

**WORLD 5**  
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FORCE TRAINING BASE

**MONEY 6**  
WAGE PROVISIONS LIMIT  
SBI Q2 PROFIT GROWTH

**SPORT 8**  
UNBEATEN INDIA FACE SOUTH  
AFRICA FOR TOP SPOT

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## PM Modi: They did not spare even Mahadev

**PTI ■ DURG**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday attacked Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel over the alleged "Mahadev" betting app scam, and said the Congress leader and the State Government should tell people what links they have with the accused who are sitting in Dubai.  
He also said the scams committed in Chhattisgarh under Congress rule would be investigated after the BJP Government is formed and those who looted the money of people will be sent to jail.  
Addressing a public meeting in Durg city of poll-bound Chhattisgarh, a day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) claimed that a forensic analysis and a statement made by a "cash courier" have led to "startling allegations" that Mahadev betting app promoters paid about ₹508 crore to Chhattisgarh CM Baghel so far, Modi said the CM (Baghel) has become frustrated after the money was recovered.  
Modi also said the Government will extend for five years the free ration scheme, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, covering 80 crore poor people.  
He accused the Congress of treating the poor as a "vote bank" and abusing him and the entire OBC community.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a public meeting ahead of Chhattisgarh Assembly polls, in Durg on Saturday PTI

"The Congress Government in Chhattisgarh has not spared any chance to loot you. They have not even spared the name of 'Mahadev'. Just two days ago, a major action was taken (by the Enforcement Directorate) in Raipur and a huge pile of cash was recovered.  
"People are saying that this is the money belonging to 'sattabai' (those involved in betting) and they have collected it by looting the poor and youth of Chhattisgarh. Congress leaders have been filling their houses with the same money," Modi said.  
In the media, it is being published that the money is linked to him, the PM said, apparently

referring to CM Baghel.  
"The Congress government and the CM should tell the people of Chhattisgarh what link they have with the accused in this scam sitting in Dubai. The CM (Baghel) became frustrated after the money was recovered. I have even heard that the (Congress) leaders here are conveying the message to us threatening that they will keep the money at our (leaders) places and send the police. Whom they are threatening? People know everything," Modi said.  
The PM said Congressmen abuse him day and night and that he faces "2.5 kg abuses" every day. "But the Chief

Minister (Baghel) has also started abusing the country's investigating agencies. Modi is not scared of abuses. You have sent Modi to Delhi only to take action against the corrupt. Action will be taken against those who have looted the poor of Chhattisgarh," he said. Modi alleged the "corrupt" government of Chhattisgarh has broken the trust of people and insulted Chhattisgarh 'Mahtari' (mother Chhattisgarh) by indulging in scams.  
"I assure you that after the formation of the BJP government in the State, such scams will be investigated and those who looted your money will be sent to jail," he added.  
In a jibe at Baghel, the Prime Minister alleged "30 per cent commission in every work in the Congress government".  
"Congress priority is to fill its coffers by indulging in corruption...Chhattisgarh says '30 taka kakka, apka kaam pakka'," he added.  
The PM said that for him the biggest caste in the country is the "poor", and said he was their "sevak" (servant) and accused political parties of hatching new conspiracies to divide the poor and spread the poison of casteism.  
He said the Congress has given nothing to the poor except deception and has been "emotionally exploiting" the poor people.

## Defending champion England crashes out of World Cup

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

Adam Zampa produced three timely strikes in the middle overs as Australia knocked out defending champions England out of the ODI World Cup with a 33-run win here on Saturday, their fifth consecutive victory.  
Australian batters were guilty of not converting starts but still managed to post 286 against arch-rivals England. Marnus Labuschagne (71 off 83) recorded his highest score of the tournament.  
England, whose formidable batting lineup has massively underperformed in their title defence, had a good opportunity to pick up a win after four consecutive losses.  
Amid heavy dew, Ben Stokes (64 off 90) kept the chase alive while batting alongside Dawid Malan (50 off 64) and Moeen Ali (42 off 43) before Zampa landed the killer blows to stop England at 253 in 48.1 overs.  
Chris Woakes (32 off 33) tried his best towards the end but it was not enough.  
Zampa first had out-of-form England skipper Jos Buttler (1) caught in the deep before getting rid of Stokes in a soft dismissal. It was a short ball on the leg side and Stokes ended up offering a simple catch to Stoinis at short-fine leg.  
It was all over for England when Moeen's slog sweep off

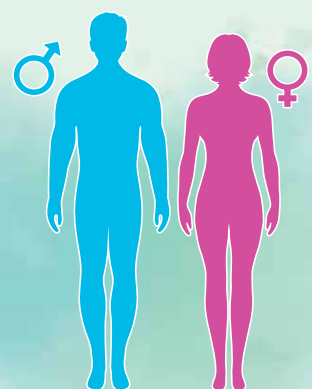


Australia's bowler Adam Zampa celebrates the wicket of England's batter Jos Buttler during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 match between Australia and England at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Saturday PTI

Zampa arrived straight into the hands of David Warner at deep mid-wicket.  
England batters, including Stokes, Moeen and Dawid Malan, did exhibit the stroke-play they are known for but could not stay long enough to see their team through.  
Left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc got the ball to swing in the powerplay. He got lucky in the first ball of the England innings as Jonny Bairstow got a faint edge to one swinging down the leg-side.  
Joe Root was set up by Starc with a series of inswingers before he pushed one wide and the England number three got the outside edge. Australia's sharp fielding also contributed

to their fifth win in a row.  
Earlier, Labuschagne, Steve Smith (44 off 52), Cameron Green (47 off 52) and Marcus Stoinis (35 off 32) were among the batters who failed to cash in on their starts.  
Leggie Adil Rashid (2/38) was frugal as usual while pacer Mark Wood (2/70) was back to his menacing ways, using the short ball to hurry the opposition batters, especially Green.  
Chris Woakes (4/54) delivered with the new ball for the second game in a row, removing the dangerous opening duo of David Warner (15) and Travid Head (11). He also struck twice in the death overs.  
England were able to get the early wickets after putting

Australia in to bat.  
Head handed a regulation catch to Joe Root at first slip off an angled away ball from Woakes.  
Three overs later, Warner mistimed a pull to give Woakes his second wicket, leaving Australia at 38 for two in the sixth over.  
Smith and Labuschagne, who both have not had the best of times in the tournament, then shared a 75-run stand off 96 balls. It was hard work in the middle for the seasoned batters who found the boundaries hard to come by.  
Following Smith's fall, Josh Inglis (3) tried to up the scoring rate but fell while attempting a reverse sweep off Rashid. Green, who looked uncomfortable against the short-pitched stuff from Wood, did hit some crisp boundaries off the other bowlers. His cover drive off Woakes was the highlight of his knock. He saw his leg stump uprooted after missing a slog sweep off left-arm pacer David Willey.  
Stoinis then got into the action depositing Rashid and Liam Livingstone into the stands over deep mid-wicket before getting caught in the same spot off a short ball from the latter.  
It seemed Australia would not be able to use their full quota of overs but Adam Zampa's timely cameo of 29 from 19 balls took the team close to 300.



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# Delhi turns most polluted city in world

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Once again, Delhi has topped a real-time list of the world's most polluted cities, compiled by the Swiss group IQAir. The Indian Capital's Air Quality Index (AQI) stands at 640, categorising it as "hazardous," followed by Lahore, a Pakistani city, with an AQI of 335. Mumbai (177) is ranked fourth and Kolkata (166) sixth in the ranking of most polluted cities in the world.

Even though the average pollution levels in Delhi dipped marginally from 475 from Friday to 470 on Saturday but the concentration of PM 2.5 was, however, more than 8 times the healthy limit prescribed by the World Health Organization.

Data shows that Delhi's air quality index increased by over 200 points between October 27 and November 4. The rising pollution level and AQI is likely to cast shadow on the World Cup fixture in the



national Capital on Monday as the International Cricket Council (ICC) is currently assessing situation after the Sri Lanka team cancelled their practice session at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Saturday due to air pollution,

just a day after Bangladesh cancelled its practice session on Friday evening due to the same reason.

The hazardous pollution levels have compelled many to forgo their morning walks, sports, and other outdoor activities. Amid criticism for failing to curb air pollution, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Saturday urged the Centre to permit only CNG, electric, and BS VI-compliant vehicles in Delhi-NCR to combat vehicular pollution.

In a letter to Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav, he expressed concerns about the expected deterioration in air quality in the coming days due to Diwali and stubble burning in neighbouring states.

"Therefore, an emergency meeting should be convened with NCR States to address the issue," he said. Delhi and the NCR has been under heavy smog for the last five days, reflected in an unprecedented spike in the

AQI of the national capital. The AQI in Delhi crossed 500 AQI, as the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range recorded 616; RK Puram 582, Indira Gandhi International Airport 571, Dhirpur 542, Okhla 528 and JNU stadium 511.

It was 743 at Knowledge Park, Noida, 583 at Noida's sector 116; 631 at Teri Gram Gurugram; 504 at Faridabad's sector 30.

The AQI recorded at Anand Vihar was 481; at Wazirpur 442, at Punjabi Bagh 435 and at Bawana 434. Data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) shows 10 districts of Haryana namely Hisar, Sonapat, Rohtak, Panipat, Karnal, Ambala, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ballabgarh, Bhiwani have reported unhealthy, hazardous and very severe category air pollution. Fatehabad recorded an AQI of 464, followed by Faridabad at 439, Jind at 428, Kaithal 426, Hisar 425, Sonapat 414, Sirsa 414, Gurugram 410, Bahadurgarh 369, Kurukshetra

325, Rohtak 319 and Bhiwani 307. In Punjab, Bathinda reported an AQI of 385, followed by Ludhiana 301, Jalandhar 291, Mandi Gobindgarh 277, Amritsar 264, Khanna 265 and Patiala 247. Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, saw an AQI of 179.

Experts say the variation in AQI data could be due to poor calibration of station or local factors.

Smoke from stubble burning accounted for 24.5 percent of the PM2.5 pollution in Delhi on Saturday, dropping from 35 percent on Friday, according to a numerical model-based system developed by the Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology. Punjab reported 1,360 fresh stubble-burning incidents as farmers continued to burn crop residue. Out of 1,360 stubble-burning incidents reported on Saturday, Sangrur reported a maximum of 240 such cases, followed by 140 in Ferozepur, 120 in Mansa, 116 in Tarn Taran and

112 in Bathinda. Delhi residents continued to grapple with deteriorating air quality as a layer of haze engulfed the city for the sixth consecutive day on Saturday with doctors expressing concerns that air pollution is causing an increase in respiratory and eye problems among children and the elderly.

The concentration of PM2.5, fine particulate matter capable of penetrating deep into the respiratory system and triggering health problems, exceeded the government-prescribed safe limit of 60 micrograms per cubic metre by seven to eight times at multiple locations throughout Delhi-NCR.

It was 80 to 100 times the healthy limit (5 micrograms per cubic metre) set by the World Health Organization (WHO). The toxic air has prompted the authorities to close schools for two days and non-essential construction work being banned, along with restrictions on vehicular movement.

## Maharashtra pharma factory fire kills 8

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A massive fire, followed by multiple explosions that rocked a pharmaceutical factory at a state-established industrial area at Mahad in Raigad district, has so far claimed eight lives, while an intensive search is on for three more missing persons.

Till Saturday evening, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel, local fire brigade teams and the police had recovered eight bodies from the gutted factory premises of Blue Jet Healthcare Ltd, where a major fire had broken out on Friday morning. The local fire brigade personnel battled with fire for most part of Friday and Saturday.

Spread over eight acres of land at the Mahad Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) complex, the premises of M/s Blue Jet Healthcare Ltd reverberated with the deafening noise caused by a series of explosions that rocked the area immediately a raging blaze engulfed the factory premises.

In all, 20 workers were on duty when fire swept through the pharmaceutical factory premises at 11 am on Friday. Before long, thick clouds of smoke enveloped the area making it rather difficult for the fire fighters to douse the blaze and recover the bodies of workers killed in the mishap. Having recovered eight fully burnt bodies of workers, the rescuers were searching for three more workers till late on Saturday evening.

# VCS unilaterally appointed by Governor 'illegal entrants': Bengal Minister

PTI ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu on Saturday described the officiating vice-chancellors of universities appointed by Governor CV Ananda Bose without consulting the state government as "illegal entrants."

Basu justified the decision to exclude those officiating VCs in a symposium organised by the higher education department held in collaboration with CII.

"The VCs should be appointed following discussions between the governor and the higher education department. The Supreme Court has already termed the appointment of interim VCs by the governor without taking the state in confidence as illegal," the minister told reporters. The department has invited to the symposium only those academics who were appointed as per law, he said.

"We don't think any illegal entrant is needed here," Basu said.



Governor Bose, who is the ex-officio chancellor of state-run universities, has appointed officiating

vice-chancellors in 16 varsities. The post is still vacant in several other such institutes. Asked about the officiating Vice Chancellor of Jadavpur University Buddhadeb Sau having convened a meeting of the Executive Council, the highest decision-making body of the varsity, Basu expressed disapproval of any such move.

"If we have not been consulted about the EC meeting, and so far I remember, we have not been, that move by the university is violative

of the Supreme Court's observation on the issue. I will again crosscheck if we have been intimidated. And if I find we had not been kept in the loop, we will bring it to the notice of the Supreme Court," he said.

The apex court on October 6 had stayed the emoluments of newly appointed interim VCs of state universities in West Bengal. In an earlier ruling, it said it would set up a search committee to pick up VCs. About allegations by a theatre

group in North 24 Parganas district that its bookings of a municipality-owned auditorium in Kalyani have been cancelled at the last moment after they staged an "anti-government" play in Kolkata, the minister said, "Theatre cannot be stopped, theatre will move on its own."

Basu, an acclaimed theatre personality, however, added that he would talk to the chairman of Kalyani Municipality to know the reasons for cancelling the bookings before commenting further on the issue.

## ISRO chief withdraws publishing of his autobiography

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

ISRO Chairman S Somanath on Saturday said he was withdrawing from the publishing of his upcoming autobiography, after a controversy erupted over some of his alleged critical remarks about his predecessor K Sivan in the book. Somanath confirmed that he had decided to withdraw the publication of the book "Nilavu Kudicha Simhanga" (loosely translated as - Lions that drank the moonlight), in the light of the controversy.

Earlier in the day, talking to PTI, he said every person would have to go through some kind of challenges during their jour-

ney to reach a top position in an organisation.

Somanath was responding to a report that claimed his autobiography had some critical remarks about his predecessor Sivan.

"Persons holding such key positions may have to go through several challenges. One among them is the challenges with regard to getting positions in an organisation," he said, adding that these are challenges that everybody has to go through. "More persons might be eligible for a significant post. I just tried to bring out that particular point. I didn't target any particular individual in this regard," he explained.

# HDK takes dig at Shivakumar for his alleged CM ambition

PTI ■ BENGALURU

In a sarcastic remark, JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy on Saturday offered to extend the support of all the 19 JD(S) MLAs if Congress leader D K Shivakumar wishes to become the Karnataka Chief Minister. The JD(S) state president wondered why the grand old party needed to bring JD(S) MLAs into its fold when it already had 136 MLAs in the 224-member assembly.

Shivakumar, who is deputy chief minister and also Congress state president, is considered to be a contender for the chief ministerial position. Kumaraswamy's reaction came amid Congress claims that many of his party's MLAs were willing to join the grand old party.

"Why should I be an impediment? Let us do one thing. Let him (DCM D K Shivakumar) be the Chief Minister tomorrow morning... I will get the support of all 19 people (JD(S) MLAs)," Kumaraswamy said in a press conference. The former chief minister said,



"Why should they (Congress leaders) unnecessarily say, '10 people are coming, five people are coming'. They (JD-S MLAs) are ready and discussions (with JD(S) MLAs) have already taken place under the leadership of (former minister) Krishnappa. Didn't they say such things before the Media?" He claimed that the Congress leaders were standing in front of JD(S) MLAs with applications asking them to join Congress.

According to Kumaraswamy, Congress leaders had contacted JD(S) MLA G T Deve Gowda with an offer to make him minister and "do something for his son too".

He also claimed that JD(S) Devadurga MLA Karemma and others too received a similar offer from Congress.

"You (Congress Karnataka unit) are 136 (MLAs). What will you do by asking us to join your party when you don't have money for your own MLAs to carry out development work?" the JD(S) leader sought to know.

Kumaraswamy, however, exuded confidence in his own MLAs, saying that none was ready to join the Congress. The JD(S) second-in-command claimed that there was a TCM and a DCM in the state. "TCM means Temporary Chief Minister and DCM means

Duplicate Chief Minister. Already many claimants to the CM post have emerged in the recent past. We don't know how many chief ministers we will see in the next five years if this government survives for such a long period," the former CM said.

Reacting to JD(S) leader's comment, Shivakumar said Kumaraswamy's party is now a partner with the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), whereas Congress has no connection with NDA. "Let him (Kumaraswamy) come out of NDA and then talk. Presently, we have 136 seats and we have the blessings of the people of the state. Let him be a good opposition leader and rectify the mistakes of the government wherever needed. He should not pass remarks but help the government improve," the Deputy CM said.

Shivakumar also asked Kumaraswamy to use his 'vast' experience as being former chief minister and son of former Prime Minister H D Devegowda to guide the Congress government.

## As heavy rain batters TN, CM says its impact has been reduced

PTI ■ CHENNAI

As heavy rain battered Tamil Nadu, forcing the authorities to declare a holiday for schools in several districts on Saturday, Chief Minister M K Stalin said the impact of the rain was prevented due to the timely mitigation work initiated by the state government. Mettupalayam in Coimbatore recorded a maximum of 13 cm rainfall, followed by Kamuthi, Sivagiri, and Alandur: 12 cm each, while Puzhal recorded 11 cm, according to the Regional Meteorological Centre, here. As rain lashed the state, the administration in Chennai, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Dindigul, and Theni districts announced a holiday for schools today.

"The apprehension of a deluge in Chennai during the monsoon is now passe because of the steps taken by the DMK government," Stalin said in a post on the social media platform "X". The impact of the heavy rain has been prevented from

affecting people by taking up work such as desilting and establishing stormwater drains for a distance of 876 km. With the RMC warning of heavy rains in the next few days, the state ministers, representatives of local bodies besides civic officials and staff have been told to be actively on the ground to serve the people, he said in the post, tagging state Ministers: K N Nehru (Municipal Administration), P K Sekar Babu (Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments department) and Ma Subramanian (Health), Corporation Mayor R Priya and Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner Dr J Radhakrishnan.

"Let's strengthen the faith in the Dravidian model government which is around to prevent the people from suffering even the slightest calamity," the Chief Minister said, reposting a message from the Greater Chennai Corporation which said many areas, including, subways remained free from water stagnation.

**CORRIDGENDUM**  
**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No. 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005  
 Notices under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. LBNDD00002263659, Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower VIKRAM PAUL/ BANITA PAUL, Symbolic Possession notice dated March 23, 2022 published in News paper The Pioneer (Eng) & Pioneer (Hindi) dated March 29, 2022. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said publication and property address mentioned in as NGP-174, DLG NEW TOWN HEIGHTS, 17TH FLOOR, TOWER-P, SECTOR-90, GURGAON instead of NGP-174, DLF NEW TOWN HEIGHTS, 17TH FLOOR, TOWER-P, SECTOR-90, GURGAON. We therefore, request you to please read the same as NGP-174, DLF NEW TOWN HEIGHTS, 17TH FLOOR, TOWER-P, SECTOR-90, GURGAON. All other details mentioned in the said Notice dated will remain same. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you in this regard.  
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## THREAT E-MAILS TO MUKESH AMBANI

### Two held from Telangana and Gujarat, say Mumbai Police

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Police investigating the threat e-mails received by RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani wherein the senders had gradually raised the demand for money to Rs 400 crore nabbed two youths from Telangana and Gujarat on Saturday, an official said. At least three e-mails were sent to the official e-mail ID of Ambani's company in the last eight days threatening to eliminate him if he fails to pay up.

One of the two youths, identified as Ganesh Ramesh Vanrapathi (19) was picked up by the Mumbai Police's crime branch from Warangal in Telangana and another person, identified as Shadab Khan (21), was held from Gujarat, the official said. Prima facie, Vanrapathi and Khan were using two different email IDs to send the threatening communications. An e-mail was received by Ambani's office on October 27 in which the sender demand-



ed Rs 20 crore stating, "If you (Ambani) do not give us Rs 20 crore, we will kill you, we have the best shooters in India."

Another e-mail was received the next day seeking Rs 200 crore threatening that "If the demands are not fulfilled, a death warrant will be issued," according to police. An FIR was lodged in Gamdevi police station based on the complaint by the industrialist's security in charge. Another threat email was received by Ambani's company from an unidentified person seeking Rs 400 crore on Monday. Vanrapathi was produced

before a court here which remanded him to police custody till November 8. Another accused Khan is a highly-qualified student, the police official said. Both the accused were arrested under relevant sections 387 (putting a person in fear of death or of grievous hurt in order to commit extortion) and 506 (2) (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and further investigation is underway, the official added.

## Puri inaugurates ONGC-funded multi-speciality hospital in Assam built at ₹483 crore

PTI ■ SIVASAGAR

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday inaugurated a multi-speciality hospital built at a cost of Rs 483 crore in Assam's Sivasagar district. The Siu-Ka-Pha Hospital has been funded by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) under its CSR commitments, and will be managed and

operated by Aurangabad-based Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Vaidyakiya Pratisthan (BAVP), a statement said. Speaking at the inauguration function, Puri said the hospital is expected to improve the healthcare services for the people of upper Assam as well as other parts of the Northeast. Reiterating the BJP-led NDA government's thrust on the development of the region, he

said, "Driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to the Northeast, government and public enterprises like ONGC are committed to improving lives here. "Prioritising healthcare, ONGC's Siu-Ka-Pha Hospital, with its state of the art medical infrastructure, will bring in substantive enhancement in healthcare capacity of not only upper Assam but in entire Northeast."

MoS for Petroleum Rameswar Teli, also present at the inauguration, said the highly advanced healthcare services that will be available at the new hospital will benefit people of the entire region. The programme was also attended by state Health Minister Keshab Mahanta and ONGC chairman and CEO Arun Kumar Singh, among others.



# Permit only CNG, electric, BS VI vehicles in city, Centre told

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Saturday urged the Centre to permit only CNG, electric, and BS VI-compliant vehicles in Delhi-NCR to combat vehicular pollution.

In a letter to Union Environment Minister Bhopendra Yadav, he expressed concerns about the expected deterioration in air quality in the coming days due to Diwali and stubble burning in neighbouring states. "Therefore, an emergency meeting should be convened with NCR states to discuss the issue," he said. Rai suggested that the Centre

should also implement a ban on all vehicles non-compliant with BS VI norms in the entire National Capital Region. "Looking at the rise in the level of pollution in the last two days, construction has been banned in Delhi from yesterday. Today there has been an improvement in the level of pollution as compared to yesterday. The situation is still serious. I am writing a letter to the Central Government saying that the Union Environment Minister should call an emergency meeting of the Environment Ministers of all five states immediately. Because the orders of CAQM are not being implemented in the states.

Rules are being made, and CAQM is giving directions, but in the whole NCR, rules are being violated. This is the problem of the whole of North India," the Delhi Minister wrote in the letter. Rai also appealed to the UP government to stop sending BS3 petrol and BS4 diesel vehicles "that emit so much smoke" to Delhi. He said that these vehicles are banned in Delhi, where only electric and CNG buses are allowed. "It's my request to the Uttar Pradesh government, to stop sending such vehicles that emit so much smoke...we have stopped all the construction in Delhi currently, BS3, BS4 vehi-



cles are banned, but these vehicles are coming from outside, I request Yogi to stop this so that we can control the pollution

due to vehicle, Rai said on Friday night after visiting the Anand Vihar bus depot. "The Delhi government is taking various steps to reduce the pollution in Delhi but we saw that since morning, Anand Vihar has the highest AQI, so I came here tonight to understand why it is happening," he added. Starting from November 1, only electric, CNG, and BS VI-compliant diesel buses are allowed to operate between Delhi and the cities and towns in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan that fall within the National Capital Region (NCR), according to directions issued by the Centre's

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM). Various emission inventory and source apportionment studies conducted for Delhi in recent years have indicated that on-road vehicular exhaust emissions contribute to 9 to 38 per cent of PM2.5 emissions in the capital. Pollution levels in Delhi and its surrounding areas saw a marginal decrease overnight due to relatively better wind speed, although the concentration of harmful PM2.5 particles remained over 80 times the healthy limit recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). A thick, toxic haze has persist-

ed over the city for the fifth consecutive day on Saturday, causing concern among doctors regarding the increasing respiratory and eye problems in children and the elderly. Air quality in Delhi-NCR has deteriorated over the past week due to a gradual drop in temperatures, calm winds that trap pollution, and an increase in post-harvest paddy straw burning across Punjab and Haryana. Data from the Central Pollution Control Board reveals that Delhi's Air Quality Index rose by over 200 points between October 27 and November 3, resulting in its classification as 'severe plus' (above 450) on Friday.

## Suspend DPCC chief for smog tower closure: Rai to CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Closure of the 'Smog Tower' in Connaught Place has kicked up a controversy with Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai again raised the issue, blaming the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and its chairman Ashwani Kumar for it. He also shared the documents related to Smog Tower in Connaught Place at his social media handle on Saturday. Delhi has been choking under severe toxic air for the past few days.

The rapid deterioration in air quality and fog has also plunged the visibility in the national capital as a suffocating smog gripped the city. Rai wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday, seeking the suspension of Kumar for "arbitrarily halting" the operation of a large smog tower installed at Connaught Place two years ago to mitigate air pollution.

In the letter to Kejriwal, Rai also sought disciplinary action against the project in-charge, Anwar Ali, whom the minister



accused of changing his stance on the smog tower's effectiveness under pressure from Kumar. Rai said as the Delhi Air Quality Index (AQI) worsened, several BJP leaders went to the Connaught Place-located smog tower and made videos accusing the Aam Aadmi Party of being behind it. I thought it was important for the people in Delhi to know under what conspiracy the smog tower in Delhi was shut and who did it..." Rai said at a press conference. "I would like to propose the suspension and disciplinary action against Ashwani Kumar, Chairman DPCC, for acting in

contempt of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's directions, not implementing the council of ministers' decision, arbitrarily halting operations and maintenance payments, failing to make decisions based on the merits of the study and presenting them before the Cabinet, and not reopening the smog tower after the monsoon months, which prevented the formation of clean air zones at a time when pollution levels are expected to rise," Rai wrote. The Environment Minister mentioned, "IIT Bombay submitted its report to the government on 30th September 2023. It was found that the smog tower possessed a range

of impact of about 500 meters. Instead of building upon the findings of the IIT Bombay report and drafting a policy/action plan accordingly, on 10th October 2023 a note was put out stating that the impact of the smog tower at a certain distance is very low, and the project should be closed." "As a result, the project on which the Delhi government has spent Rs 23.63 crores is now lying idle and unused in the peak pollution season. These machines have now been shut down and allowed to rust. Payment of just a sum of Rs 2.09 crore had to be made to O&M, which could have allowed the smog tower to continue functioning. But it is surprising to see the lengths to which the DPCC chairman was willing to go to stop the work of public good," he said. "It is quite surprising that the officer in charge who was insisting on continuing the project till the completion of the pilot study by IIT Bombay, completely changed his stance in the note on August 1, 2023 without even waiting for the final results of the study. It

appears that Ashwini Kumar cast accusations against him about providing misleading data and threatened him disciplinary action, the project in charge took a diametrically opposite view without considering the final report," Rai said in a note which shared on his X handle. "Suspension of and disciplinary action against the DPCC Project in-charge Dr. Anwar Ali Khan for his sudden volte-face regarding the efficacy of the Smog Tower. His change of opinion was not backed by any change in scientific data, and this led to shutting down of the Smog Tower that was set up based on the directions of the Supreme Court. Immediate reopening of the smog tower and release of funds for necessary O&M payments so that the smog tower may help combat pollution at localised scale during the winter months where Delhi faces high pollution levels. The report of IIT Bombay may be placed before the Cabinet and the Supreme Court so that further action plan may be decided," Rai said in the note.

## Pollution sparks blame game

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As citizens of Delhi continue to face worsening air quality, BJP blamed the ruling AAP Government for the situation while Congress criticised the Central and State Government for the state of affairs. The Congress also distributed masks to people in 14 districts of the city.

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, said the Arvind Kejriwal Government is habitual in turning a blind eye to its responsibilities and playing the blame game instead of taking responsibility for its own mistakes. The BJP leader also charged that at a time when the people of Delhi are suffering from pollution, Kejriwal is busy with election campaigns, and his ministers are more focused on blaming others than saving the public.

The Kejriwal government has not purchased a single CNG bus to date. Even the electric buses running in the capital were provided by the central government. Since Kejriwal's government came to power, not a single step has been taken to



improve public transport, exacerbating the situation, Bidhuri said. Moreover, due to the poor condition of buses, people are forced to use their vehicles. On one hand, the number of vehicles has increased, and on the other hand, the lack of road maintenance and the absence of new roads have worsened pollution in Delhi. Bidhuri claimed the central government has made several efforts to control pollution in the capital, but the Kejriwal government has always hindered those efforts. When the central government constructed peripheral roads, the Delhi gov-

ernment refused to bear its share of the expenses, he said. Even during the construction of the Pragati Maidan tunnel, the Delhi government declined to contribute its part. In the case of the RRTS, the Delhi government did not provide its share, and the court had to make strong comments against the Kejriwal government. The court said the Delhi government has 1,300 crores for advertising expenses, but it does not want to spend money on development projects. In the expansion of the Delhi Metro as well, the Delhi Government continued to resist its share, Bidhuri said.

## 162 vehicles fined for GRAP violations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Transport Department's enforcement teams have fined 162 cars and SUVs for violating GRAP III restrictions imposed in view of hazardous levels of air pollution prevailing in the city. The owners of these vehicles have been slapped with ₹20,000 fine each for the violations under the MV Act, they said.

The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) stage III restrictions, which include a ban on operation of BS III petrol and BS IV diesel four-wheelers, were imposed in Delhi-NCR. As part of the drive, enforcement teams are being deployed in entire Delhi in shifts, with focus on 13 pollution hotspots - Rohini, Dwarka, Okhla, Punjabi Bagh, Vivek Vihar, Wazirpur, Jahangirpuri, RK Puram, Bawana, Narela, Mundka, Mayapuri and Anand Vihar, the transport department officials said. As many as 84 teams for



enforcement of restrictions related to two wheelers and 30 for two-wheelers are working in shifts round the clock. Under the GRAP III restrictions, owners of 162 BS III petrol and BS IV diesel light motor vehicles were challaned with Rs 20,000 fine till Saturday.

At present, only BS VI emission standards-compliant light motor vehicles, electric vehicles, CNG vehicles, including buses are allowed to ply on the national capital's roads. So far, 301 overloaded trucks have been impounded while 3,683 vehicle owners were challaned for not having pollution

under check, officials said. Also, 340 buses were impounded for different violations and 4,031 challans were issued to owners for parking violations, they said. The enforcement teams are being supervised by nine teams led by inspectors. Eighteen enforcement teams are deployed on border areas around hotspots to monitor overloaded trucks, heavy vehicles, and BS III and BS IV light motor vehicles. Sixteen other teams were working in shift of 4 PM to 12 AM, to tackle the congestion due to inter-state buses and other vehicles at major choke points. Further, 41 teams were deployed on identified 22 stretches of the Inner Ring Road and Outer Ring Road in two shifts to monitor and catch offending vehicles. Motorcycle patrolling teams numbering 39 were deployed from 9 AM to 6 PM for enforcing PUC violations, they added.

## Efforts upped to curb pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital's local bodies, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), have intensified efforts to initiate steps to mitigate pollution. In accordance with its winter action plan, the MCD has constituted 517 teams constituting 1119 to check the open burning, unlawful dumping of construction waste, construction site inspections, and to monitor road dust besides taking measures to clean up the pollution. The NDMC also said that 36 challans worth Rs 50,000 have been issued as per the National Green Tribunal (NGT) guidelines. In the MCD area, as many as 236 people have been assigned to monitor C&D trash disposal at night, while 323 staff have been assigned to monitor it during the day. In the mean-



time, 560 employees—244 during the day and 316 at night—monitor open and biomass burning. These teams are also levying challans on defaulters, according to a statement here. Forty challans totaling Rs 8.9 lakh have been imposed since Thursday for the dumping of C&D waste, of which Rs 70,000 has been recovered. The PWD has set up 60 anti-smog guns to help the MCD fight pollution at the 13 pollu-

have been installed, along with 52 mechanical road sweepers. An additional 106 anti-smog guns have been deployed at various pollution-causing facilities such as MCD's C&D plants, landfill sites, and identified high-rise buildings among others. The MCD also said that over 75,000 trees and 2.2 lakh have been planted since April in an attempt to reduce pollution, the statement said. The NDMC has also deployed 7 mechanical road sweepers with GPS tracking for wet sweeping which work in two shifts. "All avenue roads are mechanically cleaned daily or on alternate days...All the centre verge of the roads have been converted into a green belt and the gaps have been filled from time to time. There are no potholes on the roads under the jurisdiction of NDMC if any found the restoration is to be made simultaneously," the NDMC said in a statement.

## Doctors use magnet to extract needle from minor boy's left lung

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Applying foresightedness and innovative solutions, a team of doctors from AIIMS Delhi have successfully extracted a large sewing machine needle deeply embedded in the left lung of a seven-year-old boy using a magnet, the hospital said on Saturday.

The intricate endoscopic procedure carried out by the Department of Paediatric Surgery was necessitated due to the location of the 4 cm needle within the lung and the limited space available for surgical instruments, it said. The boy was admitted to AIIMS on Wednesday in a life-threatening condition after encountering hemoptysis — cough with bleeding. Radiological investigations revealed a long sewing machine needle lodged deep in his left lung, said Dr Vishesh Jain, Additional Professor in the Department of Paediatric Surgery. Dr Jain reached out to an acquaintance, who facilitated



the procurement of the magnet from the bustling Chandni Chowk market the same evening. "The magnet, 4 mm in width and 1.5 mm in thickness, was the perfect tool for the job," Dr Jain said. The needle resided so profoundly within the lung that traditional methods would have proven to be almost ineffective, Dr Devendra Kumar Yadav, Additional Professor in the Department of Paediatric Surgery explained the complex procedure. "This realisation prompted a series of intense discussions among the surgical team, aimed at exploring innovative solutions to safely and effec-

tively extract the needle," he said. The subsequent step involved meticulous planning and brainstorming with the surgical team and their technical officer, Satya Prakash. "The primary objective was to ensure the secure delivery of the magnet to the needle's location without any risk of dislodging it into the trachea. The team ingeniously devised a specialised instrument equipped with only one jaw, to which the magnet was securely affixed using thread and a rubber band," Dr Jain said. According to Dr Yadav, the team commenced with an endoscopy of the windpipe to assess the needle's location within the left lung. What they encountered was solely the needle's tip, deeply nestled within the lung. "The magnet-tipped instrument was carefully inserted. It seemed almost magical as the needle responded to the magnetic force, smoothly emerging from its concealed location. It was successfully extracted," Dr Jain said.

## DDA to hire consultant to find best method to demolish apartments

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will hire a consultant to determine the most suitable method to demolish the Signature View Apartments located in North Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar. The authority has issued a Request for Proposal (REP) for hiring of a consultant for demolition of a Signature View Apartment and removal and recycling of construction and demolition waste. According to DDA officials, the scope of consultant's work include method of demolition on the Signature View Apartment and recycling of waste after the demolition; measures to prevent air/water/noise pollution during the demolition; safety measures to be taken during demolition; time of demolition and no objection certificate to be required prior the demolition. The authority has given



November 30 as the deadline to the residents of the apartment, to vacate the premise, which has been declared "structurally unsafe" by IIT Delhi last year. Nearly 1,200-1,300 people are still living in these buildings. They have asked DDA to consider starting rentals as soon as over 70% of the owners have signed the agreement. In the evacuation agreement, DDA has mentioned that it will start paying rentals to the owners once all 336 families have signed the agreement. DDA has said that it will pay Rs 50,000 per month to high-income group flats and Rs 38,000 to middle-income group flat owners.

## Safal outlets to sell buffer onion at subsidised rates

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up measures to provide relief to consumers from rising onion prices, the Centre on Saturday said Mother Dairy's Safal outlets will also sell buffer onion at a subsidised rate of ₹25 per kg from weekend in Delhi-NCR, while Hyderabad Agricultural Cooperatives Association is doing so in Telangana and other southern States. Already, cooperative bodies NCCF and Nafed are retailing buffer onion at subsidised rate on behalf of the central government. While Nafed has so far set up 329 retail points consisting of mobile vans and station outlets in 55 cities across 21 states, NCCF has set up 457 retail points in 54 cities in 20 states, it said. Kendriya Bhandar too has started retail supply of onion through its outlets across Delhi-NCR from November 3. "Safal Mother Dairy will start from this weekend. The retail sale of onions to consumers in Telangana and other southern



states is being taken up by Hyderabad Agricultural Cooperatives Association (HACA)," the consumer affairs ministry said in a statement. The ministry has initiated an aggressive retail sale of onion from the buffer in a bid to provide relief to consumers from the recent increase in onion prices due to delay in the arrival of kharif crop. In order to control the seasonal price volatility between rabi and kharif crops the Government maintains onion buffer by procuring rabi onion for subsequent calibrated and targeted release. This year, the

buffer size has been raised to 7 LMT from 2.5 LMT in 2022-23. Till date 5.06 LMT of onion has been procured and the procurement of balance 2 LMT is in progress. Due to recent measures taken by the government, wholesale prices are showing a declining trend but it takes time to reflect in retail markets. Wholesale price of onion was ₹ 4,800 per quintal on October 28 in Lasalgaon market in Maharashtra, as against Rs 3,650 per quintal on November 3, the statement said. There was a decline of 24 per cent in a week.



# Modi, Kharge condole deaths in Nepal quake

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday expressed anguish over the loss of lives and damage caused by the earthquake in Nepal. Modi said India stands in solidarity with its neighbouring country and is ready to extend all possible assistance.

"Deeply saddened by loss of lives and damage due to the earthquake in Nepal. India stands in solidarity with the people of Nepal and is ready to extend all possible assistance. Our thoughts are with the bereaved families and we wish the injured a quick recovery," Prime Minister Modi said on X. At least 128 people were killed and several others injured when a powerful 6.4 magnitude earthquake jolted western Nepal's remote moun-



tainous region just before midnight on Friday. According to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre, the earthquake with an epicentre in Jajarkot district was recorded at 11.47 pm. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge condoled the loss of lives in the devastating earthquake said in this hour of crisis, Indians stand shoulder to shoulder with the neighbouring country.

In a post on X, Kharge said, "Anguished by the loss of precious lives due to the devastating earthquake in Nepal. Our deepest condolences, thoughts and sympathies are with the families of the victims and the injured." "In this hour of crisis, Indians stand shoulder to shoulder with Nepal," the Congress president said, tagging Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

# BJP, Congress spar over Chhattisgarh CM Baghel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As Chhattisgarh goes to polls, the BJP and the Congress on Saturday here fielded their top leaders to score a point over each other over the controversy that erupted from Mahadev betting app issue that has targeted Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

While BJP accused the Congress of using hawala money from the illegally-run Mahadev betting app to fund its poll campaign in the State, Congress alleged that the imminent defeat of the BJP in the Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan Assembly polls has forced it to use its last weapon, the Enforcement Directorate (ED), to reverse its fortunes.

The ruling party in the State said the claims made by the federal agency against Bhupesh Baghel are part of a "conspiracy" hatched by the saffron party to tarnish his image. The chief minister has accused the BJP of using central investigation agencies to target him ahead of the Assembly polls in the state on November 7 and 17. The ruling party at the Centre



targeted Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel over the allegation that he received more than Rs 500 crore kickback from the firm's promoters. "Never before has evidence come forth which clearly indicates that hawala operators' instruction and money emanating from Dubai by looting the poor has been utilised by the Congress leadership to fight an election," Union minister Smriti Irani said at a press conference. Baghel, she alleged, has redefined corruption and asserted that the "overwhelming" evidence, including from the states not ruled by the BJP, has indicted the Congress leadership too. He is fighting the polls not with the support of people but hawala and betting operators,

she said. In her riposte, Irani said the Enforcement Directorate's probe is based on the details and evidence brought forth in investigations by police in Chhattisgarh as well as Andhra Pradesh and asked if Baghel is putting his own government in the dock. "Does Baghel believe that the Chhattisgarh Police and government, and Andhra Pradesh are conspiring against him," she said, noting that government employee Chandra Bhushan Verma had admitted to handling Rs 65-crore kickback meant to protect the betting operation from police in the poll-bound state. There are voice messages and statements of the accused linking the use of betting money for

funding the Congress' campaign in the state and kickbacks given to Baghel, she claimed. Are all evidence wrong and only Baghel is right, she asked. Irani cited the ED's statement that a cash courier, Asim Das, arrested by it in Raipur with Rs 5.39 crore was sent by the app promoters from the UAE to deliver a large amount of cash for electioneering expenses of the ruling Congress in the state, to attack Baghel.

More than Rs 450 crore worth of proceeds of the crime have been seized by probe agencies, she said. The ED had on Friday claimed that a forensic analysis and a statement made by a cash courier have led to "startling allegations" that Mahadev betting app promoters paid about Rs 508 crore to the Chhattisgarh chief minister so far, and that "these are subject matter of investigation". Baghel later accused the ED of making a "malicious attempt" to tarnish his image ahead of the Assembly polls in the state. Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters, Congress general secretaries K C Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh, along with Abhishek Singhvi, said the party is explor-

ing all legal options in this regard.

Ramesh claimed that with the defeat of the BJP in the Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh Assembly polls certain, the saffron party is misusing central agencies, such as the ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"The people of Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh have faith in the Congress. The BJP is indulging in vendetta politics," he said. Venugopal, said there is a clear-cut conspiracy to tarnish Baghel's image, adding that people will give a befitting reply to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the upcoming polls.

He also claimed that whenever the BJP faces electoral defeats and sees its ground slipping from under its feet, it has only one weapon to use and that is the ED.

"This is a clear-cut conspiracy hatched by the prime minister to tarnish the image of Bhupesh Baghel and the Chhattisgarh government for winning this election," Venugopal alleged, claiming that all this is being done as the Chhattisgarh election is going to be one-sided in favour of the Congress.

# Ground staffer dies in Chetak helicopter accident in Kochi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Chetak helicopter of Indian Navy met with a ground accident on Saturday during maintenance taxi checks at INS Garuda, Kochi, resulting in the loss of life of one ground crew. A Board of Inquiry has been ordered to investigate the cause of accident.

Giving details here, Navy officials said Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar and all personnel of Indian Navy mourn the loss of life and pay tribute to Yogendra Singh, Leading Air Mechanic (LAM) who lost his life in the unfor-

tunate accident at Kochi and extend heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. The accident reportedly took place at about 2.30 pm. The deceased hailed from Madhya Pradesh. The INS Garuda is adjacent to INS Venduruthy and the headquarters of Southern Naval Command. INS Garuda is a major naval air training centre as well as an operational base. It has two intersecting runways, allowing almost all operational aircraft to land and take off. The INS Garuda is an important operating station for the Indian Navy, with several training schools, and maintenance and repair facilities and experimental stations based there.

# Govt has broken many real, perceived and exaggerated barriers: PM Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Saturday that his Government has broken many real, perceived and exaggerated barriers, laying the foundation for building a developed, grand and prosperous India.

Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit here, he referred to the theme of the event — 'Beyond Barriers' — and said the 2024 Lok Sabha poll results will see people supporting the ruling BJP "beyond barriers". The media group's theme of its 2027 summit will be "Developed Nation: What Next", he said in a lighter vein in reference to his government's call for making the country developed by the centenary of its independence. The prime minister cited a host of development measures taken by his government to highlight the changes, asserting that India's growing middle class and reducing poverty will become the foundation for a massive economic cycle.



The country has risen to become fifth largest economy in the world and will occupy the third position in our third term, he asserted. Citing data, Modi said the number of those filing income tax returns has almost doubled in 2023 to 7.5 crore in 10 years while the mean income has risen by up to Rs 13 lakh. The length of highways being built daily has risen to 30 km from 12 km while the number of operational airports has more than doubled to almost 150 from 70. Over 40,000 km rail track has been doubled by

his government against only 20,000 km done till 2014, he said. Such a sea change has taken place, Modi said. He also said a lot of fear-mongering used to be done about the impact of Article 370 removal but his government opened the doors to development and peace in Jammu and Kashmir by removing it. Terrorism is ending there and tourism rising, Modi said, underlining that his government has committed to the region reaching new heights of development.

# India, Sri Lanka review maritime security, ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Sri Lanka have discussed the entire gamut of maritime security and ways to further enhance ties and synergy in operations during the 33rd edition of annual International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) meeting between the representatives of Navies and Coast Guards of India and Sri Lanka.

Giving details here on Saturday, navy officials said the meeting was held on Friday onboard at the India - Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Line off Point Calimere at Palk Bay. The interaction between the counterparts of both countries acts as a forum for the Navies and CGs of the two countries to further enhance ties and synergy in operations. The Sri Lankan delegation was headed by Rear Admiral B A K S Banagoda, Commander North Central Naval Area (NCNA), Sri Lanka Navy. The Indian delegation was headed by the



Rear Admiral Ravi Kumar Dhingra, Flag Officer Commanding Tamil Nadu and Puducherry Naval Area (FOTNA). Representative from Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (East), Defence Advisor to the High Commission of India in Colombo and other senior officers from both countries also participated. During the meeting, attendees from both the Navies and Coast Guard discussed maritime security in the Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar region,

safety of fishermen, measures to curtail trafficking of contraband among other issues. Ways and means to enhance existing communication network and timely sharing of information between the two Navies and Coast Guard aiding in timely actions were also discussed at length. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of mutual cooperation in operations and agreed to take forward the decisions taken, to strengthen the maritime security in area.

# Min: India set to be among top 5 bio manufacturing hubs by 2025

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India is all set to be among top 5 global bio-manufacturing hubs in the next three years, by 2025, Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State Science & Technology said on Saturday while launching the website of "Global Bio-India - 2023", a mega International congregation on Biotechnology, to be held here next month.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that our bio-economy witnessed double digit growth rate year-on-year in the last 9 years. India is now being rated among top 12 biotechnology destinations in the world, he said. "In 2014, India's bioeconomy stood at just about \$10 Billion, today it is \$80 Billion. In just 8/9 years it has gone (up) 8 times and we look forward to having \$300 Billion by 2030," he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said, Bioeconomy is going to be a hugely lucrative source of livelihood in the times to come.

"Biotechnology sector in India has evolved over the last three decades and has made significant contributions to various sectors including Health, Medicine, Agriculture, Industry and Bioinformatics," he said. The Minister said, Biotech StartUps are crucial to India's future economy. "Biotech Startups have grown 100 times in the last 8 years from 52 odd startups in 2014 to 6,300 plus presently. Every day 3 Biotech Start-Ups are getting incorporated in India with aspirations to provide viable technological solu-



tions," he said as he termed biotechnology as the technology of tomorrow. "India has a huge wealth of bioresources, an unsaturated resource waiting to be harnessed and an advantage in Biotechnology especially due to the vast biodiversity and the unique bioresources in the Himalayas. Then there is the 7,500 kms long coastline and last year we launched the Samudrayaan which is going to dig the biodiversity beneath the seas," he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said, Biotechnology Startups is a different genre combining new research of Biology and Manufacturing, viz processing of living systems such as micro-organisms, self-cultures etc. "Biotechnology provides you with a milieu, an environment which will be Clean, Greener and more compatible with your well-being, then your stake gets linked. And as time passes by, it also generates lucrative sources of livelihood, also the alternatives to the petrochemicals-based manufacturing, like bio-based products like food additives, bioengineering ties, animal feed products," he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said, today there are over 3,000 Agritech Startups and are very suc-

cessful in areas like Aroma Mission and Lavender cultivation. "About 4,000 people are engaged with Lavender cultivation and earning lakhs of rupees, quite a few of them do not have high qualifications, but are very innovative," he said. Dr Jitendra Singh said, Department of Biotechnology has been supporting R&D innovations in Advanced Biofuels and 'Waste to Energy' technologies. "In the future, garbage will be reduced to Zero. Everything will be recycled," he said, citing the recycling technology developed by the Dehra Dun based Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP) by designing a van that collects waste cooking oil and converts it into biofuel. "We have to fulfil global benchmarks, global strategies and global outlook," he said. In his address, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Dr Rajesh Gokhale said, the DBT and its PSU, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), are supporting the manufacture of biologicals and fostering and nurturing the startup innovation ecosystem.

# Taking India's cue, UK set to ban vaping products



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking cue from India, the United Kingdom is all set to restrict the marketing and sale of vapes and similar products such as e-cigarettes and new age gateway products targeted at children. Applauding the move, experts, including doctors and child psychologists pinned hope that other countries will too follow the suit and save the users, mostly youth and teenagers from the deadly trap. Earlier this month, the Union Health Ministry had issued a clarification to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, emphasizing the imperative for rigorous enforcement of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA), 2019. While PECA may not explicitly state the prohibition of individual e-cigarette or vaping device use, its overarching intention is to ban all aspects of these products including its consumption. PECA enforces a sweeping ban that encompasses all categories of electronic nicotine delivery systems, heat-not-burn products, e-hookahs and similar devices, said the experts. Sushant Kalra, Parenting Coach & TEDx Speaker, said "The

lack of awareness surrounding the risks associated with vaping is a huge concern in many countries including India. Many school-going children are taking up vaping under the false assumption that it carries no risks or dangers. This alarming trend is troubling because young individuals may unknowingly become addicted. "Both children and their parents often remain unaware of the severe health consequences of vaping, as they perceive it as a harmless activity involving the inhalation of flavours like apple or strawberry." Dr Rajesh Gupta, Additional Director Pulmonology & Critical Care - Fortis Healthcare Noida added, "Although India's effort in implementing the ban on vaping is laudable there is a need for more measures. While curtailing the availability of vapes through the grey market, both physically and online is crucial, demand side controls are also crucial." He pointed out that the addictive nature of vaping poses a growing threat to our children and youth in a post-Covid world. It is imperative for all countries to take strict measures to ensure that vapes do not reach the hands of children," added Dr Gupta.

# Judges must retire to enable succeeding generations rejig old legal principles: CJ



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Judges must retire so the succeeding generations point out errors of the past and rejig legal principles for society to evolve, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said on Saturday. Sharing his perspective on the retirement age of judges at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit here, Chandrachud said while the American constitution has no age of retirement for judges, in India, judges retire after a particular age. The CJ said it would be "too much of a responsibility" cast on human beings in terms of their own infallibility by postulating that they should not retire from office. "We have followed a model where judges retire. But as someone who has been in the system for 23 years as a judge, I have a different take. In a sense, it is important that judges must retire because its too much of a responsibility to cast on a human being in terms of their own infallibility by postulating that they should not retire from their office.

"Judges are human beings prone to errors and societies evolve. You must pass on the mantle to succeeding generations who would be able to point out errors of the past and rejig legal principles for society to evolve. Because to give that sort of power to unelected judges to continue for life, in the Indian context, it is wisely not adopted by the Indian Constitution. So as to allow for a source of change for the transformation of legal principles," he said. Currently, the retirement age for judges in India is 60 years in lower courts, 62 in high courts and 65 in the Supreme Court. A parliamentary committee had recommended a performance appraisal system for extending the tenure of judges of the Supreme Court and high courts beyond the existing retirement age. During the tenure of the UPA-II government, a bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha to bring the retirement age of HC judges on par with those of the apex court but it never came up for consideration and lapsed.

# Country's daughters work its bright future: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written a letter to the girl who had brought his sketch to a public meeting addressed by him in Chhattisgarh, and said the country's daughters are its bright future.

"The affection and the sense of belongingness" he receives from them is his strength in the service of the nation, Modi said in the letter to Akansha. It was while addressing a poll rally in Chhattisgarh's Kanker on Thursday that the prime minister spotted her holding up a sketch of him.

Writing to her on Friday, Modi thanked her and said he has always received a lot of love from the people of Chhattisgarh and they have also contributed enthusiastically to the country's development. "The next 25 years are going to be important for young friends like you and the country. In this period, our young generation, especially daughters like you, will provide a new direction to the country's future while fulfilling their dreams," read the prime minister's letter to Akansha. Our government's aim has been to build a healthy, safe and well-equipped nation for our daughters, he added. Modi advised Akansha to study hard and wished that she brought glory to her family, society and country with her achievements.



# Attack on Pak Air Force training base

NINE TERRORISTS KILLED: PAK ARMY

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Nine heavily armed terrorists attacked a Pakistan Air Force training base in Punjab province early Saturday and all of them were 'sent to hell', the army said, a day after 17 soldiers were killed in three separate terror strikes in the country.

The Mianwali Training Air Base of Pakistan Air Force was attacked by nine terrorists, the Pakistan Army said in a statement, confirming that three some damage was done to three already phased-out non-operational aircraft during the attack.

The military confirmed that the "combing and clearance operation at PAF Training Airbase Mianwali has been concluded and all nine terrorists have been sent to hell".

The operation was launched to "eliminate any potential threat in the surrounding area following the cowardly and failed terrorist attack on the base this morning", the statement said.

The army said while no damage had been done to any of the PAF's functional operational assets, some damage was done to three already



phased-out non-operational aircraft during the attack.

The Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan (TJP), a newly emerged militant group that is an affiliate of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), has claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement to the media.

Condemning the attack, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said, "Any attempt to undermine our security will meet with unwavering resistance."

The attack comes hours after a series of terror strikes killed at least

17 soldiers in the restive Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Fourteen Pakistani soldiers were killed on Friday when militants ambushed two vehicles carrying security forces from Pasni to the Ormara area of Gwadar district in the restive south-western Balochistan province.

Friday's toll is the heaviest suffered by the military in Balochistan province this year where separatists and militants have stepped up their attacks since a ceasefire deal between TTP and the Pakistan government ended in November 2022.

Hours before the Gwadar attack, a series of bomb blasts targeting convoys of police and security forces killed one soldier and five others and wounded 24 others in the Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Two soldiers were killed in another attack in Lakki Marwat district in the same province.

Interim interior minister Sarfraz Bugti said the names of terrorists involved in Friday's and Saturday's attacks "must have been different but the enemy behind the scenes is the same".

He termed the current wave of terror a "conspiracy to make Pakistan a target of uncertainty and instability once again".

Saturday's attack is not the first time that terrorists have attacked a military installation in Pakistan.

In September 2015, Taliban gunmen killed 29 people, including 16 praying in a mosque, when they stormed Badaber air base, close to the northwestern city of Peshawar. It was the deadliest Taliban attack on a military installation in Pakistan's history. Among those killed were 22 serving officials of the Pakistan Air Force, four civilians and three army soldiers responding to the attack. The 13 gunmen were also killed in the attack.

# Former Guinea dictator escapes from prison

AP ■ CONAKRY

Gunmen stormed the main prison in Guinea's capital early on Saturday and freed former dictator Moussa "Dadis" Camara, the country's justice minister said, announcing the closure of the West African nation's borders.

The announcement by Justice Minister Charles Alphonse Wright came several hours after heavy gunfire erupted in the Kaloum district of the capital, Conakry.

Among the others who escaped were Claude Pivi and Blaise Goumou, who along with Camara had been detained on charges in connection with a 2009 stadium massacre that left 157 people dead.

"We will find them. And those responsible will be held accountable," Wright told local Radio Fim FM.

A fourth prisoner, Moussa Tiegboro Camara, already has been recaptured, he added. Camara came to power in a 2008 coup d'etat following the death of longtime dictator Lansana Conte. Camara had lived for years in exile after surviving an assassination attempt by one of his bodyguards before returning home to Guinea in late 2021.

More than a dozen suspects were charged in connection with the 2009 massacre, when Guinean security forces fired upon peaceful demonstrators protesting against his intention to run for president after seizing power.

For years Guinea's government had sought to prevent Camara's homecoming from exile in Burkina Faso, fearing it could stoke political instability. However, another coup in September 2021 put a military junta in power in Guinea that was more amenable to Camara's return.

Camara testified in court last year that he was sleeping during the early hours of the attack, then awoken at 11 am when he was told that demonstrators had been killed.

# British Indian politician tables motion against anti-Hindu hate crimes

PTI ■ LONDON

A British-Indian London Assembly member tabled a motion this week calling on the Metropolitan Police to include the breakdown of hate crimes by religion to tackle growing instances of anti-Hindu hate.

Krupesh Hirani addressed the assembly, which deals with issues affecting Londoners as part of the Mayor of London-run Greater London Authority, to highlight instances of "Hinduphobia".

His motion, tabled on Thursday and agreed unanimously, called for the Met Police to work with local Hindu communities to encourage confidence in reporting hate crimes targeting Hindus.

"Hinduphobia has absolutely no place in London and beyond. Sadly, there has been a worrying rise in hate crimes faced by our community over the past year," said Hirani.

"Given that Hindus are the second most likely group to face religiously motivated hate crime, but that this isn't seen in police data, shows that the police must, first, record this better and, secondly, respond to it better. I am pleased that the London Assembly supports holding the Metropolitan Police to account so that they build the confidence held in them by our community," he said.

Hirani referenced the Crime Survey for England and Wales, which shows that Hindus are the second most likely religion to have been vic-

tims of religiously motivated hate crime.

His motion reads: "This assembly calls for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to work with local Hindu communities to encourage confidence in reporting Hindu hate crimes."

"The assembly further calls for the MPS to include the breakdown of hate crime by religion on the Crime Dashboard."

It quotes recent statistics from the UK Home Office which reveal that in 2022-2023 there were 291 hate crimes against Hindus, an increase on the previous year which saw 161 recorded hate crimes.

"This assembly further notes that despite having the second lowest figure of recorded hate crimes, in 2022, Hindus formed the second most likely religion to have been victims of religiously motivated hate crime according to the Crime Survey for England and Wales. This suggests that Hindu hate crime is not being effectively recorded by police services," it adds.

Hirani's motion came ahead of Diwali and also welcomed Mayor Sadiq Khan's "leadership in celebrating London's diverse communities", including Londoners celebrating the festival of lights with the Diwali on the Square annual event at Trafalgar Square last weekend.

It brought hundreds together to the UK capital's landmark square to enjoy dance, music, theatrical performances and Indian street food stalls.

# Taliban appeal to private sector to help Afghans fleeing Pakistan

Islamabad (AP): The Taliban on Saturday appealed to Afghanistan's private sector to help people fleeing Pakistan's mass deportation drive.

Pakistan is arresting and expelling all foreigners it says are in the country illegally, but the policy mostly affects Afghans because they are the biggest group of undocumented foreigners in the country.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Kabul urged Afghanistan's private sector to step forward and help.

Afghans forcibly expelled from Pakistan are facing the worst situation of their lives, with no opportunities, the ministry said.

"The ministry invites the private sector to take action because of the profound humanitarian disaster caused by the forced migration of hundreds

of thousands of the poor and needy. It is the duty of Islam and Afghans to stand up for their fellow countrymen."

Afghanistan is overwhelmed by challenges, including years of drought, a beleaguered economy and the aftermath of decades of war.

Millions are already internally displaced, raising concerns among the humanitarian community about the impoverished country being unable to support or integrate those leaving Pakistan.

Taliban social media accounts have shown senior officials at the Torkham border, in eastern Nangarhar province, shaking hands with returning Afghans and welcoming them home. Temporary camps are providing people with food, shelter, and health care, according to Taliban authorities.

As many as 250,000 Afghans left Pakistan before

an October 31 deadline to leave voluntarily expired. Tens of thousands are heading to border areas fearing detention and deportation as Pakistan security forces go door-to-door searching for undocumented foreigners. Aid agencies have scrambled teams to border areas, describing chaotic and desperate scenes among returning Afghans.

People told Save the Children they have nowhere to live or money to pay for food, rent or transport after crossing the border. Some Afghan children born in Pakistan are in Afghanistan for the first time, the agency said. The deportation drive marks a spike in tensions between Pakistan and the Taliban. Pakistan says Afghans are responsible for carrying out suicide attacks in the country and accuses the Taliban of harboring such militants. The Taliban deny the allegations.

# Average Gazan living on two pieces of bread a day, scarce water: UN official

United Nations (AP): The average Gazan is living on two pieces of Arabic bread made from flour the UN had stockpiled in the region, yet the main ration now being heard in the street is "Water, water," the Gaza director for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said on Friday.

Thomas White, who said he travelled "the length and breadth of Gaza in the last few weeks," described the place as a "scene of death and destruction." No place is safe now, he said, and people fear for their lives, their future and their ability to feed their families.

The Palestinian refugee agency, known as UNRWA, is supporting about 89 bakeries

across Gaza, aiming to get bread to 1.7 million people, White told diplomats from the UN's 193 member nations in a video briefing from Gaza.

But, he said, "now people are beyond looking for bread. It's looking for water."

UN deputy Mideast coordinator Lynn Hastings, who is also the humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, said only one of three water supply lines from Israel is operational.

"Many people are relying on brackish or saline ground water, if at all," she said.

In the briefing, UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths also said intense negotiations are taking place among

authorities from Israel, Egypt, the United States and United Nations on allowing fuel to enter Gaza.

Fuel, he said, is essential for the functioning of institutions, hospitals and the distribution of water and electricity. "We must allow these supplies reliably, repetitively and dependently into Gaza."

Backup generators, which have been essential to keep hospitals, water desalination plants, food production facilities and other essential services operating "are one by one grinding to a halt as fuel supplies run out," Hastings said.

White pointed to other major problems. Sewage is not being treated and instead is

being pumped into the sea, he said. "But when you speak to municipal workers, the reality is once their fuel runs out, that sewage will flow in the streets."

In addition, he said, cooking gas that was brought into Gaza from Egypt by the private sector before the war is increasingly in short supply. Aid organisations like UNRWA "are not going to be able to step in and replicate the network of distribution by the private sector for this essential item," he said.

White said close to 600,000 people are sheltering in 149 UNRWA facilities, most of them schools, but the agency has lost contact with many in the north, where Israel is car-

rying intense ground and air operations following Hamas' surprise Oct. 7 attacks.

An average of 4,000 displaced Gazans are living in the schools without the resources to maintain proper sanitation, he said. "The conditions are desperate," with women and children sleeping in the classrooms and men sleeping outside in the open, he said.

The UN can't provide them safety, White said, pointing to over 50 UNRWA facilities impacted by the conflict, including five direct hits. "At last count, 38 people have died in our shelters. I fear that with the fighting going on in the north right now, that number is going to grow significantly,"

he said. Griffiths, the humanitarian chief, said 72 UNRWA staff members had been killed since Oct 7. "I think it's the highest number of UN staff lost in a conflict," he said.

The Gaza Health Ministry's total of more than 9,000 people killed in Gaza is four times as many deaths as during the 50-day conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza in 2014 when just over 2,200 Palestinians were killed, Griffiths said. He added that the real toll will only emerge once buildings are cleared and rubble is taken away.

Griffiths called for humanitarian pauses to get aid to millions of people.

# Humanitarian conditions in Gaza must improve: Blinken tells Israel

Tel Aviv (AP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned Israel on Friday that it risks destroying an eventual possibility for peace unless it acts swiftly to improve humanitarian conditions in Gaza for Palestinian civilians as it intensifies its war against Hamas.

In a blunt call for Israel to pause military operations in the territory to allow for the immediate and increased delivery of assistance, Blinken said the current situation would drive Palestinians

toward further radicalism and effectively end prospects for any eventual resumption of peace talks to end the conflict.

"There will be no partners for peace if they're consumed by humanitarian catastrophe and alienated by any perceived indifference to their plight," Blinken said, even as the call for a temporary pause without the release by Hamas of Israeli hostages was swiftly rejected by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said Israel would be "going with full steam ahead."

# Honduras recalls ambassador to Israel

Condemns civilian Palestinian toll in war

AP ■ TEGUCIGALPA

Honduras on Friday became the latest Latin American country to recall its ambassador to Israel for consultations as it condemned what it called genocide and other serious violations of international law in the Gaza Strip.

The Central American country's Foreign Affairs Minister Eduardo Enrique Reina said on X, formerly Twitter, that President Xiomara Castro had decided to immediately recall the ambassador in light of "the serious humanitarian situation the civilian Palestinian population is suffering in the Gaza Strip."

Honduras is the latest left-

ist-led Latin American government to take diplomatic steps to express its disapproval of Israel's expanded offensive.

Bolivia's government severed diplomatic relations with Israel on Tuesday, accusing it of carrying out "crimes against humanity" in Gaza. Chile and Colombia also recalled their own ambassadors to Israel as they criticised the Israeli offensive against Hamas militants.

The Palestinian death toll in the Israel-Hamas war has reached 9,227, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza. More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, most of them in the Oct 7 Hamas attack that started the fighting, and 242 hostages were

taken from Israel into Gaza by the militant group. Reina told The Associated Press that recalling the ambassador was a way to draw attention to the civilian situation in Gaza and said the government decided to pull him out until the situation was clearer. Relations with Israel remain stable and Honduran diplomats and staff will remain in the embassy, he added.

He noted the main points of a recent United Nations resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire, respect for humanitarian law and to start a dialogue in search of peace. "It is a position to say, in a way, that the situation of the innocent population concerns us,"

# Sheikh Hasina appears on Time Cover

SAYS, TOUGH TO OVERTHROW HER

WASHINGTON: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has appeared on the cover page of Time magazine, in an interview asserted it is difficult to overthrow her government through a democratic system.

Elections in Bangladesh are scheduled in January 2024.

"I am confident that my people are with me... They're my main strength... It's not that easy to overthrow me through a democratic system... The only option is just to eliminate me. And I am ready to die for my people," Hasina told Time magazine, according to the excerpts of the interview released by the news outlet.

The November 20 edition of the magazine, which featured Hasina on cover page, will hit the stands on November 10, the New York-based outlet said.



At 76... Bangladesh's Prime Minister

is a political phenomenon who has guided the rise of this nation of 170 million from rustic jute producer into the Asia-

Pacific's fastest-expanding economy over the past decade.

"In office since 2009, after an earlier term from 1996 to 2001, she is the world's longest-serving female head of government and credited with subduing both resurgent Islamists and a once meddlesome military," read TIME's Charlie Campbell cover story. "Having already won more elections than Margaret Thatcher or Indira Gandhi, Hasina is determined to extend that run at the ballot box in January," Campbell wrote. "Few rebuttals are as stark as the 19 assassination attempts that Hasina has weathered over the years. In recent months, supporters of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) have clashed with security forces, leading to hundreds of arrests, police vehicles and public buses set ablaze, and several people killed. The BNP has vowed to boycott the election as they did in both 2014 and 2018 unless Hasina hands power to a caretaker government to shepherd elections," the cover story said.

# Ukraine minister wants to turn country into a weapons production hub for the West

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's newly appointed head of defence industry says he is working tirelessly to ramp up local arms production and wants to turn the country into a weapons production hub for the West.

Oleksandr Kamysyhin, the minister for strategic industries of Ukraine, said that Russia's invasion of his country and the Israel-Hamas war raging in the Middle East have highlighted the need for countries to spend on their defence systems.

"We're really focusing on making Ukraine the arsenal of the free world," Kamysyhin told The Associated Press in an interview late on Friday.

Kamysyhin said approximately 500 companies in Ukraine's defence industry are contributing to the country's efforts to increase weapons production in order to counter

Russia's attempts to seize more territory. Among those are 70 state-owned factories, over 200 primarily private factories producing unmanned systems, and more than 200 private sector companies involved in the production of various types of weaponry and ammunition.

"We are focused on producing all types of weapons and ammunition, and we show that we can test it on the battlefield and make it better during the war," Kamysyhin said. "That's something we can contribute to the free world, because as you see, defence industry is becoming more and more important globally."

Oleksandr Kamysyhin was appointed to the post around eight months ago, and is now in charge of 3,000,000 people employed in Ukraine's defence industry.

He previously worked as

the chief of the national railway Ukrzaliznytsia, which under his rule, became famous for keeping trains running on time despite the war, crucial to evacuating hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians to safety in the early days of Russia's invasion.

Now, he recalls that time as his "past life" and says he is completely focused on making the defence industry a successful enterprise like Ukrzaliznytsia.

He acknowledges that he has had to start scaling the local manufacture of weapons from scratch. Ukraine barely had a local defence industry to speak of before 2022, he said, with the military mainly relying on what it already had and what it received as military aid from allies before the war began with Russia's invasion in February 2021.

Now, Ukraine is delivering locally produced munition to the battlefield and can increasingly

strike inside Russia, he said.

He declined to disclose specific figures but said Ukraine is manufacturing mortar and artillery ammunition, drones, armored vehicles, missiles and various other items. The industry, he says, has grown by dozens or even hundreds of times compared to the previous year in some segments.

Artillery ammunition production has increased by 20 times in the last 10 months, and armored vehicle production has grown by five times during the same period, he said.

Most crucially, Kamysyhin says that the increased local production of weapons has enhanced Ukraine's capabilities to launch attacks on Russian territory.

"As you know, Moscow never sleeps. Now, Sochi never sleeps. Now, Krasnodar never sleeps. And there would be more Russian cities that never sleep,"

said Kamysyhin, referring to regular drone strikes occurring on Russian territory.

Since the onset of the war, the Western allies were careful with providing Ukraine with weapons that could reach Russia, fearing the strikes of Western-supplied weapons on Russian territory would lead to a wider war.

Kamysyhin acknowledged that defence technology, particularly in the field of innovative warfare, is a game-changer and the fastest-growing sector in Ukraine's defence industry.

As many allies have significantly depleted their stocks in order to support Ukraine, the country has recently hosted an international defense industry conference seeking other forms of cooperation, including the joint production of weapons. Kamysyhin said that over 60 companies signed an agreement to become a part of the Alliance

of Defence Industries of Ukraine after the forum. He revealed they are mostly companies from the US, the UK, France, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and Turkey.

The minister has ambitious plans for the future of Ukraine's defence industry and believes that one day, his country will be able to export various types of weapons and munition, just as it exports its grain across the world.

"That's something we can contribute to the free world because, as you see, the defence industry is becoming more and more important globally," he said, adding that it could help to revitalize Ukraine's economy, drained by war.

Despite the claims of steady growth, Kamysyhin admits that it will never be possible for Ukraine to cover its needs without supply from its foreign partners.

# 14 wounded in attacks amid EC head visit to Kyiv

AP ■ KYIV

Russian attacks in Ukraine wounded at least 14 civilians over the past day, officials said Saturday, as the president of the European Commission returned to the Ukrainian capital to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The governor of the Zaporizhzhia region, Yuri Malashko, said nine people were injured in a Russian rocket strike on the village of Zarichne. Overall, 26 cities and settlements in the region came under attack over the past day, he said. In the Kherson region, five people were injured, said Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin. He said attacks in the region came from artillery, mortars, drones, warplanes and tanks. Nikopol, a city of the opposite bank of the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest, came under fire but no injuries were immediately reported, according to Dnipropetrovsk regional Gov. Serhii Lysak.

European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen arrived in Kyiv on Saturday morning and was met by Zelenskyy at the train station.

She wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that talks during her sixth visit would focus on the path for Ukraine to join the European Union "and how we will continue to make Russia pay for its war of aggression."



# Wage provisions limit SBI Q2 net profit growth to 9 per cent

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's largest lender SBI on Saturday reported a 9.13 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 16,099.58 crore for the September quarter, weighed down by money it had to set aside for employees' impending wage and pension revisions.

On a standalone basis, the State Bank of India (SBI) had a 8.03 per cent increase in the profit after tax for the reporting quarter at Rs 14,330 crore. However, the same was down 15.13 per cent compared to Rs 16,884 crore in the June quarter.

Its core net interest income grew 12.27 per cent to Rs 39,500 crore on the back of a 12.39 per cent growth in advances but the Net Interest Margin (NIM) contracted 0.12 per cent to 3.43 per cent as the cost of deposits rose.

SBI Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said the operating profit declined over 8 per cent to Rs 19,417 crore for the quarter.

He pointed to the surge in provisions for wages and pensions to over Rs 5,900 crore as a major factor behind the fall in operating profit.

The bank, which started provisioning for an increase in wages and pensions since last November, revised up the pay growth assumption to 14 per cent from 10 per cent resulting in the hit, he said.

A write-back of over Rs 1,200 crore from higher-than-required standard asset provisions done in the past helped reduce the hit of higher wage provisions on the bank's profits. The loan loss provisions for the quarter were down 9.75 per cent to Rs 1,815 crore, helped by containing of slippages. The gross non-performing assets ratio improved to a decadal



best of 2.55 per cent.

With the Reserve Bank flagging caution on unsecured lending, Khara said there are

no concerns for the SBI on this line and added that the unsecured loans' portfolio is better than secured loans.

The gross NPA from the unsecured book is only 0.69 per cent, he said, attributing the same to a focus on lending to

those having salary accounts with the SBI and also ones working for better rated corporates.

Khara said the corporate loan growth was a muted 6.61 per cent, as entities focused on using internal accruals for making their investments.

Over Rs 1.5 lakh crore of Rs 4.77 lakh crore in corporate loans sanctioned earlier are awaiting disbursals, Khara said, pointing that it will do better in the second half on this aspect.

Khara hoped that the NIMs will stay at the same levels as the current one, and added that in the worst case, there can be a 3-5 basis points contraction in the number. The bank is focusing on increasing its current account deposits to help garner adequate deposits for fuelling the high credit growth, he said, hinting that there will not be a hike in deposit rates amid what some in the indus-

try call a "war for deposits". It does not plan for any hike in savings bank deposits rate as being mulled or implemented by some rivals, and will not burn cash to push products like the central bank digital currency either, he said.

The bank is targeting to add 600 more branches to the current network of over 22,400 branches by the end of FY25, Khara said, adding that the private sector rivals launching dedicated offerings for semi-urban and rural areas are "aping" SBI.

The international book witnessed handsome growth on the back of companies' demand for external commercial borrowings and trade finance, Khara said, specifying that the bank has done well in the US, Japan and the Middle East.

Khara said it is business as usual at the branch in Tel Aviv, and there is no impact on the

state-run bank's business as a result of the frostiness in ties with Canada as well.

Its overall capital adequacy stood at 14.28 per cent as of September 30 and Khara said there is no need for any new fund infusion either saying the buffers will go up beyond 15 per cent by end of March quarter once the profits from subsidiaries come in.

The bank doesn't have any plans to slice-off its digital banking offering Yono into a separate entity, Khara said, adding that the offering is central to the bank's own business.

Domestic brokerage StoxBox said it is a mixed set of results that was not expected from a giant like SBI. "We feel that the bank has missed its direction and needs to buck up with the business growth, especially in this high-interest environment and intense competition," it said.

## Vedanta posts net loss at ₹1,783 cr in July-Sept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Ltd on Saturday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 1,783 crore in the second quarter ended September 2023, citing a one-time exceptional item in its balance sheet as a result of adoption of new tax rate.

The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,808 crore in the year-ago period, Vedanta Ltd said in a BSE filing.

Vedanta Executive Director Arun Misra told PTI over phone that net loss is on account of one time write down that the company has taken and that is the correction the mining conglomerate has taken so that in the future the tax burden is lesser.

There has been a one-time net tax impact of Rs 6,128



crore as a result of adoption of new tax regime effective FY23, the company said.

The consolidated income of the company in the July-September period increased to Rs 39,585 crore from Rs 37,351 crore in the year-ago quarter.

The company further said that in the second quarter of FY24, the revenue increased by six per cent Y-o-Y to Rs 38,546 crore, driven by higher sales volume, favourable

movement in exchange rate and favourable arbitration award.

The company's gross debt was at Rs 74,473 crore as on September 30, 2023.

Vedanta, a subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Ltd, is a diversified global natural resources company with significant operations in oil and gas, zinc, lead, silver, copper, iron ore, steel, aluminium and power across India, South Africa and Namibia.

## Delhivery Q2 loss narrows to ₹103 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Logistics company Delhivery Ltd on Saturday said its consolidated net loss narrowed to Rs 103 crore in the second quarter ended September 30, 2023. The company had reported a net loss of Rs 254 crore for the year-ago period, it said in a regulatory filing.

Total income rose to Rs 2,042.98 crore from Rs 1,883.38 crore in the year-ago period.

Total expenses fell to Rs 2,148.18 crore from Rs 2,157.79 crore earlier.

The company in a statement said its express parcel shipment volumes grew 12 per cent year-on-year to 181 million in Q2 FY24 from 161 million in Q2 FY23. MD & CEO Sahil Barua said, "We are pleased with H1 operating and financial performance, and volume levels at our mega-facilities have also been consistently high."



The company further announced that effective January 15, 2024, Suraj Saharan, co-founder of Delhivery, would take over as Chief People Officer. Varun Bakshi would be Head of Business Development, Part Truckload Freight business effective January 9 next year.

Vivek Pabari, SVP of Corporate Finance, will take up additional responsibilities of Investor Relations & Treasury. These leadership appointments are aimed at creating experienced long-term leaders for key functions and business

roles, Barua said. Saharan is an alumnus of IIT Mumbai and prior to founding Delhivery, worked as a management consultant at Bain and Company.

Bakshi is an alumnus of IIT Delhi and IIM Bangalore with almost 10 years of sales experience at Deutsche Bank apart from stints with Invest India and as a fintech entrepreneur.

Pabari is an alumnus of IIM Bangalore with 13 years of experience in Investment Banking and Corporate Finance.

## BoB Q2 net profit jumps 28 pc to ₹4,253 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Saturday reported a 28 per cent rise in its net profit to Rs 4,253 crore for the second quarter ended September on the back of a decline in bad loans and rise in interest income.

The state-owned lender had posted a net profit of Rs 3,313 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal. Its total income rose to Rs 32,033 crore in the second quarter of 2023-24, compared to Rs 23,080 crore a year ago, BoB said in a regulatory filing.

The interest income during the quarter increased to Rs 27,862 crore as compared to Rs 21,254 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

The lender improved its asset quality, with the gross non-per-



forming assets (NPAs) coming down to 3.32 per cent of the gross advances by the end of September 2023, from 5.31 per cent in the year-ago period.

Net NPAs fell to 0.76 per cent from 1.16 per cent in the same quarter a year ago.

Provisions for bad loans and contingencies rose to Rs 2,161 crore in the quarter from Rs 1,627 crore a year ago.

Net interest margins rose to 3.33 per cent at the end of September 2022.

## Air India enters into interline partnership with Alaska Airlines

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has entered into an interline partnership with Alaska Airlines.

The partnership will allow Air India customers to "avail seamless connections from New York JFK, Newark-New Jersey, Washington DC, Chicago, San Francisco, and Vancouver gateways to and from 32 destinations in the USA, Mexico, and Canada on Alaska Airline's network", according to a release.

An interline arrangement refers to a pact to issue and accept tickets for flights that are operated by the partner airline. When selling an interline ticket, the operating airlines' own flight numbers are used.



The release said the scope of the partnership includes bilateral interlining which allows both the airlines to sell tickets on each other's network.

"The two airlines have also entered a Special Prorate Agreement, which allows Air India to file 'through fares' on routes covering Alaska Airlines' network," it added.

## Tanishq opens boutique in Singapore, plans 50 stores globally

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Tanishq, a jewellery brand from the Tata Group, plans to have 50 boutiques globally over the long term, said Kuruvilla Markose, the CEO of Titan Company which manages the brand business, as it opened a boutique here on Saturday.

Currently, Titan has 13 boutiques in the international market and is constantly scouting for new sites to serve some 32 million global Indian diasporas, he said. "Long-term plan is to have 50 boutiques globally, and the company is planning such retail outlets in the United Kingdom, Australia and Malaysia," Markose said at the inauguration of the brand's first boutique in Singapore.

Indian High Commissioner to Singapore Dr. Shilpak Ambule inaugurated the boutique in Singapore's Little India



precinct, welcoming one of the renowned brands which will be entering the South East Asian markets through the city-state.

"As a true Tata brand, it lives the values of giving back, by protecting and promoting the ageless craftsmanship of Indian jewellery making," said K V Rao, the Resident Director of ASEAN at Tata Sons.

"Tanishq in Singapore aims to delight the customers and the endless visitors from all over

the world -- to come, see, touch, feel and possess a piece of Tanishq, a treasure forever, also giving a testament to our designers and artisans behind this magic," said Rao when asked about Tanishq's vision in the Lion City.

"We intend to cater to the diverse preferences of Singapore's residents, bringing a wide range of exquisite jewellery and at the same time, interesting designs in everyday wear," Markose said.

## BYJU's core business operational loss narrows

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Edtech firm Think and Learn Private Ltd, which operates under the brand name of BYJU's, on Saturday reported narrowing of operational losses in core business to Rs 2,253 crore for the 2021-22 fiscal.

The EBITDA, or the operational loss in core business, was down from Rs 2,406 crore in the year-ago period, the company said.

The core business of the company comprises its K12 offering, application and tuition centres. BYJU'S said its core business revenue grew 2.3 times to Rs 3,569 crore in FY22 from Rs 1,552 crore in the previous year.

"The core business has demonstrated good growth, underlining the potential of edtech in India, the fastest-



growing major economy. I am also humbled by the lessons learnt in the post-pandemic world of readjustments," BYJU'S founder and group CEO Byju Raveendran said in a statement.

"BYJU'S will continue on the path of sustainable and profitable growth in the coming years," he said.

The financial numbers released by the company excludes the financial performance of all acquisitions made by the company.

## No significant financial implication on bank due to bob World, says BoB

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Saturday said there was very insignificant and immaterial financial implication of 'bob World' on the bank.

The bank has terminated the services of head digital lending business Akhil Handa as part of actions initiated following regulatory steps taken by the Reserve Bank of India, Bank of Baroda managing director Debadatta Chand said while announcing its quarterly numbers.

On October 10, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had directed Bank of Baroda to halt onboarding fresh customers on its mobile application 'bob World' with immediate effect, citing material supervisory concerns, according to reports.

# UCO Bank realigns growth strategy with focus on profitable corporate lending

PTI ■ KOLKATA

State-owned lender UCO Bank is implementing a strategic shift in its growth plan, concentrating on the pursuit of a "profitable" corporate loan portfolio expansion while identifying retail, MSME, and agriculture as its key drivers of growth in the coming quarters.

This shift in perspective concerning the bank's corporate loan portfolio coincides with the delayed rate cut expectations, attributed to global inflation and geopolitical uncertainties.

Furthermore, the bank has adopted a less aggressive approach to term deposits, choosing to prioritise CASA accounts to manage its cost of funds. It intends to utilise its surplus Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) deposits to fuel its growth initiatives, according to a senior bank official. The bank presently holds an excess SLR of Rs

23,400 crore. "We are not chasing corporate loan growth merely for the sake of expansion. Our focus is on sustainable and profitable growth," UCO Bank MD and CEO Ashwani Kumar said.

Addressing a post-results briefing here on Friday, Kumar said the bank has identified retail, agriculture, and MSME segments as robust drivers of growth, all of which have been delivering favourable results.

However, Kumar clarified that the pursuit of profitable corporate lending does not imply a reluctance to engage in fresh lending activities.

He said about Rs 17,000 crore in loans were sanctioned during the second quarter, and Rs 8,000 crore disbursed.

In terms of advances, UCO Bank reported a 17.61 per cent year-on-year increase in its Retail, Agriculture & MSME (RAM) segment, reaching Rs



90,046 crore.

Retail advances grew 17 per cent to Rs 36,362 crore, agriculture advances increased 14 per cent to Rs 22,985 crore, and MSME advances were up 20.83 per cent to Rs 30,699 crore. The share of RAM segment lending sequentially expanded to 63.15 per cent of the total during the second quarter of the current fiscal, up from 61.48 per cent in the year-ago period.

In contrast, the corporate book revenue for the same period was

Rs 1,738 crore, down from Rs 2,088 crore in the preceding quarter.

The domestic corporate advance book witnessed a 1.79 per cent contraction, totaling Rs 52,907 crore in the quarter under review.

Kumar emphasised on the bank's commitment to striking a balance by either renewing government securities upon maturity when bond yields are higher or utilising matured funds to facilitate credit expansion.

The bank's Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio is 67.25 per cent, lower than the industry average of 76 per cent.

Until the CD ratio matches the industry average, the net interest margin should be between 2.93 and 3.0 per cent, Kumar said.

Regarding joining the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), Kumar said the bank recently received regulatory approval and is currently in discussions with

the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to progress further.

Kumar clarified that the bank's plan to raise up to Rs 2,000 crore in equity will not occur in the December quarter and may be considered at a later date.

Due to higher operating expenses, the bank reported a 20 per cent year-on-year decline in net profit, reaching Rs 402 crore for the September quarter. BoB Q2 net profit jumps 28 pc to Rs 4,253 crore.

New Delhi, Nov 4 (PTI) Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Saturday reported a 28 per cent rise in its net profit to Rs 4,253 crore for the second quarter ended September on the back of a decline in bad loans and rise in interest income.

The state-owned lender had posted a net profit of Rs 3,313 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

Its total income rose to Rs 32,033 crore in the second quarter of

2023-24, compared to Rs 23,080 crore a year ago, BoB said in a regulatory filing.

The interest income during the quarter increased to Rs 27,862 crore as compared to Rs 21,254 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

The lender improved its asset quality, with the gross non-performing assets (NPAs) coming down to 3.32 per cent of the gross advances by the end of September 2023, from 5.31 per cent in the year-ago period.

Net NPAs fell to 0.76 per cent from 1.16 per cent in the same quarter a year ago.

Provisions for bad loans and contingencies rose to Rs 2,161 crore in the quarter from Rs 1,627 crore a year ago.

Net interest margins rose to 3.33 per cent at the end of September 2022. Capital adequacy ratio improved to 15.30 per cent from 15.25 per cent at the end of September 2022.

## NTPC Group installed capacity goes up to 73,874 MW

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned power giant NTPC on Saturday said its group installed capacity has reached 73,874 MW after its arm started commercial operations of a 50 MW wind energy unit.

"NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC, has on Nov 4 declared commercial operation of its first project of 50 MW Wind at Dayapar Project in Gujarat, taking the group installed capacity to 73,874 MW," a company statement said.

With this, the total Renewable Energy (RE) operational capacity of NTPC Group stands at 3,364 MW, it said.

This is also the first capacity in India declared commercial under the new IEGC code and GNA Regime. The NTPC REL was incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC on October 7, 2020 to accelerate NTPC's RE capacity addition.

Dayapar Wind is the first project of NTPC REL, and apart from this, there are 15 other RE projects under different stages of execution, totalling 6,210 MW, it stated.

Also, Dayapar Wind Complex, when fully commissioned, will add 450 MW to NTPC's existing 100 MW wind portfolio, it stated.

In addition to solar and wind capacity, NTPC REL is investing in green hydrogen technologies. Based on green hydrogen storage and micro-grid principle, it is setting up a large capacity in Ladakh.

NGEL, another wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC, has commissioned RE capacity of 2,711 MW and is setting up two solar projects, including 40 MW Solar at Ayodhya, UP, and a hydrogen hub at Pudimadaka, Andhra Pradesh.

As part of long-term growth plan and sustainability, NTPC is targeting an RE capacity of 60 GW by 2032 and has a pipeline of 20 GW+ RE capacity.



# VAISHALI CRUSHES STEFANOVA TO TAKE SOLE LEAD

PTI ■ ISLE OF MAN (UK)

India's R Vaishali shot into sole lead after she crashed through the defences of former world champion Antoaneta Stefanova of Bulgaria in the ninth round of Fide Grand Swiss chess tournament here. Playing the tournament of her life, Vaishali also completed an inconsequential fourth Grandmaster norm in the process and now just needs around seven rating points to become the third woman from India to attain the feat. Vaishali, who is the elder sister of Indian's latest chess sensation R Praggnanandhaa, is on seven points. With just two rounds left, she will face Zhongyi Tan of China in what is seen as the final hurdle between her and the title. In the open section, Vidit Gujrathi played out a draw with Russia's Andrey Esipenko to

remain in a six-way lead on 6.5 points. The American duo of Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura, Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania, Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran and Esipenko have an identical score and it is a very close race. Vaishali's game was keenly contested in the middle game arising out of a Queen pawn opening. The Indian got an unbalanced position on board in the early middle game but Stefanova's quest for unwarranted complications cost her dearly as she ended up losing a pawn. As the Bulgarian tried to resurrect, Vaishali won another pawn and efficiently converted to a rook and pawns endgame where the victory was never in doubt. For the second day running, Gujrathi could not make much use of his white pieces. Esipenko was quite up to the task in find-

ing out the road to equality and the draw was a just result. Arjun Erigaisi played out another draw with Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia. Playing black Erigaisi did not face any serious complexities and will now have to do well in the last two rounds in this 460000 USD event. Amongst other Indians in the fray, Nihal Sarin's hopes of a podium finish ended as he blundered and lost to Vincent Keymer of Germany. Praggnanandhaa scored his second victory in the event at the expense of Rinat Jumabayev of Kazakhstan while P Harikrishna defeated Hrant Melkumyan of Armenia to breach the fifty percent mark. Important and Indian results round 9 (Indians unless specified): Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 6.5) Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou, 6.5); Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (6.5) drew with Andrey Esipenko (Fid, 6.5); Hikaru



Nakamura (Usa, 6.5) beat Ivan Cheparinov (Bul, 5.5); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 6) drew with Arjun Erigaisi (56); Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri, 6.5) beat Alexey Sarana (Srb, 5.5); Yuriy Kuzubov (Ukr, 6) drew with Samuel Sevian (Usa, 6); Etienne Bacrot (Fra, 5.5) drew with Alexandr Predke (Srb, 6); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 6) beat Nihal Sarin (5); Allures Firouzja (Fra, 5) drew with Aravindh Chithambaram (5); R Praggnanandhaa (5.5) beat Rinat Jumabayev (Kaz, 4.5); P Harikrishna (5) beat Hrant Melkumyan (Arm, 4); Jordan Van Foreest (Ned, 4.5) drew with Aryan Chopra (4.5); S L Narayanan (5) beat Axel Bachmann (Par, 4); Temur Kuybokarov (Aus, 5) beat D Gukesh (3.5); Ruslan Ponomarev (Ukr, 4.5) beat Abhijeet Gupta (3.5); Maurizio Marandria (Fra, 3.5) lost to Raunak Sadhwani (4.5); Murali Karthikeyan (3.5) drew with Jaime Santos Latasa (Esp, 3.5); Dmitrij Kollars (Ger, 4) beat B Adhiban (3); Leon Luke Mendonca (4) beat Wu Li (Iom, 3). **Women:** Antoaneta Stefanova (Bul, 6) lost to R Vaishali (7); Leya Garifullina (Fid, 6) drew with Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 6.5); Sophie Milliet (Fra, 5.5) lost to Tan Zhongyi (Chn, 6.5); Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 5.5) drew with Batkhuyag Munguntuul (Mgl, 6); Aleksandra Gor-yachkina (Fid, 5) lost to Mai Narva (Est, 6); Deysi Cori (Per, 6) beat Marsel Efroginski (Isr, 5); Stavroula Tsolakidou (Gre, 5.5) drew with Anna Ushenina (Ukr, 5.5); Monika Socko (Pol, 5) drew with D Harika (4.5); Elisabeth Paehtz (Ger, 4.5) drew with Tania Sachdev (4.5); B Savitha Shri (3) lost to Oliwia Kiolbasa (Pol, 4.5); Divya Deshmukh (4) beat Elina Danielian (Arm, 3); Trisha Kanyamarala (Irl, 2) lost to Vantika Agrawal (4).



## Rashford misses United game after Hag criticism

AP ■ LONDON

Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford was missing for the Premier League match against Fulham on Saturday, a day after manager Erik ten Hag criticized the player's decision to go to a nightclub party after a derby loss to Manchester City. United said Rashford's absence was down to a heavy knock to his leg in training and that he failed a fitness test before the game. Ten Hag had been unhappy with Rashford going to a nightclub for a pre-arranged birthday party hours after the 3-0 defeat to City on Sunday. Rashford turned 26 on Tuesday. "I spoke with him about it," Ten Hag said Friday. "It's unacceptable, I told him, he apologized and that's it. For the rest, it's an internal matter." Ten Hag repeated that it was an "internal matter" when asked if Rashford had been fined for the incident.

Rashford was among the substitutes in the 3-0 loss to Newcastle in the League Cup on Wednesday, with Ten Hag saying that was due to rotation rather than punishment. Rashford was dropped to the bench for a game against Wolverhampton Wanderers last season for time-keeping, but Ten Hag rejected the notion that the England forward is not attuned to his demands. "Your suggestion is not right," he said. "He's fitting in, he's very motivated to put things right. I know which effort he is putting in. He's totally with us. So, he makes a mistake, but that doesn't say he's not fitting in." "I see him every day in training, what he's doing, I know. So, he makes one mistake but also, off the pitch, what he is doing, how he lives, and I'm sure he is doing everything right to help the team to perform and to let us win." Rashford has scored just a goal for United this season.

## Chile forced to play striker in goal Drops 1-0 game to Mexico in Pan American gold medal match



AP ■ SANTIAGO (CHILE)

Chile's women's soccer team had a shot at its biggest achievement in history in the Pan American Games' gold medal game, but was forced to put a player who usually plays striker in net for the entire match and lost 1-0 to Mexico. The hosts embarrassingly lost both their goalkeepers to European clubs ahead of the match on Friday. Chilean players sat on the pitch to protest the disorganization that led to 29-year-old Maria José Urrutia playing the position in their

absence, and earned enthusiastic applause from their fans. Rebeca Bernal scored the only goal for Mexico in the 29th minute at the Elias Figueroa Stadium in the city of Valparaiso, outside Santiago. The story of the match could have been different if Chile's starting goalkeeper Christiane Endler and her backup Antonia Canales did not have to return to their clubs. Endler had promised her club Olympique Lyonnais to return to France this week for training. Canales returned to her club Valencia in Spain due to an injury to the

team's starting goalkeeper. Chile was also missing midfielder Karen Araya and defender Camila Sáez, who had previous commitments with their club, Real Madrid in Spain. The Pan American Games women's soccer competition is not a FIEA tournament, which allows clubs to decide whether their players will be eligible and when. Earlier this week, coach Luis Mena said one of his alternatives to play in goal was striker Franchesca Caniguan. She had some experience in the position playing for local club Rangers, he said.

"That fact is another evidence of the little professionalism and seriousness in the management of women's soccer in Chile," said the country's women's soccer players association. "We know that this would not happen to the men's team and that we would never see the reaction of some media outlets, who said the players were responsible for this." The United States' Under-19 women's team took the bronze medal with a 2-0 victory over Argentina. Amalia Villarreal scored in the 30th minute and Claire Hutton added a second in the 37th minute.



## Coco Gauff overcomes 17 double-faults to beat Marketa

AP ■ CANCUN (MEXICO)

Coco Gauff overcame 17 double-faults and came back after being a game away from elimination at the WTA Finals, eventually pulling out a 5-7 7-6(4) 6-3 victory over Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova in a round-robin match to stay in contention for a semifinal berth. "Mental toughness is the biggest thing I'm pleased with," Gauff said on Friday. "That was a tough match. She's not an easy player. Not easy conditions. And I stayed in there, every point, just fighting." Gauff, the 19-year-old from Florida who won the US Open in September, dropped four consecutive games and 16 of 21 points to go from leading the opening set to dropping it and trailing 1-0 in the next. There was a 25-minute rain delay early in the second set; perhaps that helped Gauff regroup a bit. Still, Vondrousova managed to get in front and serve for the victory at 6-5 in the second. Gauff broke there to stay in it. And after briefly trailing in the third set, too, Gauff grabbed five of the match's last six games to improve to 2-1 at the season-ending championship for the top eight players in women's tennis. Vondrousova went 0-3 and will not advance. The third-seeded Gauff's hopes for getting to the event's semifinals for the first time hinged on the result of Friday's last match: Iga Swiatek (2-0), who already was guaranteed a berth in the

final four, against Ons Jabeur (1-1). "Every match, you want to win, but I knew that I needed to get (at least) a set - and hopefully a win - to even have the chance to move on," Gauff said. "So I'm really happy I was able to buckle down and do my best to get through that." Earlier on Friday, No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka reached the semifinals for the second consecutive year, holding on to beat Elena Rybakina 6-2 3-6 6-3 in a contest that was repeatedly interrupted by rain the night before. Play was halted on Thursday night with Rybakina about to try to force a third set by serving for the second at 5-3. When they resumed, she did just that. But Sabalenka came through in the decider - although not without a bit of tension in the last game. She needed to save five break points, and then required four match points to end it. "Really tough conditions, and I'm super happy that I was able to get this win, no matter what," said Sabalenka, who double-faulted 15 times. This was a rematch of the Australian Open final in January, also won by Sabalenka. Sabalenka went 2-1 in round-robin play and advanced as the second-place finisher in her group. Jessica Pegula, who beat Maria Sakkari on Thursday to go 3-0, finished atop their group. Rybakina was eliminated with the loss on Friday. "There were a half-dozen rain delays during Thursday's stop-start-stop.

AP ■ SAO PAULO

A little help from heavy rain at Interlagos made it easier for Formula One champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull to start this weekend's Brazilian Grand Prix in pole position. His teammate, Sérgio Perez, didn't get as lucky and will start in ninth position after Friday's qualifying. Verstappen clocked 1 minute, 10.727 seconds in qualifying, which was cut short due to rain. Race organizers said it would take about one hour to remove debris from the track, so the decision was made to end qualifying. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc will start in second position, with a lap 0.294 seconds behind Verstappen's. Two Aston Martins will be in the second row, with Lance Stroll and Fernando Alonso, respectively. Perez, who is still fighting for the runner-up position in the drivers' championship with Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, will see his rival start from the fifth spot on Sunday.

## Red Bull's Verstappen to start Brazilian Grand Prix in pole position

Qualifying at Interlagos started with a 15-minute delay due to debris on some of its main turns. No accidents took place in the lone practice session earlier. Verstappen set his time early in the third and decisive part session of qualifying and then the rain came. "We didn't know when (the rain) was going to fall during qualifying, but we thought it would," Verstappen said. "This weather is insane ... Charles (Leclerc) and I were saying our laps looked terrible, but I don't know about that. The wind started to change and got very strong, we lost a lot of lap time because of that." Leclerc said he never experienced such a turn in the weather. "The car was extremely difficult to drive, it had no grip. I was thinking about that at the end of the lap," the Ferrari driver said. "It was weird for everyone on the



track today. But I am happy to start in the first row." After the qualifying was over, the covering on some of the stands at Interlagos collapsed. No one was injured as the vast majority of fans had already left, race organizers said. Earlier, Ferrari's Carlos Sainz paced the field at Interlagos with a lap at 1 minute, 11.732 seconds at the only practice session of the

weekend. Leclerc was 0.108 seconds behind. Three-time F1 champion Verstappen spent a long portion of the practice session working with Red Bull on adjustments to his car and was only 16th fastest. The effort paid off with his car looking steadier than his rivals' during qualifying. Perez was 18th in practice, in another sub-par showing for the

embattled driver. Verstappen has won a record 16 of 19 races so far this season, including four in a row. That includes the first two stops in a monthlong tour of the Americas. Verstappen won the U.S. Grand Prix in Austin, Texas, two weeks ago, then last Sunday at Mexico City. F1 wraps up three consecutive weeks of racing this Sunday in Sao Paulo and has a one-week break before the eagerly awaited Las Vegas Grand Prix. Verstappen claimed his third consecutive title early last month and Red Bull has already won the manufacturer championship. It's made the status of Perez, who has woefully underperformed this season in clearly dominant Red Bull equipment, the hottest topic in the sport. He's under contract at Red Bull, but the team also has Daniel Ricciardo under contract and Perez left

Mexico City with reports swirling he'd be replaced next year by Fernando Alonso. Alonso was displeased with the chatter when he got to Brazil and said it was disruptive to his Aston Martin team. "Paddock rumors are normal, but people out there just try to make fun of it and gain some followers and these kinds of things," Alonso said. "But I am not into that game. I am not enjoying the rumours." Perez is clinging to second in the F1 standings and trying to hold off Hamilton, who cut the deficit from 39 points to 20 with three races remaining when Perez crashed out of his home race last Sunday in Mexico. Alonso in Friday practice said the track was dirty and "not in Formula One standards." The veteran driver had the 11th-fastest lap of practice. Stewards worked to clean some of the turns as soon as practice was over. On Saturday, there will be a sprint race with more points up for grabs. Formula One also announced on Friday it has extended Interlagos' contract until 2030.

# Djokovic gets his revenge by beating defending champion Rune

AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic took his revenge over defending champion Holger Rune to reach the semifinals of the Paris Masters after a nearly three-hour battle. The Dane beat Djokovic in last year's final but could not prevail this time. Djokovic won the quarterfinal match 7-5 6-7(3) 6-4 on Friday. The top-ranked Djokovic, a six-time champion at the Paris Masters, advanced to the last four for the ninth time. Rune saved a match point when trailing 5-4 in the second set and played an excellent tiebreaker to level at one-set apiece but Djokovic raised his level in the decider, dropping

just three points on his serve. Djokovic secured an early break in the third set and then played aggressively to keep Rune well behind the baseline. "It was quite a similar match to last year's final, it was anybody's game in every set," the top-seeded Djokovic said. "I played an awful tiebreak in the second set, probably the worst one this year. But again credit to him for staying mentally tough and playing solid. We have similar games. Move well, defend well and all-round players." Djokovic had a heated exchange with umpire Renaud Lichtenstein toward the end of the second set over a challenge by Rune and was booed by some sections of the lively Paris

crowd after the Dane won the tiebreaker. The result extended Djokovic's winning streak to 16 matches. He will meet the fifth-seeded Andrey Rublev for a place in the final. Rublev rallied to win 4-6 6-3 6-1 against Alex de Minaur, who had a walkover on Thursday after Jannik Sinner withdrew from the tournament in a scheduling protest. Earlier, Grigor Dimitrov booked his spot in the semifinals with a 6-1 4-6 6-4 win over Hubert Hurkacz that ended his rival's hopes of qualifying for the ATP Finals. Despite hitting 19 aces, the 11th-seeded Hurkacz dropped his serve three times in their quarterfinal match. He can no longer finish among the top



eight players of the season. The 32-year-old Dimitrov reached the last four at the indoor tournament for the second time in his career. It's the first time since 2017 - the year he won the ATP Finals - that Dimitrov has reached 40 tour-level wins in a season. The Bulgarian will have the chance to improve that record against seventh-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas in the semifinals. Dimitrov has been enjoying a good run of form, also reaching the semifinals at the Shanghai Masters last month. "My body is feeling well for now, that's the most important thing," said Dimitrov, who converted all three break points he had. "My head is good. If I'm able to

play like that on a consistent basis throughout every game, I put myself in a position to do better. Today was no different." Hurkacz started poorly but fought hard to level at one set each before he was broken in the seventh game of the decider. "(Hurkacz was) on fire definitely with the serves," Dimitrov said. "I knew what to expect against him, but I wasn't sure if I was going to get a break. I had to stay very focused and every time I had the opportunity to get into a rally, I had to do something. A few points made a huge difference today." Tsitsipas had no problem beating Karen Khachanov 6-3 6-4 to post a 300th career-win and achieve a third consecutive semifinal appearance.





# UNBEATEN INDIA FACE FORMIDABLE SOUTH AFRICA IN BATTLE FOR TOP SPOT

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The top spot is at stake and an unconquered Indian team will certainly feel a sense of déjà vu when it takes on a red-hot South Africa on Sunday in what will be a battle of equals in the World Cup.

It promises to be a fascinating contest and Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin can't escape that "been there in this position" feeling since they were part of the World Cup squad that had a similar run in 2011.

The only game that India had lost in the 2011 edition was against South Africa when an unheralded Robin Peterson had smashed Ashish Nehra for 19 runs after Indian batting imploded in Nagpur despite a hundred from Sachin Tendulkar.

Kohli, who is one short of record-equalling 49th ODI hundred, and Ashwin are the only players in the current squad who were part of India's title-winning run.

On Sunday, Rohit Sharma's players need to guard themselves from complacency and emulate the all-conquering Australian team of 2007 which won the World Cup without losing a single game.

A win and 16 points would confirm India's top spot with a match left against the Netherlands.

The die-hard Indian fans however won't mind 'Law of Averages' catching up before the knock-out stage and not feel the heat when it matters most.

South Africa's batting line-up, filled with power-hitters and game-changers will test India's 'pace galactics' before the semi-finals.



An unprecedented demand of tickets has added to the excitement to the Eden contest which in bigger picture will determine the group toppers heading into the semifinals.

## SA'S BATTING VS INDIAN PACERS:

Consistently racking up those humongous scores, it has been a challenge bowling to South Africa in this World Cup.

They had notched the tournament's biggest score of 428/5 batting first against Sri Lanka in their opening match. In all of their five matches they have batted first South Africa have posted 300-

plus totals with their chief enforcer being De Kock who leads the run-chart with 545 runs from seven matches.

Their only weakness has been chasing which was exposed by the minnows Netherlands who bundled them out for 207 inside 43 overs defending a modest 245.

The Proteas also made a mess of their 271-run chase against Pakistan before tall-talker Keshav Maharaj sealed an edgy one-wicket win.

India on the other hand have showed they can chase and defend well. Chasing would be easy with dew around at the Eden but South Africa

would be wary to bat second and would look to go all out up front.

## SHAMI 2.0: 'NO ROCKET SCIENCE':

"Eat. Sleep. Take five-wicket haul. Repeat" — reads a post from the ICC in praise of Indian pacer Mohammed Shami's second five-for in three matches in this World Cup.

Call it a twist of fate but Shami has made the biggest difference to this Indian team following premier all-rounder Hardik Pandya's ankle injury that ruled him out of the World Cup.

It forced a twin change with Suryakumar Yadav and Shami brought in place of Pandya and Shubman Gill

for the New Zealand match. Since then, Shami has been on a roll taking 14 wickets in three matches at an average of 6.71.

Shami calls it 'no rocket science' but the way he has consistently hit Test match lengths and get those late movements, has made India's three-pronged pace attack the most lethal, something that was evident when they skittled out Sri Lanka for 55 en route to securing a record 302-run win.

While Jasprit Bumrah has added a menacing slower yorker to his repertoire, Mohammed Siraj has given him a perfect support with the new ball.

They have taken 10 wickets — five each — in the powerplay as India have been most economical of the 10 teams in this crucial phase.

Half of the battle will be won if the duo manages to give early breakthroughs by sending back in-form De Kock and Rassie van der Dussen, who have six centuries between them in this World Cup.

Another interesting battle will be the battle between Heinrich Klaasen, who is known for taking on the spin attack, and Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja.

**'BATTING MIGHT':** Having missed centuries against Australia (85), New Zealand (95), Sri Lanka (88), Kohli on his 35th birthday, would be eager to finally get that record-equalling 49th ODI hundred.

Rohit has a penchant to score daddy hundreds at his 'favourite' Eden Gardens and he too would be keen to be back among runs after getting out for 4 against Sri Lanka at his home ground.



## Pandya out of World Cup after ankle swelling resurfaces Prasad gets call-up

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya was on Saturday ruled out of the ongoing World Cup after failing to recover from his ankle injury.

Pacer Prasad Krishna, who played 17 ODIs, has been named Pandya's replacement in the Indian squad, the ICC said in a media release.

Pandya had hurt his left ankle while fielding of his own bowling in the game against Bangladesh in Pune on October 19.

"Tough to digest the fact that I will miss out on the remaining part of the World Cup. I'll be with the team, in spirit, cheering them on every ball of every game. Thanks for all the wishes, the love, and the support has been incredible. This team is special and I'm sure we'll make everyone proud," Pandya said on 'X', formerly twitter.

According to BCCI sources privy to developments at the NCA, Pandya had resumed his training in Bengaluru but the swelling on his left ankle has resurfaced and hence there is no chance that he could even play at the business end of the tournament.

"As it has been said earlier, Pandya doesn't have any fracture and only had minor tear. He had resumed training but suddenly considerable amount of swelling developed in left ankle region and he wouldn't have been fit to bowl. "This is not some injury which could be managed with injections. Considerable swelling resurfaced on Thursday and unless it subsides, he can't do skills training for some more time," the official told PTI on condition of anonymity.

The BCCI had three players named as standbys for the tournament — left-handed batter Tilak Varma, wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson and pacer

Prasidh and they could only name one of the three.

It is understood the rationale behind Prasad's selection is that the team would miss Hardik's bowling more than his batting and hence the only player who could fit the bill was the Karnataka pacer.

In fact before his lower back stress fracture and subsequent surgery, Prasad was among Rahul Dravid's top choice to play ODI cricket and rest as they say is history.

With Shardul Thakur and Ravichandran Ashwin already in the back-up, the Indian team management wasn't too keen on an all-rounder as both are considered to be decent enough batters.

In terms of batting, the team is well covered with Ishan Kishan, a left-hander-cum-keeper already in the reserves, hence neither Sanju nor Tilak would have been considered for the role.

Right now, the team is set and even Prasad, unless some massive injury happens, is unlikely to get a game.

All the three pacers — Mohammed Shami, Mohamamed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah pick themselves and hence there is little chance for Prasad to get a look-in.

The only situation where some pacers can rest is the Netherlands game where a Shardul, Ashwin or Prasad could get a look-in in case the first choice fast bowlers are rested before the semifinal likely to be played in Mumbai.

The situation is also God sent for Suryakumar Yadav, who at No. 6, will get to play all of India's remaining games unless injury happens.

The replacement of a player requires the approval of the Event Technical Committee before the player can be officially added to the squad.



## Pak pip NZ by 21 runs via DLS method to keep semis hopes alive

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Pakistan defeated New Zealand by 21 runs via DLS method in a rain-hit World Cup game to keep their semifinal hopes alive here on Saturday. Opener Fakhar Zaman played an unbeaten knock of 126 and was well-assisted by skipper Babar Azam (66 not out) during their run chase, which was impacted by intermittent rain.

New Zealand had amassed 401 for six in their 50 overs. Following a short spell of rain, Pakistan were set a revised target of 342 in 41 overs. The rain returned in the 26th over with Pakistan cruising at 200 for one but no play was possible thereafter. With the Pakistanis ahead of the DLS par score by 21 runs, they took home two much needed points.

The Kiwis had put on a great show with the bat courtesy Rachin Ravindra's classy 108 and skipper Kane Williamson's 95. It was the fourth successive defeat for the New Zealanders. The defeat against Pakistan

was their fourth in a row in the tournament, leaving the Kiwis in a must-win situation against Sri Lanka on November 9 here and they will also have to keep the net run rate equations in mind.

"There's a lot left in this tournament for us. It's a frustrating result for us after so much of it going so well today. We need to move on and focus on our next challenge — take the positives, learn a few lessons," said Williamson.

Williamson said his side will have to get some clarity in their thoughts ahead of the match against the Lankans.

"The approach will be very similar. We can't rely on other teams as you get down to those small margins of whether it's run rate or your last match."

**Brief scores:**  
New Zealand 401/6 in 50 overs (Rachin Ravindra 108, Kane Williamson 95; Mohammad Wasim 3/60). Pakistan 200/1 in 25.3 overs (Fakhar Zaman 126 not out, Babar Azam 66 not out).

## Net practice: Suryakumar gears up for showdown against Maharaj

PTI ■ KOLKATA

His chinks against left-arm spin is well exposed as explosive Indian middle-order batter Suryakumar Yadav was seen gearing up to tackle Keshav Maharaj in a specialised manner on the eve of their World Cup clash against South Africa here on Saturday.

The Indian T20 specialist, who is yet to replicate this in the ODIs, has an average of 17.00 against left-arm spin and has been dismissed eight out of 18 times in ODIs so far.

On the day, the likes of Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul skipped their optional training. Yadav headed to the spin bowling net for a long session with the local left-arm twerkers. Hardik Pandya's ankle twist against Bangladesh had made an opening in the team for Surya and the Indian 360-degree batter has showed that he too can bat with patience in a gritty 47-ball 49 against England that rescued them from a tricky 131/4 to 229/9 on a tacky Ekana wicket.

Surya, incidentally, knows the condition well



having represented Kolkata Knight Riders for four seasons before being picked by the Mumbai Indians in 2018. "Constantly you have got to keep improving. You've got to keep evolving. You've got to keep getting better. And the more kind of situations he finds himself in and he comes out of it, like he did really well against England, the better he's going to get at it," Indian coach Rahul Dravid said of Suryakumar evolving as a depend-

able ODI batter.

"Yes, I mean, there are just in terms of just the areas in which he scores in T20 cricket and how quickly he has to go in T20 cricket. He's obviously been exceptional at that. "And it's good to see that in one day cricket, he's also realising that maybe at times you can give yourself a little bit more time to settle in. And then you know how dangerous he can be at the death," Dravid added, well aware that his exploits at the death can be decisive.

Apart from Surya, the Indian top order duo of Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli also had lengthy sessions, facing pace and spin bowling in both the nets.

Kohli has missed the Sachin Tendulkar's record-equalling 49th ODI century for three times in a row and he will once again look to make amends when he turns up to bat at No 3 on his 35th birthday.

Kohli was greeted by "Happy Birthday King Kohli in advance" by about a thousand fans who managed to sneak into the stadium on the sidelines of their practice.

## Sri Lanka cancel training due to 'severe' air pollution in Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After Bangladesh, Sri Lanka were forced to cancel their opening training session in the national capital on Saturday due to "severe" air pollution.

Bangladesh, who arrived here on Wednesday, had decided against practising on Friday as the pollution levels in the city hit the "severe plus" category.

Sri Lanka followed them into staying indoors on Saturday when the Air Quality Index stood at 407 in the morning.

"It was cancelled owing to the air quality issue," said a SLC source, referring to the Saturday's training session.

However, Bangladesh are likely to brave the pollution two days before the game on Monday. They are scheduled to train on

Saturday from 6 PM.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

It is unlikely that the International Cricket Council (ICC) will shift the game out of Delhi but the call on whether the match will go ahead will only be taken on that day.

"We are currently assessing the situation. The ICC and our hosts the BCCI take the well-being of all participants seriously and are monitoring the air quality in Delhi. We are taking expert advice to assess the situation," an ICC spokesperson told PTI. The air quality is usually assessed by match officials on the day of a game.

## India game gave us a bit of confidence: Afghan coach

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Head coach Jonathan Trott feels despite losing against India at the World Cup, the match worked as a confidence booster for Afghanistan, who have started believing they can also win and dominate games.

Enjoying their best-ever performance, Afghanistan have registered comprehensive wins of over three former champions — England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — and the Netherlands to keep alive their semifinal hopes.

"I think we saw a bit of form coming into the side against India. Obviously, we lost the game but then that gave us a bit of confidence," Trott said after Afghanistan's seven-wicket win over the Netherlands here on Friday. After underwhelming performances against Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Afghanistan batters have done well to put a score close to 300 (272) against India.

"I said we'd lost so many close games lead-



ing into the series against Pakistan and then in the Asia Cup. We just need to start 1-1 or 2 and we'll get that confidence and belief and a bit of a spring in our step and that we can win those close games but also dominate games if we get the opportunity to," Trott said.

Afghanistan, who are just outside the top 4 in fifth spot, play inform Australia and South Africa in their last two league fixtures. "We need to improve on for the next game

against Australia in Mumbai. But I saw a lot of good things as well that's going to stand us in good stead going forward against the likes of Australia and South Africa in the next two games. Plenty to work on but also plenty to be pleased about," the coach said.

## IT'S IMPORTANT TO DOVETAIL IN A LONG TOURNAMENT

The Afghans have been making changes to their bowling depending on the wicket.

"We're lucky to have the quality of players to choose from. A lot of teams, you don't have the option of playing four spinners, or the quality of the four spinners," Trott said. "It's important to dovetail in a long tournament like this and it's good to see the guys doing that. The way Noor (Ahmad) came in, I thought he bowled brilliantly today (Friday) as well, I should say.

But he then didn't play in Pune, it didn't look like it was going to spin, and he was brilliant with it."

## Kohli@35: Journey to top started at Garden of Eden 14 summers ago

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The entire Mohun Bagan cricket team was on celebratory mode having just won the P. Sen Trophy at the Eden Gardens back in 2009, barring one individual.

From a distance, the architect of that crown was quietly sitting on a famous white coloured cane chair, forever planted outside the Eden dressing room. He looked at the celebrations with utmost nonchalance.

Virat Kohli was all of 20, already an U-19 World Cup captain, touted as the next big thing in Indian cricket but a solitary half-century in five ODIs wasn't a reflection of what one was going to witness over the next decade. As Kohli steps onto field on his

35th birthday, against South Africa in-front of a packed crowd on the same hallowed turf, there would be an over-riding feeling among the handful who had watched the genius in the making 14 summers ago.

In extreme heat and humidity, Kohli scored 184 off just 121 balls in that final match against Town Club. It was not even a decent club attack but in those challenging conditions, it was unbelievable domination from a future superstar.

"Bahot tough tha. Lag raha tha skin phat raha hai (It was tough. The heat was unbearable)," Kohli told reporters that day apart from answering the customary questions on his possible comeback into the Indian side.

But that 'club class' hundred was the pre-cursor or trailer for the full length feature film released around six months later on Christmas eve when he scored his first of his 48 ODI hundreds — 107 vs Sri Lanka at this very ground.

It was still a chubby-cheeked Kohli, not the chiselled-jaw world class athlete, who forged a beautiful partnership with Gautam Gambhir.

Post-match, Gambhir called up Kohli and handed his player of the match cheque to the young player as a mark of encouragement from a senior player. Who knows the world record equalling 49th hundred might just happen at the same venue where it all started. There won't be 70,000 'Kohli



Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik creates a sand sculpture on the eve of Indian cricketer Virat Kohli's birthday, in Puri, on Saturday PTI

masks' in the stands but when have "Viratians" (as his die-hard partisan fans identify them-

selves) needed to mask up. They have Kohli in their hearts and a prayer on their lips for the

49th ton on what could be the best strip for batting thus far in the competition. "He is not tensed about his 49th hundred.

His job is to contribute to team's cause and he has done that. We still discuss about the game. "For me, what stands out is his discipline, dedication and above all staying so rooted and humble in this journey," childhood coach and mentor Rajkumar Sharma told PTI on the eve of his favourite student's birthday. More than Guru-Shishya, Rajkumar-Kohli share a father-son bond.

And now Kohli's elder brother Vikas and sister Bhawna's kids also train at the iconic West Delhi Academy in Paschim Vihar.

On Sunday, the coach has planned an intimate birthday celebration along with family members before getting on to watch his ward in action.

But before that Sharma does have another challenge: to deal with the requests of close to 50-odd Bangladeshi journalists, who all want to interview him on the 'Making of Virat', something he has spoken about a zillion times.

Life might come to a full circle for world cricket's most bankable mega-star, a phenomenon big enough for a global body to market his name to get into the Olympics.

He is Virat Kohli. He is everything. A precocious talent, wayward with rough edges, a fitness freak, a manic run-machine, a

social media game-changer blessed with eloquence to match for, fiercely protective but an elegant public figure.

His persona has changed and one can see how free and charged up he has been after relinquishing his captaincy. On November 5 last year, Kohli was asked about his celebration plans and he had said that everything will happen after the T20 World Cup final in Melbourne.

The CAB's plans to have a public birthday celebrations didn't get BCCI's nod. May be the legend himself wants to keep everything on hold till November 19. On that day, he won't mind Mohammed Siraj and Shubman Gill carrying him on their shoulders at Motera.



"My life is actually empty, so I feel like I'm lying to everyone by pretending to be happy on the outside"  
—Sulli



India's cricketing evolution has seen a seismic shift in focus from batting to a formidable bowling unit.

This World Cup has showcased their newfound balance, rewriting the narrative of Indian cricket, and fuelling hopes of clinching the title, writes **SWARN KUMAR ANAND**

# INDIAN LETHAL PACE BATTERY



In the annals of cricket history, the Indian team has long been revered for its formidable batting lineup. From legends like Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar to modern day flamboyant maestros such as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and KL Rahul, India's prowess with the bat has often been the centrepiece of their game. However, one recurring theme has been the struggle to strike a balance between frightening batting dexterity in the world and a reliable bowling attack. The frailty in the bowling department at times proved to be their Achilles' heel. For decades, Indian cricket enthusiasts watched their team pile up imposing totals, only to see the opposition chase them down with disconcerting ease. This pattern, a source of perennial frustration, had been attributed to a dearth of lethal pace bowlers who could consistently deliver under pressure to unsettle the opposition.

Although there have been exceptional individual talents in the bowling department, such as Kapil Dev, Manoj Prabhakar, Javagal Srinath, Zaheer Khan, and Irfan Khan, sustaining excellence across the entire bowling attack had often been a challenge.

The issue transcends generations. In the 1990s and early 2000s, India was often accused of over-relying on the genius of batters like Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Sourav Ganguly, and Rahul Dravid, to name a few in the long and glittering list, while the bowling resources struggled to consistently back them up.

Matches that should have been won were lost due to the inability to defend even the most defendable totals. One such memorable instance was the Kolkata Test of 2001, often referred to as the "Eden Gardens Miracle". VVS Laxman and Dravid orchestrated one of the greatest comebacks in cricketing history with a monumental partnership of 376 runs, propelling India to a staggering total of 657. However, despite this mammoth score, India could not seal the deal, as the visiting Australian side chased down 384 runs to clinch victory.

As we fast forward to recent years, there is a discernible shift in this paradigm. In the grand tapestry of Indian cricket, the story of a weak bowling attack failing to defend massive scores is gradually becoming a tale of the past. A new generation of Indian bowlers has emerged, redefining the narrative.

Spearheaded by the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, and Mohammed Siraj, India now boasts a dreadful bowling arsenal that complements its legendary batting lineup.

India's pace battery is now regarded as one of the most clinical in international cricket. The rise of these bowlers has brought about a sense of equilibrium, a feeling that with a competitive total on the board, India can genuinely challenge any opposition. The current crop of bowlers, with their skill, determination, and ability to thrive under pressure, is rewriting new narrative, ensuring that the legacy of Indian cricket is one of balanced excellence.

In the chronicles of Cricket World Cup history, the current edition stands out as an extraordinary chapter for India, with victories secured in all seven matches thus far. What sets this campaign apart is the emergence of terrifying bowling prowess. India's bowlers have not merely played a supporting role; they have been the driving force behind the team's success. Their consistent ability to pick up wickets and mount pressure on the opposition has been a



game changer. In this World Cup tour, whenever India fielded first, the bowlers dismantled cricketing giants like Australia and New Zealand, as well as former champions Pakistan, England, and Sri Lanka, before they could complete their allotted 50 overs, securing all 10 wickets.

Each member of India's bowling attack has risen to the occasion at different stages of the World Cup campaign. "As you can see, our fast bowling unit is very good. If I am not getting wickets, Shami steps in and takes them, or Jassi (Jasprit Bumrah) does," said Mohammed Siraj, highlighting the seamless teamwork. Surprisingly, India's bench strength of pacers is also impressive, highlighting the fact that a country which in the past struggled to maintain its pace arsenal is now abundant in it, thanks to the IPL.

At the helm of the fast-bowling brigade, Bumrah's astute insights on bowling lengths have been invaluable. "When Jassi bowls, he gains an understanding of what line and length works best on a given wicket. He relays the same message to us, and I also discuss with KL (Rahul) because, from his position, he can observe how much the ball is swinging or if there's any movement off the seam," Siraj explained.

A noteworthy aspect of this World Cup has been India's dominance in bowling economy, with pacer Jasprit Bumrah and spinner Ravindra Jadeja holding the top three positions in the World Cup rankings. While individual top wicket-takers do not feature Indians, it is the

“ IN THIS CRICKET WORLD CUP, INDIA'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY UNFOLDS WITH SEVEN CONSECUTIVE VICTORIES. WITH EACH MEMBER OF THE ATTACK CONTRIBUTING, INDIA'S FAST BOWLING, LED BY STALWARTS LIKE JASPRIT BUMRAH AND MOHAMMED SHAMI, HAS DISMANTLED CRICKETING GIANTS. THE SEAMLESS TEAMWORK, ASTUTE INSIGHTS, AND EXCEPTIONAL JUDGMENT SHOWCASED BY THE LIKES OF KL RAHUL HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL. THIS NARRATIVE OF BALANCED EXCELLENCE HAS REDEFINED INDIAN CRICKET, WITH ROHIT SHARMA'S RECORD-BREAKING SIXER SPREE AND THE UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE OF THE BATSMEN FURTHER HIGHLIGHTING THEIR REMARKABLE JOURNEY

collective effort of the Indian bowling unit that has been truly remarkable.

The match against England presented a tense challenge, with India falling 30 runs short of what was considered a competitive total.

However, the opening pace duo of Bumrah (3/32) and Shami (4/22) unleashed scintillating spells, paving the way for spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja to further dazzle.

Their combined efforts resulted in India bowling

out the defending champions for a mere 129 runs in just 34.5 overs.

Acknowledging the exceptional performance by the bowlers, Rohit said during the post-match presentation, "You don't witness that every day when you're defending such a total. Our seamers capitalised on the conditions excellently; there was swing and lateral movement available on the pitch."

The last match against Sri Lanka was

brehtaking as India's bowling unleashed terror on the Lankan batters with deliveries that were nearly unplayable. Bumrah (who took first wicket on first ball), Shami, and Siraj decimated the Sri Lankan batting lineup, bundling them out for a paltry 55 while chasing India's total of 357/8 at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium. Mastering the art of swing bowling and yorkers, the Indian bowlers made the Sri Lankan batters struggle on every delivery, with Shami taking five wickets, leading the way.

Rohit's record-breaking spree, claiming the title for the most sixes, further adds to India's World Cup achievements. The confidence exuded by the batsmen, even in the face of early setbacks, has been palpable, while the bowling performance has been nothing short of fabulous. The emergence of India's bowling expertise has transformed them from a predominantly batting-focused but bowling-weak team into a more balanced and redoubtable outfit.

As the team steps onto the field, the harmonious interplay of bat and ball will be the key to their success. Building a substantial score is only half the battle; it is the bowling that truly fortifies the team's position. The current crop of bowlers, known for their skill, determination, and ability to perform under pressure, ensures golden chapter in Indian cricket. With newfound confidence in their bowling unit, India stands poised to make history in this World Cup. As the cricketing world eagerly awaits the clash against giant South Africa today, India's unbeaten streak in the tournament makes them the most deserving contenders for the title.



# AIR-ING CONCERN

For the past few years, the month of November has become synonymous with watery eyes, itchy throats, and respiratory problems as people in Delhi and NCR wake up everyday to a blanket of smog. During this period, air quality in the world's most polluted capital city reaches hazardous levels, consequently impacting health, livelihood and economy. **THE HEALTH PIONEER** brings a report

## IMPACT OF AIR QUALITY ON PREGNANCY



DR VAISHALI SHARMA  
Gynecologist from VS Healthcare

Pregnancy is a time of anticipation and joy, but it can also be a time of increased vulnerability to environmental factors, particularly air quality. As the air we breathe can significantly affect the well-being of both the mother and the developing baby, understanding the connection between air quality and pregnancy outcomes is vital. In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore the impact of air quality on pregnant women and provide actionable advice on how to protect yourself and your baby during this critical time.

When air quality is compromised, it can lead to health issues for both the mother and the baby. The tiny particles in polluted air can potentially disrupt fetal development, leading to preterm delivery. Low birth weight can result from exposure to poor air quality during pregnancy. Babies born with low birth weight may experience health problems. It's crucial to understand that even minor improvements in air quality can significantly reduce the risk of these adverse outcomes.

**How to Safeguard Against High AQI**  
Being aware of the air quality in your area is the first step. You can use air quality apps or websites to keep track of AQI levels. When the AQI is high, consider staying indoors. Also,



keep your living space well-ventilated. Use air purifiers and maintain proper humidity levels to reduce indoor air pollutants. When you need to be outdoors, plan your activities during times when the air quality is better. Avoid busy roads and industrial areas. Wear a mask to reduce inhalation of harmful particles.

Air purifiers can be a valuable addition to your home during pregnancy. They help filter out pollutants, providing cleaner air for you and your baby. When choosing an air purifier, look for one with a HEPA filter and adequate coverage for the room. But here comes the question are air purifiers helpful? For this we need to understand the concept of air purifiers

These are devices designed to remove particles and pollutants from the air. They work by drawing in air, filtering it, and then releasing clean air. There are various types of air purifiers, including HEPA filters, activated carbon filters, and UV purifiers. HEPA filters, which stand for High-Efficiency Particulate Air, are particularly effective at capturing particles as small as 0.3

microns. They trap dust, pet dander, and even bacteria, improving indoor air quality. Select an air purifier that matches your room's size and consider additional features like noise level and energy consumption. It's essential to maintain your air purifier by regularly changing filters for optimal performance.

**Diet and Lifestyle Changes for a Healthy Pregnancy**  
A diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals can help the body combat the effects of air pollution. Consume fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Proper hydration supports the body's natural detoxification processes. Drink an adequate amount of water daily to help flush out toxins. Also, stress can exacerbate the effects of air pollution. Engage in relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or yoga to manage stress and improve overall well-being.

One can go for regular physical activity which in fact is essential during pregnancy. Opt for indoor exercises or choose outdoor activities in areas with better air quality to minimize exposure to pollutants.

## INVITING TUBERCULOSIS

A study has found that respiratory health and rates of tuberculosis in low-income communities may be severely impacted by controllable external factors. Tuberculosis (TB) — a curable and preventable disease — is now the world's leading cause of death from an infectious agent, surpassing HIV and AIDS.

The study — published online by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health — found that, in Laos, for every additional source of exposure to air pollution, the odds of TB go up 47%. Sources of air pollution considered included exposure to smoked tobacco, secondhand tobacco smoke, and smoke from indoor cooking fires, burning crop waste and burning trash outside. This study explored what expo-

sure to multiple sources of air pollution did to impact rates of TB. Researchers said they hope the findings will lead to the engagement of multiple sectors of the society beyond healthcare — including agencies working on tobacco control, environmental health, policy makers and civil groups — in promotion of respiratory health.

"We often see the same issues in lower-income communities here in the U.S.," said Anne Berit Petersen, assistant professor for Loma Linda University School of Nursing and the study's lead author. "If we look at these factors in terms of poverty, we're seeing a lot more avoidable cases of tuberculosis in poorer communities. Often the places with the poorest air quality have the most impoverished people," she said.

The study reported that more than half of the world's TB cases in 2017 came from the Western Pacific region. In Laos, "the high rates of tobacco use and use of polluting biomass fuels for cooking (e.g., wood, charcoal, crop waste, dung) represent significant risk factors for TB," the study stated.

Titled, "Smoked Tobacco, Air Pollution, and Tuberculosis in Lao PDR: Findings from a National Sample," the study was funded by grants from the National Institute of Health. It included data from more than 9,700 subjects from across Laos, representing more than 2,800 households. The findings suggest that the risk of poor respiratory health would be decreased greatly if air quality were improved.

## BITTER PILL FOR 'SUGAR'

Inhaling polluted air increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, the first study of its kind in India has found. Research conducted in Delhi and the southern city of Chennai found that inhaling air with high amounts of PM2.5 particles led to high blood sugar levels and increased type 2 diabetes incidence.

When inhaled, PM2.5 particles — which are 30 times thinner than a strand of hair — can enter the bloodstream and cause several respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

The study is part of ongoing research into chronic diseases in India that began in 2010. It is the first to focus on the link between exposure to ambient PM2.5 and type 2 diabetes in India, one of the worst countries in the world for air pollution.

The average annual PM2.5 levels in Delhi was 82-100µg/m3 and in Chennai was 30-40µg/m3, according to the study, many times the WHO limits of 5µg/m3. India's national air quality standards are 40µg/m3.

There is also a high burden of non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, hypertension and heart disease in India; 11.4% of the population — 101 million people — are living with diabetes, and about 136 million are pre-diabetic, according to a paper published in the Lancet in June. The average diabetes prevalence in the European Union was 6.2% in 2019, and 8.6% in the UK in 2016.

The Lancet study found India's diabetes prevalence to be higher than previous estimations and showed a higher number of diabetics in urban than rural India. In the BMJ study, the researchers followed a cohort of 12,000 men and women in Delhi and Chennai from 2010 to 2017 and measured their blood sugar levels periodically. Using satellite data and air pollution exposure models, they determined the air pollution in the locality of each participant in that timeframe.

They found that one month of exposure to PM2.5 led to elevated levels of blood sugar and pro-

longed exposure of one year or more led to increased risk of diabetes. They found for every 10µg/m3 increase in annual average PM2.5 level in the two cities, the risk for diabetes increased by 22%.

"Given the pathophysiology of Indians — low BMI with a high proportion of fat — we are more prone to diabetes than the western population," said Siddhartha Mandal, lead investigator of the study and a researcher at Centre for Chronic Disease Control, Delhi.

The addition of air pollution — an environmental factor — with lifestyle changes in the past 20 to 30 years is fuelling the increasing burden of diabetes, he said.

"Until now, we had assumed that diet, obesity and physical exercise were some of the factors explaining why urban Indians had higher prevalence of diabetes than rural Indians," said Dr V Mohan, chairman of the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation and one of the authors of the paper.



## AYURVEDA TIPS FOR HEALTHY LUNGS

With the change in weather, people have started suffocating due to increasing pollution levels in the National Capital Region. There has been a sudden increase in the number of patients suffering from diseases like asthma, COPD and allergic bronchitis. After Corona, the functioning of people's hearts and lungs has been badly affected.

The responsibility of pollution control lies not only with the government, but with the citizens as well. By using simple measures, home remedies and Ayurvedic treatment not only can the functioning of the lungs be improved, the harm caused to the body by pollution can also be reduced to a great extent. The adverse effects of pollution can be avoided as well as reduced through yoga, pranayam, Ayurvedic medicines and Panchakarma therapy.



DR R P PARASHAR  
Ayurveda Expert, Chief Medical Officer (Ayurveda) Municipal Corporation of Delhi

Herbs and medicines: Ill effects of pollution and the body's immunity can be increased by consuming turmeric, basil, vasaka, ginger, cinnamon etc. boiled in milk or tea or in the form of a decoction cures sore throat and inflammation. Drinking dates, Piper longum, raisins and fresh or dry ginger boiled in milk increases the immunity of the body and improves the functioning of the lungs. Ayurvedic medicines like Sitopaladi Churna, Talisaadi Churna, Tankan Bhasma, Lakshmi Vilas Ras, Chandra Amrit Ras, Chitrak Haritaki, Agastya Haritaki, Vasavaleh and Tulsi, Turmeric, Vasaka, Bhringraj, Kutki, etc. are quite beneficial for improving lung functions.

Diet - Foods of cold nature like rice, curd, curry, cabbage, peas, urad dal, ice cream etc. should be avoided. Use green vegetables like bitter gourd, zucchini, tinda, spinach, bathua, mustard and pulses like moong, gram and lentils in food. Take soup of tomato, spinach and green vegetables two to three times a day and include grains of warm nature like bajra and jowar in your diet.

For the removal of toxins, it is necessary that the elementary canal remains clean and there should not be constipation. For smooth digestion of food, spices like cardamom, fennel, coriander, cinnamon, fenugreek, celery, cumin, turmeric etc. should be used regularly. If suffering from constipation, use castor oil with milk before sleeping at night.

Stop using the air conditioner completely and keep the fan's speed slow. Special care needs to be taken at night, especially for children and elders because there is a significant variation between day and night temperatures.

Practice Kumbhaka (full breathing in the lungs and holding it for maximum time) regularly in the morning and evening so that the lungs become strong and flexible. Pranayama, Anulom-Vilom, Dhanushasana, Chakrasana, Bhujangasana and Halasana also play an important role in strengthening the lungs.

## AIR POLLUTION & LUNG DISORDERS

For the past few years, increased levels of pollution has become a regular menace in Delhi and NCR. Burning of firecrackers and stubble, dust from construction and last but not the least, smoke from the vehicles, are main reasons for the menace. The lower temperatures in winters and the presence of fog do not let the particulate matter (PM) & pollution dissipate upwards and it stays in the environment leading to infections and disorders of the lungs.

The most dangerous and fatal pollutant is PM2.5. Increased levels of PM2.5 in the environment make the air unfit to breathe in. Consequently, the Air Quality Index (AQI) also gets worse because of the decrease in air flow. Loaded with pollutants like PM2.5 and smoke, this air becomes extremely toxic and hazardous

for children and senior citizens of the capital.

**Air pollution and the company it keeps:**  
Being exposed to pollutants for the long haul and keep breathing the toxic air, might lead to infections and disorders of the lung which could require hospitalization. It is advised to be on the lookout for the following infections and diseases:

- **Acute Bronchitis** — It is an infection of the lungs which is caused due to inflammation of the lining of the bronchial tubes. It could lead to Pneumonia in some people. Chronic Bronchitis leads to COPD.
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**



DR BANDANA MISHRA  
Head of Department and Senior Consultant Pulmonology, Sanar Hospitals

— It is a disorder of the lung characterised by obstructions of the bronchioles for an extended period of time and leads to difficulty in breathing. COPD needs to be diagnosed

by a medical professional.

- **Pneumonia** — Infection of the air sacs in the lungs leading to inflammation. The air sacs get filled with fluid or pus. Pneumonia can prove to be life threatening to children, young adults and senior citizens.
- **Emphysema** — It is a lung disease that damages the alveoli in lungs. It leads to shortness of breath and difficulty in breathing.
- **Asthma** — It is a condition in which the airways become inflamed, narrow and swell up. Excessive mucus is produced which makes it extremely difficult to breathe for the person. Pollution can severely aggravate asthmatic symptoms.
- **Lung Cancer** — It is a type of cancer that begins in the lungs

and is a frequent occurrence in people who are exposed to smoke & pollutants or have a habit of smoking. Lung cancers can be treated if detected early.

**Actively avoid causing harm to your lungs by:**

- **Consultation with a Healthcare Professional** - if there is cough with sputum production or if there is any difficulty in breathing, it is advised to consult a healthcare professional or a Pulmonologist at the earliest.
- **Health check-ups** — Some irregularities always reflect in the blood work up and in the Chest X-ray. It is advised to have regular health check-ups.
- **Say YES to prevention** -

Wearing N95 face masks whenever outside can prevent harm to your lungs. Avoid stepping out during peak traffic hours and avoid exercising outdoors when the AQI is high.

- **Mind the Indoor AQI** — The air inside your homes and offices isn't really clean hence using air purifiers or HEPA filters would help improve the indoor air quality. There are some plants that help purify the air so you can add those to your home and office. It also adds a green touch to your aesthetic!
- **Take those deep breaths** — The deep breathing exercises help keep the lungs healthy by increasing the lung volumes and lung capacities. These exercises to be done in the clean air or indoors are also highly recommended for relaxation purposes.

# Time to Unravel the Antimicrobial Puzzle

Despite medical advancements, a silent threat of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) has been steadily gaining ground. As the efficacy of antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs wanes, we are confronted with a serious challenge to our health and well-being. It is time we understand the gravity of this situation and take collective action, suggests **DR SANGEETA SHARMA**

India faces a significant burden from infectious diseases and ranks second in global antibiotic consumption, increasing by 47% from 2010 to 2020. Misuse and abuse of antibiotics is a key driver for development of AMR. Free over-the-counter availability and self-medication by the patients fuel this rise. Antibiotics are societal drugs, distinct from other medications, as their misuse not only affects individual health but also contributes significantly to the growing global threat of AMR, impacting public health & society at large. Active patient and public involvement are crucial for responsible antibiotic use, promoting understanding, preventive measures, and healthcare efficiency. Overuse in animal husbandry, aquaculture and agriculture worsens the issue. Integrating efforts between humans, animals, and the environment is

vital. Public support for responsible farming, policy advocacy, proper food handling, sustainable practices, and awareness can help reduce antimicrobial use. Let us join hands in this battle, raising awareness and taking action to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics, the most vital medical resource for ourselves and future generations.

**What is Antimicrobial Resistance?**  
Antimicrobial Resistance occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites evolve and become resistant to the drugs designed to kill them. Misuse and overuse of antibiotics in humans and animals, poor infection prevention, and lack of clean water and sanitation all contribute to the alarming rise of AMR.

**Why Should We Be Concerned as We Move to the Post-antibiotic Era?** AMR doesn't discriminate and knows no bor-

ders. It affects anyone, at any age, in any country. As AMR continues to rise, the number of effective antibiotics decreases. If AMR is not addressed urgently, we might enter a post-antibiotic era where even minor infections could become deadly which could once be treated with antibiotics, leading to prolonged illness, increased healthcare costs, and a higher risk of spreading diseases to others.

**The Role of Public Awareness:** Education is our most powerful tool in the fight against AMR. Informed individuals, communities, and healthcare providers can

make prudent choices, promoting judicious antibiotic use. The DSPRUD school campaigns, supported by WHO, the Delhi Government, and ECHO India, illuminate the way. Over 600,000 students from 1000+ Delhi schools participated in 2019. Adapting to the pandemic, the 2020 online campaign reached 3,500 teachers and 350,000 students. In 2022, a focused online campaign involved 180 teachers, emphasizing microorganisms, AMR, hygiene, and one-health practices. These efforts empower communities and shape a responsible generation that understands the importance of responsible antimicrobial use. Education, paired with determination, creates change.

**Our Collective Responsibility:** Communities, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and individuals all play vital roles in combating AMR. Properly using antibiotics, following healthcare advice, and demanding responsible practices from the agricultural and pharmaceutical industries are essential steps.

**The Way Forward:** In a world where the misuse of antibiotics poses a growing threat to global health security, the World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW) provides a unique opportunity for individuals, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and communities to unite in the shared goal of preserving the efficacy of antimicrobial drugs. By embracing the theme of community empowerment and responsible use, we can collectively work towards a future where antimicrobials remain effective, ensuring a healthier and safer

world for generations to come.

**Join the Movement:** The upcoming WAAW from November 18-24, 2023, holds significant importance in our global efforts to combat AMR. This year's theme, 'Empowering Communities, Promoting Responsible Use,' underscores the pivotal role of local engagement and education in curbing AMR. Let's stand united against AMR. By educating ourselves and our communities, we can safeguard our future generations. Together, we can preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobial drugs, ensuring that when we need them, they work.

*The write is a Professor & Head, Neuropsychopharmacology, Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences (IHBAS) & President, Delhi Society for Promotion of Rational Use of Drugs (DSPRUD)*

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DR SANGEETA SHARMA



# Jokowi's dynasty: Power consolidation sparks debate

Indonesia, the third-largest democracy in the world, is preparing for its presidential and parliamentary elections early next year. Its current President Jokowi Widodo, who has been ruling the country since 2014, is leaving office this month. He will be completing two terms this year and the Constitution of Indonesia does not allow a President to contest for the third term. So, he has to quit the office.

Once Jokowi was symbolised as "Democratic Hope" in Indonesian politics, largely marred by long family or hereditary rule, when he was sworn in as the 7th President of the country a decade back. He rose to the position of the Governor of Jakarta from his initial career in carpentry and furniture business. He was a complete outsider who swiftly rose to the elite echelons of power. Indeed, he was hailed as a beacon of hope all across the nations of South-East Asia.

The concern and allegation regarding Jokowi is that he has quietly been establishing a new "political dynasty" over the last decade. Now, this is all out in the open. He is introducing his two sons — Gibran Rakabuming Raka (36 years old) and Kaesang Pangarep (28 years old) — ahead of the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for next February. Currently, Gibran, the elder son, serves as the Mayor of Solo (also known as Surakarta City), while the younger one, Kaesang, was appointed as the Chairman of the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) just two days after becoming a member. Additionally, Jokowi's son-in-law holds the position of Mayor in the City of Medan, North Sumatra. This clearly illustrates Jokowi's full confidence and influence over his party and various political constituencies with whom he has been closely aligned for a decade now.

Interestingly, Jokowi's initiatives have received substantial support from a historic decision by the country's Constitutional Court, made just this month. The Court addressed a petition requesting a reduction of the minimum age for high political offices, such as the President and Vice-President, from the current age of 40 to 35. Chief Justice Anwar Usman, who also happens to be President Jokowi's brother-in-law, along with a panel of nine judges, dismissed the petition to lower the age limit, affirming that the minimum age requirement remains at 40 years for presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

However, they noted there could be exceptions for those



who have served as regional leaders or have been elected as such. This decision seemed to favor Gibran, indicating his path towards becoming the next Vice-President of Indonesia. The judges emphasised that the determination of age limits should be a matter for Parliament, and the petition lacked justification according to existing Indonesian law. It is worth noting that even prior to the verdict, the Court had received nearly seven requests for judicial review, all advocating for a lower age limit for the offices of the President and Vice-President. Some of these requests came from the PSI, which has long championed the cause of young voters in the country. The Court's decision carries significant weight, coming on October 16, just days before the deadline for candidate registration in next year's presidential and vice-presidential elections. This suggests that the Court, in coordination with the political establishment in Jakarta, has effectively removed all obstacles for Jokowi's elder son to

assume the role of Vice-President.

Currently, Jokowi is endorsing his Defence Minister, Prabowo Subianto, as the presidential candidate for 2024. This indicates that Subianto has the endorsement of the outgoing President, effectively glossing over his long record of human rights violations in the country. Meanwhile, the ruling Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) has selected Ganjar Pranowo, the Governor of Central Java, as their residential candidate for next year's election. However, it is widely understood whom Jokowi will ultimately support. Just a week after the Court's decision, Subianto announced Gibran, President Jokowi's eldest son, as his running mate for the 2024 presidential race, positioning him as a vice-presidential candidate.

With these developments, it is becoming evident that Jokowi will play the role of a kingmaker in Indonesian politics in the days to come. Following Subianto, it is possi-

ble that his elder son, Gibran, will enter the presidential bid, marking the beginning of the Jokowi family's political dynasty. It is important to note that even if one of Jokowi's sons becomes President, they would not be the first such leader in Indonesia. In 2001, Megawati Sukarnoputri became the first woman President of Indonesia. She was the daughter of Sukarno, the first President who ruled from 1945-1967. Now, Prabowo, who is running for the presidency next year, is the former son-in-law of the late General Muhammad Suharto, the second president who ruled from 1967-1998.

Prabowo, a former general, has been accused of severe human rights abuses, including kidnapping and the sudden disappearance of many pro-democracy activists before the end of Suharto's 32-year-long dictatorship in 1998.

However, it is ironic that Prabowo has never been charged for these crimes from the past. Even during Jokowi's two terms as President, these charges were never addressed

seriously, despite once being an archival of the President. Now, he is poised to become Indonesia's next president by 2024. Already, Prabowo has indicated that he will continue with Jokowi's policies and programs, a move that makes sense as it would help him garner maximum support from Jokowi's voter base.

At the moment, Ganjar Pranowo, the ruling party's candidate, holds the second position. In third place is Anies Baswedan, former Jakarta Governor, who has been a vocal critic of Jokowi for his handling of the Covid-19 crisis in the country. It is worth noting that both candidates are selecting their running mates, i.e., vice-presidential candidates, from rival factions of a Muslim organisation called Nahdlatul Ulama, which boasts more than 100 million members. This organisation is active in East Java, the second largest province of Indonesia. So far, various polls suggest that no candidate will receive more than half the votes. We will have to wait and see when the

polls start on February 14 next year, but it is highly likely that Prabowo will become the next President of Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Opposition parties, rights groups, and pro-democracy activists have largely criticised the verdict of the Constitutional Court. Given that the head of the Court is a relative of Jokowi, Article 17 of Indonesia's Judicial Authority Law explicitly prohibits Constitutional Court judges from hearing or deciding any case involving their relatives or themselves. As a result, a popular weekly newspaper called Tempo is calling for the Chief Justice to be dismissed soon.

It is now evident that Jokowi has engaged in cynical deal-making, a common practice in politics, instead of addressing the vast unresolved socio-economic issues of this island nation. He is not an exception. The greed and thirst for power are ingrained in political systems worldwide. Sadly, most existing political parties and their members, whether high-ranking or not, aim to hold onto office for as

long as possible. This race for power and position knows no bounds, transcending countries and continents. It is a universal truth that politicians often only retire when they pass away.

Jokowi, along with his family and extended relatives, have firmly entrenched themselves in the corridors of power in Indonesia. Despite his public statements about leaving the decision of dynasty-building to the people, the reality is different. In truth, despite the significant influence of political awareness driven by mass media and digital platforms, we still witness, in many parts of the world, the "manufacturing of consent" as once prophesied by Professor Avram Noam Chomsky, the American intellectual and pioneer of Modern Linguistics. Chomsky defined the intricate relationship between political structures and mass media. Consequently, the opinions of common voters are largely shaped by the political narratives set by the media. This easily translates into vote bank politics once a powerful leader, or someone widely identified with the public, emerges. In such cases, the majority of people are often indifferent to whether the positions of power and authority are held by a son, daughter, or any other family member.

This trend is gradually permeating Indonesian politics and society through the next generation of Jokowi's. While it is undoubtedly a privilege to serve the people, as Kaesang mentioned publicly, it is crucial to remember that contributing to the development and welfare of a nation is a right that belongs to everyone, and there should be no existence of privilege like his.

At 62, Jokowi has mastered the game of dynastic politics in less than a decade, surpassing all his predecessors in skill and speed. Throughout his presidency, he often stated that becoming President "does not mean channeling power to my own children".

However, he has revealed his true colours by elevating his two sons to positions of power, much like any other seasonal politician. His attempt to consolidate power and secure his position in the post-retirement phase is now evident. As a true democrat who rose to power through open competition from a humble background, he must recognize that hereditary politics runs counter to the growth and preservation of the ethos and norms of democracy.

(The writer is currently president of the Global Research Foundation)

**The upcoming Indonesian elections mark a significant turning point as President Jokowi Widodo, in office since 2014, steps down due to constitutional term limits. His legacy is overshadowed by allegations of establishing a political dynasty, with his sons poised for prominent roles. The recent Constitutional Court decision and Jokowi's endorsement of Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto signal a shifting political landscape. As Indonesia heads into a pivotal electoral season, questions surrounding democracy and dynastic politics loom large.**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Legal complexities in dowry harassment

**The recent Supreme Court verdict in the Akkamahadevi case unravels a complex interplay between legal statutes and justice, challenging conventional interpretations of dowry-related crimes**



SONAL GUPTA

Where the confluence of human suffering and the pursuit of justice unfolds as a multifaceted riddle, the recent verdict of the Supreme Court of India in the case of Akkamahadevi, a woman whose life was tragically cut short by burn injuries in 2010, unfurls a captivating tableau for a profound exploration of the intricate interplay between legal statutes and the moral compass of justice. This case defies conventional wisdom, challenging the traditional interpretations of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 304B (dowry death) and 498A (cruelty to woman by husband or his relatives), and invites us to scrutinise the very essence of fairness in the legal system.

### THE CASE OF AKKAMAHADEVI

The case of Akkamahadevi highlights the deep-rooted problems associated with dowry-related harassment and crimes against women in India. Her tragic end prompts us to critically examine the interpretation of evidence and the broader justice system, particu-

larly with regard to the interpretation of Section 304B.

The prosecution's case pivoted on the consistent demand for dowry and the torture inflicted upon the deceased, culminating in her self-immolation. The core question before the court was whether the dying declaration could be the sole basis for conviction, given the victim's severe burn injuries. The court referred to precedents and emphasised that the rule requiring corroboration is a rule of prudence, not an absolute necessity. But this decision raises essential questions about justice: Can a victim's statement, even when severely injured, be relied upon without corroboration?

In the case of Akkamahadevi, the dying declaration stated that the deceased was unable to tolerate the torture meted out by the accused, which drove her to self-immolation. This declaration serves as the cornerstone of the prosecution's case, directly linking the accused to the alleged dowry-related harassment that ultimately led to Akkamahadevi's tragic self-



immolation. Here, the court's decision hinges on the idea that the physical disability resulting from burn injuries should not disentitle a victim from making a statement, provided it was made consciously, knowing the consequences. This assertion challenges the traditional interpretation of the rule of corroboration as a mere rule of prudence, suggesting that even in the face of severe injuries, a victim's statement can be relied upon.

The judgment heavily leans on the dying declaration, citing precedents that stress the need to treat it as credible evidence. It asserts that the victim's extensive burn injuries, covering an alarming 70 per cent to 80 per cent of her body, should not discredit her statement, as long as it was made consciously and knowingly. However, the critical analysis of this point is warranted. Burn injuries of this magnitude can severely affect a person's ability to communicate clearly and coher-

ently. The judgment's apparent oversight of the potential limitations imposed by the victim's physical state begs the question: Was she genuinely in a condition to make a statement that should hold up in court?

### UNPACKING 'SOON BEFORE HER DEATH'

The verdict also reignites the debate over the interpretation of Section 304B, which requires that the cruelty or harassment leading to death occurred "soon before her

death." This interpretation was solidified in the case of Bansilal vs State of Haryana (2011). However, the pivotal issue is the distinction between Section 304B and Section 498A. Section 304B is specific to dowry deaths, demanding that the cruelty or harassment leading to death occurs "soon before" the victim's demise, while Section 498A casts a broader net, encompassing cruelty and harassment against women without specifying a strict timeframe.

The judgment suggests that the prosecution failed to establish a clear link between the alleged dowry harassment and the victim's self-immolation, leading to the overturning of Section 304B convictions.

This interpretation raises questions about the rigidity of Section 304B and the law's ability to address the intricate dynamics of real-world situations. Did the prosecution indeed falter in proving the connection between harassment and suicide, or does this case expose a fundamental flaw in Section 304B's strict timeframe requirement?

### CONCLUSION

The Akkamahadevi case serves as a stark reminder of the convoluted issues surrounding dowry-related harassment and related crimes in India. In the context of this article's critical analysis, the focus shifts to the phrase "soon before her death" in Section 304B, revealing the glaring gap between legal requirements and the real-life complexities of dowry-related crimes. It calls for a re-evaluation of these laws, emphasising the importance of reforms that acknowledge the intricate dynamics of such cases, ensuring that justice prevails while upholding the rights of both the accused and the victims.

In a legal system that strives to balance the rights of the accused with the pursuit of justice for victims, can we truly achieve fairness without re-evaluating and reforming laws that may not adequately address the complexities of real-life situations, such as dowry-related harassment cases?

(The writer practices law at the Supreme Court of India)



IF WE WIN, SOMEONE ELSE LOSES. BUT IF SOMEONE ELSE LOSES, WE LOSE. WHICH IS A POINT WE'RE NOT GETTING. THE NEW SPIRITUALITY WILL MAKE THIS JUST PAINFULLY OBVIOUS  
— NEALE DONALD WALSCH



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

The week brims with potential, marking a favorable period for financial growth and opportunities. Early on, you might find yourself reaping significant rewards. This week, there's an air of joy, revelry, and acknowledgment for your achievements. The home front radiates warmth and contentment. Women, in particular, shine brightly, infusing positivity and warmth, acting as pillars of strength and compassion. It's a time when joyous events, like welcoming new beginnings or celebrating milestones, could take center stage in the family. As the week concludes, anticipate a shift in your perspective. Embracing this fresh viewpoint can pave the way for long-term success and personal growth. Amidst these developments, you'll find opportunities for self-reflection and growth, enabling you to better understand your journey.

**Lucky number** 10 | **Lucky colour** Charcoal  
**Lucky day** Monday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

Exercise patience throughout the week, avoiding impulsivity and opting for a balanced approach. While favorable opportunities may arise that can positively pivot your journey, your own ego or indifference could turn them sour. It's essential to maintain self-respect without compromising mutual respect. Initiatives you embark upon might stir envy among competitors. Beware, as you could be targeted by ill intentions. Vigilance is advised. Stay attuned to your environment, be perceptive of people's motives, and adjust your interactions accordingly. Safeguard your valuables, ensuring precious items are securely stored. Moreover, maintain a cautious eye on those assisting you at home or in the workplace, ensuring trustworthiness in all relations. Seek wisdom in both silence and observation, strengthening your intuition and decision-making during challenging moments.

**Lucky number** 16 | **Lucky colour** Beige  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, your strength and radiance are unmistakable, with every endeavor basking in a metaphorical luminance that points toward success. Your innate drive and clarity are honed, propelling you to confront challenges and chase your loftiest goals. A significant event or celebration could be on the horizon at home, and a cherished wish might see its fruition. This could relate to the joy of children, their noteworthy achievements, or even their pursuit of academic dreams. A steadfast belief in your abilities, coupled with unwavering faith in higher powers, lays a foundation for positive outcomes. Embracing this belief often manifests the desired reality. This optimism envelops you, prompting you to undertake ambitious tasks. Real estate endeavors, whether acquisitions or disposals, might be prominent in your plans.

**Lucky number** 7 | **Lucky colour** Turquoise  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, emotions and feelings are at the forefront of your experience. You'll be naturally inclined to care for and support those close to you, acting as a beacon of solace for many. Your innate ability to provide guidance is evident, as individuals seek your counsel. However, it's essential to remain vigilant and not overlook your professional commitments. Being overly trusting can leave you vulnerable to those who might exploit your genuine nature. Proactivity is key; without taking concrete steps, mere contemplation will yield no results. It's vital to maintain a clear vision of your objectives and manage your sentiments to ensure progress. Staying grounded and focused is your guiding principle for the week.

**Lucky number** 4 | **Lucky colour** Tan  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

Feelings of solitude and disconnection might dominate your thoughts, possibly due to romantic setbacks or distance from a loved one. Challenges also arise professionally, with your earnest efforts seemingly in vain; patience becomes this week's mantra. Stay prepared and alert to potential challenges, recognizing your inner strengths and being poised to employ them if needed. This phase may just be a final test before success. A spiritual awakening could be on the horizon, and the presence of a guiding individual might be the key to overcoming current obstacles. With their mentorship, you'll discover renewed hope and innovative approaches. As the week concludes, anticipate a surge in confidence across all areas, paving the way for fresh beginnings and promising advancements.

**Lucky number** 5 | **Lucky colour** Silver  
**Lucky day** Friday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

Emotional currents and feelings of detachment might mark personal relationships. Despite minor disagreements leading to emotional outbursts or disputes, resolutions are often reached with mutual understanding. Professionally, your benevolence stands out, and unforeseen financial gains might bolster your sense of security. Balancing personal and practical matters becomes second nature, thanks to your adeptness and efficiency. Your generosity and unwavering commitment make you an indispensable asset, earning trust from those around you. A fervent desire to learn and explore new horizons propels you towards success. Your actions and values during this time can inspire and guide others, setting a benchmark of integrity and courage for all to follow. Your resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges serve as a beacon of hope for many.

**Lucky number** 12 | **Lucky colour** Maroon  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week, your inner strength and influential position become evident. It's not about physical might but the authority you possess that sets you apart. You lead with charisma, discipline, and determination, inspiring others. However, emotions take a backseat, potentially leading to challenges in personal relationships. Family disagreements, especially concerning romantic choices, may arise, with notable opposition possibly coming from a maternal figure. By mid-week, these pressures might make it difficult for you to assert your autonomy in certain decisions. Yet, as the week concludes, both your financial and emotional reservoirs are replenished, thanks to the intervention and wisdom of an elder, perhaps a paternal figure. Their fair-minded approach lays a foundation for future accomplishments.

**Lucky number** 18 | **Lucky colour** Coral  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

The possibility of strained relations looms, which could deeply affect you, and apprehensions of not succeeding might plague your thoughts. However, confronting these fears can be the catalyst for remarkable growth, equipping you to tackle future challenges. True bravery often emerges from facing one's anxieties. When opportunity knocks, embrace it, leaving uncertainties behind. Forge ahead, keeping your aspirations in focus, and shed any hesitations. If accomplishments don't meet expectations, reassess your strategies and venture into fresh avenues. This introspection is likely to steer you towards the right path. As the week progresses, anticipate financial improvements, possibly in the form of increased income or an enticing opportunity. Embrace adaptability, for it often leads to unforeseen and rewarding destinations.

**Lucky number** 20 | **Lucky colour** Gold  
**Lucky day** Monday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week promises dynamism, stability, and action. You're in a position to confidently engage with influential individuals, enjoying the perks of your stature and influence. Thriving in exhilarating situations, you maintain a warm rapport with all, serving as a guiding figure who provides direction and assurance. The harmony between your physical, mental, and spiritual facets is commendable, bolstered by a resilient heart that steers pivotal life choices. Your presence is magnetic, drawing the attention and respect of those around you. With a commitment to fairness and truth, you remain unwavering in upholding your principles. Leading with a clear vision, you guide others effectively, ensuring emotions don't cloud your sound judgement.

**Lucky number** 9 | **Lucky colour** Brown  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

Amidst the hustle and bustle, it's vital to prioritize self-care and relaxation. Embrace activities that nourish both your physical and mental well-being: delve into yoga sessions, indulge in meditation, cherish nature walks, and relish the serene moments. Equipping yourself with such grounding practices will set you up for the dynamic days ahead. The professional sphere is buzzing with prospects, and there's a chance of receiving uplifting news, be it a promotion or an unexpected bonus. On the home front, familial obligations, especially involving young ones, take center stage. Catering to their needs might also lead to some additional expenses. Those unattached could find themselves entertaining potential romantic commitments. As the week draws to a close, bonds between partners strengthen, emphasizing the essence of shared joy and intimacy.

**Lucky number** 13 | **Lucky colour** Magenta  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

Currently, you're radiating immense strength, both inwardly and outwardly, bolstered by heightened intuition that offers deep insights into any situation. Your analytical skills, combined with a newfound understanding, ensure that goal achievement feels almost second nature. It's an opportune time to dispel past constraints and any lingering uncertainties, allowing you to fully step into your own truth and clarity. Moreover, a significant spiritual renaissance is unfolding within you, prompting a closer connection to the natural world. Embracing activities like contemplative walks during the golden hours, deepening your meditation practice, or even honing skills in a chosen sport will become essential outlets for your energy. Emphasize going with the flow of life, trusting its current, and surrendering to its guidance, ensuring you navigate with ease and confidence.

**Lucky number** 3 | **Lucky colour** Lavender  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

Individuals this week are poised to tap into vast reservoirs of potential, enabling profound transformations and creations. While mastering all intricacies and secrets may be elusive, you stand as a beacon, guiding those eager to unlock the depths of their capabilities. With a spiritual and concentrated disposition, this internal strength can radically elevate life experiences. Upholding the principle of cause and effect, you understand that every deed sets a corresponding consequence in motion, echoing the concept of karma. By consistently making beneficial choices, you pave the way for favorable outcomes. This discernment fosters solutions to many of life's challenges. Anticipate a significant journey or expedition in the near future.

**Lucky number** 14 | **Lucky colour** Pink  
**Lucky day** Tuesday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Wisdom driven devotion adds value to life

Mother's two hands carry accessories signifying her productive potential – conch shell in one and majestic lotus flower in the other. The conch-shell when blown, excites a sound note comparable to "Om" - the primal-sound, which excited creation chain. She, thus, personifies the primal kinetic energy - the source and effective cause of all creations. The lotus flower in all colours with numerous petals signifies enormity and diversity of creation. Such an enticing flower grows in mud underneath water body. Yet its beauty and lustre remain unspoil, as not even a trace of mud or water droplet can stay on its leaves. It implies that she remains detached from the earth-matter making it. Also, she does not carry any sense of ego. She continues to exhibit tenderness, sense of love, generosity, and dotting nature. Even the killing of the demons is not out of any sense of revenge or prejudice. A mother would not know what

mental traits the child will end up with. Both good and bad meaning are her children. How can she kill her own child? She kills evil minded people's ego, and such traits as would be detrimental to survival of the manifest world, and not her child. Different weapons in Mother's remaining 8 arms signify her combative preparedness against demonic forces. Purposely so, because the evil forces are far more active and no less potent than our creative potential. The simile of demon is purposely used to exemplify and forewarn us about impending danger from all directions. The demons are believed to be conjurers, who could hoodwink us by making varied illusionary presences. It implies many shades of negative forces in play. As we are aware, no weird appearance, the way demons are depicted, is in evidence anywhere on earth. It is so characterised just to exemplify in clear terms the danger inherent in the evil forces

existing both within and beyond us. And the evil forces dwelling within us are no less potent than those from beyond. For, human beings, armed with power of freewill do also carry animalistic tendencies, which is why some of the demons are shown with animal heads. Here again, the negative memory implants in our minds and the preconditioning thereof, can act a great devil for the self and those around. Caught up in our usual grinds of life, we are hardly left with mind-space necessary to invoke our faculty of discrimination. We thus loose our sense of reasons and direction, and thereby objectivity, and with obvious consequences. Now, how to figure out the true intent and character of varied demonic presences in disguise, and identify the most appropriate weapon to checkmate their assault? Evidently, it calls for being on full mental alert all the time. The Mother's 10 hands do also symbolise positive and negative implications of



man's 10 sensory organs – 5 of perception and 5 of action. Invariably in usual flow of life, more often sensory perceptions get

stuck to the illusionary glare and glitter of the seeming world. Ego, driving it further, doesn't feel the necessity to invoke the faculty of discrimination necessary to figure out the underlying truths. Consequently, one may inadvertently respond unintelligently on instinctive judgment and with obvious consequences. By the time one realises, the danger would have caught him/her unawares. We, therefore, need to consciously identify our mental limitations, address them, and ensure being in full control of the self. Now, about Lion, Mother's mount, is believed to be a very intelligent animal. When it goes for hunt in search of feed, it moves strategically, cautiously, without wasting much of its energy, but with its eyes fixed on its prospective kill. However, once the prey comes within reach, it extols all its energy and pounces upon. But then, it does not go for the next kill till it has become hungry once

again. The killing too is therefore, need based and not out of greed. The animals, unlike human beings, live in their present moment, and are never tempted to encroach upon other's share to secure their future concerns. Accordingly, shakti too, ought to be applied intelligently, strategically, with all the care and caution, and focused promptly towards serving need based productive aspirations alone. If these inputs are made to sink in deep in one's mind through continued self-reflection, with time, it will find spontaneous reflection in one's conduct. Following which, one may be able to successfully steer life with ease and comfort, overcoming all challenges coming in the way. Life may then turn into a beautiful experience.

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