. Percy holed a 70-yard wedge for eagle on the sixth hole and made just about everything he looked at to reach 9 under through 13 holes, with two reachable par 5s still to play.

But he three-putted from just short of the green on the 14th and the putts he had been making stopped going in. He holed a 15-foot putt on the par-5 closing hole at El Cardonal in Diamante to match the score he shot in Las Vegas in 2010.

"I couldn't make 'em all," Percy said with a grin.

He led by two over Camilo Villegas and Michael Kim, who

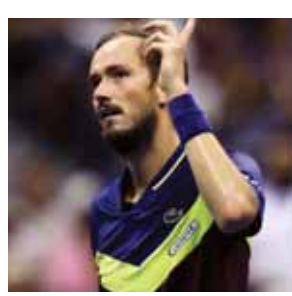


both played in the morning, and Nat Lashley and Tano Goya, who played in the afternoon. Scoring conditions were ideal all day with wide fairways, smooth greens and wind that was more refreshing than it was a menace. Getting just as much attention as the players was Tiger Woods, who designed El Cardonal, his first course used for a PGA Tour event. Woods always enjoyed a course where par was no picnic and players faced options. The

PGA Tour, is at No. 152 in the FedEx Cup. The top 125 keep full status for 2024. The top 150 would have conditional status, which would lead to a full schedule considering the \$20 million signature events for the leading players.

"Finishing top 150 at my age would be fantastic," Percy said. "I want to at least do that, but if I can keep the ball rolling like I did today, I should be able to finish a lot higher than that, and then lead into Q-school with the Champions Tour. Yeah, I'm looking forward to that."

Villegas knows the feeling, minus Champions Q-school. The 41-year-old Colombian, a four-time PGA Tour winner, split time between the Korn Ferry Tour and whatever PGA Tour events he could get in this year. He is No. 223 in the FedEx Cup with three tournaments remaining.



## Medvedev to play for Indian team PBG Eagles in World Tennis League

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Daniil Medvedev, the 2021 US Open champion, will compete for Indian team 'PBG Eagles' in the second season of the World Tennis League (WTL) and will have fellow Russian Andrey Rublev as teammate in the year-ending event starting December 24.

The Indian team has been acquired by Punit Balan Group, which already owns nine teams in various leagues across sports. The second season of the WTL, which has support of former Indian player Mahesh Bhupathi, will be held at Yas Viceroy Hotel in Abu Dhabi from December 21 to 24 where 16 of the world's best tennis stars will compete.

Medvedev, a semi-finalist at this year's Wimbledon, said, "I'm delighted to be joining for this season of the World Tennis League in Abu Dhabi. I've played several times in the UAE and always enjoy coming back, and I'm aiming to finish this year on a positive note there."

Punit Balan, the Chairman & Managing Director of PBG, said they are aiming for title as they make a foray into a global tennis project.

"We are thrilled to be a part of the World Tennis League, marking a significant stride in Punit Balan Group's dedication to creating a global sports property. With some of the world's most exceptional tennis talents already part of our franchise, we are eagerly anticipating a season filled with unmatched and thrilling tennis action," Balan said in a release.

"Much like our successes in other sporting disciplines, we aim to put up quality competition and clinch the championship title."

The PBG has teams in Premier Handball League, Ultimate Table Tennis, Ultimate Kho Kho, Maharashtra Premier League Premier Badminton League, Pro Panja and Global Chess League.

As per the format, each of four teams will have four players, competing in men's and women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

The top two teams will clash for title on December 24. The League will feature women's World number one Aryna Sabalenka, this year's Australian Open finalist Stefano Tsitsipas, and four-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek.

## Sinner withdraws from Paris Masters, slams organisers for lack of rest after early morning finish

**VAP ■ PARIS**

Jannik Sinner pulled out of the Paris Masters on Thursday in a rare scheduling protest, with the fatigued Italian criticizing organizers for failing to give him enough time to rest following an early morning finish in his previous match.

"I am sorry to announce that I am withdrawing from today's match in Bercy," the fourth-seeded Italian wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, to explain his decision which saw third-round opponent Alex de Minaur get a walkover into the quarterfinals.

"I finished the match when it was almost 3 in the morning (Thursday) and didn't go to bed until a few hours later. I had less than 12 hours to rest and prepare for the next game," Sinner said.

"I have to make the right decision for my health and my body. The weeks ahead with the ATP Finals at home and the Davis Cup will be very important, now I focus on preparing for these important



events. See you in Turin! Forza!" Sinner had finished playing his second-round match against American Mackenzie McDonald at 2:37 a.m. in Paris. Sinner was then scheduled to play Thursday in the fourth match on center court of the day session instead of being part of the night session. He would have started against de Minaur around 5 p.m. Local time if he had been fit enough. Sinner got support from other players. "14,5 hours to recover," Casper Ruud

wrote on X, "what a joke." "It's crazy... tournament doesn't care and ATP just follow what the tournament will want," Stan Wawrinka said. Sinner went into the Paris Masters having won the final of the Erste Bank Open in Vienna on Sunday against Daniil Medvedev.

**DJOKOVIC OVERCOMES VIRUS**

A subpar Novak Djokovic did enough for a 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4 win over Tallon Griekspoor to extend his winning streak to 15 matches and widen the gap with Carlos Alcaraz in the race for the year-end No. 1 ranking.

"I think he deserved more the victory today," Djokovic said on court in French. "I started well but I felt poorly afterward. No injury, just a stomach virus in the past two or three days."

The top-seeded Djokovic raced to a 4-1 lead only to experience a sudden dip in form, dropping serve twice to lose the first set.

Djokovic, a six-time champion at the Paris Masters, served three double-faults in a poor ninth game and looked almost uninterested and barely played the points when Griekspoor was serving for set. The Serbian player called for the physio after the end of the opening set and appeared to take some medicine. Djokovic saved two break points at 4-4 in the second set before taking a 5-0 lead in the tiebreaker and holding serve to level the match.

**TSITSIPAS QUALIFIES**

Stefanos Tsitsipas qualified for the ATP Finals by beating Alexander Zverev 7-6 (2), 6-4 in the third round. Before the Paris Masters, Novak Djokovic, Carlos Alcaraz, Daniil Medvedev, Sinner and Andrey Rublev had already qualified.

The seventh-seeded Tsitsipas earned his first win over a top 10 player this season, hitting 37 winners to 28 for Zverev. "What a great relief to finally get that spot."



## Pegula beats Sakkari to finish 3-0 in WTA Finals round-robin play

**AP ■ CANCUN (MEXICO)**

Jessica Pegula finished round-robin singles play at the WTA Finals with a 3-0 record a year after going 0-3 at the season-ending championship, heading to the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Maria Sakkari.

The fifth-seeded Pegula extended her overall winning streak to eight matches, including a title at the Korean Open last month. The 29-year-old American has won all six sets she's played in Cancun so far and will play in the semifinals on Saturday. Sakkari, who is ranked No. 9 but got into the eight-player field when No. 8 Karolina Muchova withdrew with an injured right wrist, went 0-3 and dropped every set.

Pegula had fewer winners than Sakkari, 12-7, but also made roughly half as many unforced errors, 35-18, on a windy evening with some brief rain.

The other semifinalist from their group was to be determined later Thursday, when No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka was scheduled to face Elena Rybakina in a rematch of this year's Australian Open final. Sabalenka won that matchup in January for her first Grand Slam title.

Pegula already had clinched first place in the four-player group by virtue of earlier straight-set victories against Sabalenka and Rybakina on the outdoor hard court built for the event.

The two semifinalists from the other singles group will be set on Friday, when U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff takes on Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova, and four-time major champ Iga Swiatek meets three-time Slam runner-up Ons Jabeur.

## PTI ■ ISLE OF MAN

Overnight sole leader Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi played out a quick draw with Hikaru Nakamura of USA while R Vaishali missed out on opportunities to split a point with French Sophie Millet in the FIDE Grand Swiss now underway here.

Top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States, Andrey Esipenko of Russia and Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania joined Gujrathi in the lead on six points and it looks like a photo-finish is on the cards with just three rounds remaining in the USD 460000 prize money tournament.

The other Indian in close contention in the open section, Arjun Erigaisi, drew with Yuri

## Vidit draws with Nakamura; Vaishali held by Sophie Millet

Kuzubov of Ukraine and is in a wolf-pack of nine players on 5.5 points looking to seal a berth in the top two that guarantees a place in the next candidates tournament.

Vidit played out one of the shortest games of the event. Playing the white side of a Sicilian Alapin, the Indian did not face much complication on board and Nakamura equalized easily. The game lasted a mere 16 moves.

Arjun got some intimidating initiative with white pieces against Kuzubov. An excellent control in

the centre in the middle game and potential for what looked like a dangerous king side attack had everyone gunning for Arjun but for the second day in a row the Indian slipped and the game ended in a draw.

In the women's section Vaishali too missed out yet again after a promising start against Millet. The ensuing middle game arising out of a King pawn game saw Vaishali coming out guns blazing with some finely crafted manoeuvres only to let the position go out of hands a few minutes later.

The sister of Praggnanandhaa fought on but in the end it was a stalemate on board after 70 moves.

Vaishali remained in a three-way lead on six points along with her overnight co-leaders Antoaneta Stefanova of Bulgaria and Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine. Four players - Tan Zhongyi of China, Leya Garifullina of Russia, Batkhuyag Munguntuul of Mongolia and Millet - are in close pursuit of the leaders a half point behind.

In the open section Nihal Sarin raised vision of coming close to

the podium defeating Niclas Huschenbeth of Germany and reaching five points. Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by Nodirbek Yakubov of Uzbekistan. The Indian missed a great opportunity for his second straight victory following a blunder by Yakubov in a theoretical rook and pawns endgame.

In other notable results, P Harikrishna, Aryan Chopra and S L Narayanan were held to draws by Rinat Jumabayev of Kazakhstan, Matthias Bluebaum of Germany and Aryan Tari of Norway respectively.





# CLINICAL AFGHANS BOWL OUT DUTCH FOR 179 IN BATTLE OF GIANT-KILLERS

**PTI ■ LUCKNOW**

Sybrand Engelbrecht struck a gritty half-century but failed to push the Netherlands to a competitive total as Afghanistan bowled them out for 179 in a World Cup match here on Friday.

Engelbrecht (58 off 86) anchored Netherlands' innings after the Dutch suffered a mid-innings collapse. This was after Max O'Dowd (42 off 40) and Colin Ackermann (29) shared an attacking 70-run stand off 64 balls for the second wicket after electing to bat.

Netherlands lost Wesley Barresi, who replaced Vikramjit Singh, in the fifth ball of the innings, with Mujeeb Ur Rahman catching him plumb in front of the wicket.

O'Dowd and Ackermann steadied the Dutch ship before Netherlands suffered a dramatic middle-order collapse.

Three run outs jolted Netherlands' surge as from 73 for one they slumped to 92 for 5, losing half the side inside 20 overs.

Poor judgement while running



between the wickets and some brilliant fielding from the Afghans destabilised the Dutchmen.

A set O'Dowd fell victim to an unnecessary run out, caught inches short of the crease by Azamatullah Omarzai's direct hit from the deep in search of a double. O'Dowd struck nine boundaries during his knock.

A few overs later, it was Ackermann who was run out at the keeper's end while going for a non-existent single.

Netherlands' slide continued as wickets fell like nine pins with wicket-keeper Ikram Alikhil involved in four dismissals.

Bas de Leede first edged one to Alikhil off off-spinner Mohammad Nabi and then few overs later the Afghan glovesman pounced on another smart nick off Noor Ahmad to send Saqib Zulfiqar back into the dressing room.

Alikhil then effected a stumping off Nabi to dismiss Logan van Beek.

The wear and tear of Lucknow pitch favoured the Afghan spinners — Nabi (3/28), Noor Ahmad (2/31) and Mujeeb (1/40).

# Three lions look to roar against Kangaroos

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

Australia and England have endured widely contrasting fates in the World Cup with one firmly on course for the semifinal while the other barely surviving.

But on Saturday when the two Ashes rivals clash, a lot will be on the line for the adversaries who last faced off in a battle for the 'Urn' in July of this year.

In the last four matches, five-time champions Australia have shown their batting might to turn around a floundering campaign with four successive wins and are now placed at the third spot with eight points.

Defending champions England, on the other hand, have faced the ignominy of four defeats, primarily due to their inexplicable batting failure, having being bowled out for 170 or less in each of their last three games.

Ahead of the marquee clash, both the teams are battling different sets of problems.

Australia will be forced to make replacements following the unavailability of two of their key players — Mitchell Marsh and Glenn Maxwell.

While Marsh had to fly back home due to personal reasons, Maxwell suffered concussion after falling down from the back of a golf cart in a freak incident.

Marsh had looked in blistering form at the top, while Maxwell had provided the late surge, having blasted the fastest ton in the World Cup the other day.

In their absence, Cameron Green and Marcus Stoinis are likely to be back in the squad for Saturday.

England, meanwhile, have tried all permutations and combinations in pursuit of that elusive win and yet another change in the XI is expected when they return to the venue where their campaign started on a poor note, having lost to New Zealand in the opener.

Harry Brook, who was left out for the last two games, is expected to return, while 28-year-old quick Brydon Carse, who replaced an injured Reece Topley, might also get a game.

While their fate is hanging by a mathematical calculation, last-placed England will have to play out of their skin against Australia to keep their hopes of qualifying for the Champions Trophy in 2025.

Only the top seven placed teams



# Absence of Maxwell, Marsh not ideal, teams should've allowed more than 15 players in squad: Cummins

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

Australia will not have the services of stars Glenn Maxwell and Mitchell Marsh against England, and captain Pat Cummins on Friday said the teams should have been allowed more players instead of 15 in the squad considering this World Cup's duration.

Maxwell suffered a freak injury during a game of golf while Marsh has returned home for personal reasons, and no definite timeline is marked for their return to action.

"Yeah, to be honest. It's a two-month tournament. You wouldn't want to be in a position like New Zealand. They have had some injuries and, luckily, they've been able to hold Kane (Williamson) in the squad. But if suddenly you had to rule him out, I think that wouldn't be good for cricket or World Cup.

"It's not like you can poach players from other countries, so I always think of as many players as you need, you should



# Desperate New Zealand and Pakistan seek win to remain in semifinals race

**PTI ■ BENGALURU**

An injury-tormented New Zealand will seek resurgence while Pakistan need a continuation of their recent resurrection, and that subtext of desperation could turn their crucial World Cup match into a classic here on Saturday.

The fortunes of New Zealand and Pakistan went through sharp curves after a bright beginning, leaving them in a tight spot in the race to the semifinals of the quadrennial big bash. The Kiwis started the tournament with four wins on the bounce, and it looked a matter of time before they sealed a last-four berth.

Since that point, they have fallen to three defeats in a row against India, Australia and South Africa, and they are now stranded at eight points from seven matches.

On the other side, Pakistan are in an even dingier space with six points from seven matches.

Apart from the dwindling on-field returns, New Zealand will also have to deal with another



obstacle ahead of their clash with Pakistan — a growing injury list that has five names in it.

Matt Henry hurt his hamstring against South Africa and the pacer is set to miss the match against Pakistan, forcing the Kiwis to summon strapping fast bowler Kyle Jamieson as his cover. James Neesham had suffered a hit on his wrist in the match against the Proteas and the Kiwis will keep a close eye

# Injured Henry ruled out of WC

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

New Zealand pace spearhead Matt Henry was on Friday ruled out of the World Cup with a torn right hamstring and has been replaced by Kyle Jamieson.

The 31-year-old sustained the injury during New Zealand's match against South Africa in Pune on Wednesday and an MRI scan confirming that he had a grade two lower tear, which will require a minimum of two to four weeks of recovery time.

"We're gutted for him," head coach Gary Stead said in Bengaluru.

"Matt's been a crucial part of our One-day side for a long time and to see him ruled out



as we reach the business end of this tournament is immensely disappointing.

"He's consistently been ranked inside the ICC top 10 ODI bowlers for the past few years which is testament to his class and skills. "Moreover, Matt's a great team man and we're all going to miss his personality and experience."

Jamieson reached Bengaluru late on Thursday and was expected to train with the team on Friday.

in the World Cup will qualify for the 50-over tournament in Pakistan, and England will hope to find their bearings when they face old foes Australia next.

History is stacked against them as England have lost 87 times in their 155 meetings with Australia in ODIs, while being 3-6 behind in World Cups.

However, the English team has often managed to find its best against the Aussies. A case in point being the fiercely-contest-

# World Cup not a stage to focus on individual milestones, says Iyer



**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Individual milestones don't take precedence in a stage like World cup, said Shreyas Iyer, hoping to get a hundred for India in the coming matches after smashing a 56-ball 82 against Sri Lanka here.

India's huge total of 357 for 8 against Sri Lanka did not feature a single century as three of the key batters — Shubman Gill (92), Virat Kohli (88) and Iyer (82) — missed their personal milestones of getting hundreds.

India's brilliant approach with the bat after being asked to bat first was overshadowed by a sensational bowling show by Mohammed Shami (5-1-18-5), Mohammed Siraj (7-2-16-3) and Jasprit Bumrah (5-1-8-1) during their 302-run win, the country's biggest win in the 50-overs format.

"This is the stage where you play for the team. You don't play for your individual performance," Iyer told the media after India crushed Sri Lanka and qualified for the World Cup semifinals.

"We definitely discuss about missing out on centuries or half

centuries, but going forward, say if we are put in the same situation, I would have to go against the bowlers, right?"

"Like if I'm batting in the 47th or 48th over, I won't be thinking. I was sighting the ball pretty well. It's just that I missed out on that particular ball.

"...And a few balls here and there, I could have got to 100. But nonetheless, there are a few more matches to come and hopefully, I'll be able to get one," Iyer said.

The Mumbaier termed India's bowling performance as "surreal" after they bowled out Sri Lanka for a mere 55 in 19.4 overs, keeping them under 100 for the third time this year.

After bowling them out for 73 at Thiruvananthapuram in January, India shot out Sri Lanka for just 50 in the final of the Asia Cup.

Iyer was asked to compare which bowling performance — in the Asia Cup final or in the World Cup clash — was more 'dangerous'.

"I think (with) the current bowling attack, it's pretty hard to say because in (the) Asia Cup final, I was sitting out. From outside, it was a bit different," Iyer said.

"But now playing on the field, I felt that today's (Thursday's) performance was surreal, especially by the bowlers, the way they stood up to the occasion. And once we got that two-three wickets, we just capitalised on that.

"As a bowling unit, and also as a fielding unit, we supported our bowlers by taking a few catches here and there. (The) team is in a great space of mind."

# We need to play Black Caps style of cricket, says Daryl

**PTI ■ BENGALURU**

Three defeats on the trot have pegged New Zealand back, but middle-order batsman Daryl Mitchell said on Friday that they need to pursue the Black Caps way of cricket to find their feet again in the World Cup.

After winning their first four matches, the Kiwis went down against India, Australia and South Africa making their games against Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Bengaluru must-win affairs.

"For us, it's just showing up and playing the Black Cap style of cricket that we want to play. I'm sure if we can control those little things and do them for long periods of time, then we'll go a long way to getting some outcomes which we want.

"Hopefully, it means we're in the mix coming into the tournament," said Mitchell.

# Asia Cup decimation by India could be behind Sri Lanka's huge World Cup loss to Rohit's side: Coach Nawaz

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Sri Lanka's decimation by India in the Asia Cup final in September could potentially have dented the confidence of the players, which led to another crushing defeat in their World Cup match against Rohit Sharma's side here on Thursday, conceded their batting coach Naveed Nawaz.

Sri Lanka could only make 50 runs in the Asia Cup final in Colombo and India overhauled the target in just the seventh over, inflicting a crushing 10-wicket defeat on the hosts.

In the World Cup match here on Thursday, India thrashed the Islanders by 302 runs after notching 357/8 and then bundling out Kusal Mendis' side for 55 runs, Sri Lanka's lowest-ever total in the tournament.

"I thought we (had) flushed (the Asia Cup loss out of our minds) and ended it. We talked about it with those guys as a playgroup, we completely removed it from their



heads. We emphasised to them the importance of approaching the upcoming matches without dwelling on it (Asia Cup loss)," Nawaz said following the loss on Thursday.

"However, I think that such an incident (Asia Cup loss) could potentially affect their confidence. Otherwise, in this tournament, we haven't witnessed the ball being attacked in such a manner before. This is the first time I've seen this in this World Cup competition.

"Indeed, there is certainly a skill gap, which is why we had to participate in the World Cup qualifier matches before entering the

New Zealand will now stay back in Bengaluru for their last two league matches, and Mitchell said adapting to the conditions will play a big role in deciding the outcome.

"We know what this ground's like, we know the dimensions and what the wicket can be like, but we also know within tournament, pitches can vary from time to time, depending preparation and things like that.

"So, for us, it's just adapting as quick as we can and making sure we communicate that with each other. Hopefully we do it quicker than the opposition and it gives us a good chance," he added.

# India looks best team by country mile: Atherton

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Former England captain Michael Atherton feels in-form India are the "best team by a country mile" in the ongoing World Cup.

India on Thursday thrashed Sri Lanka by 302 runs to record their seventh straight win and become the first team to qualify for the semifinals.

India first piled up a mammoth 357 for 8 in 50 overs and then bundled out a hapless Sri Lanka for a paltry 55 in 19.4 overs to register their biggest victory by margin of runs in the 48-year history of the tournament.

"They've looked the best team by a country mile. They've got the best bowling attack. That's really the thing that has stood out for me," Atherton said on ICC's Review Podcast.

"They're a very good all-round side, obviously, but to watch them tonight (Thursday) against Sri Lanka here in Mumbai, and then the way they bowled against England in Lucknow, those seamers are making early in-roads and then, making life much easier for the spinners."

Mohammed Shami continued his impressive form, picking up his second five-wicket haul in the tournament to take his tally to 14 in just three matches.

With 45 World Cup wickets under his belt, a record for India, Shami overtook former pacer Zaheer Khan's feat of 44. Mohammed Siraj supported him with a three-wicket burst, along with fellow speedster Jasprit Bumrah.

Among spinners, Ravindra Jadeja scalped a victim, while Kuldeep Yadav turned out to be highly economical.

Atherton said the current



Indian pace battery makes the team look invincible.

"It's a fantastic attack. I think the quality and depth of the Indian pace bowling is the thing that's changed dramatically, really, since I played here," Atherton said.

"I'm not sure I've seen a better pace attack than the one India are putting out right now. (Javagal) Srinath and (Venkatesh) Prasad, when I played, were very good, Zaheer Khan obviously.

"They've had very, very good bowlers, but this three, backed up by the two spinners, it's a really top quality all-round attack right now."

India will be up against second-placed South Africa next at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday.

The Proteas so far have lost only one match out of seven they have played.

With the batting department of both the teams at their peak, Atherton said the match between the two top teams promises to be an exciting contest.

"It's going to be a taster of what may be to come in the knock-out stages.

"Whether the players can hold their nerve, whether South Africa can still bat as aggressively and as well against India's pace attack, that remains to be seen. It'll be a good pointer to what's to come," he concluded.