



नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥



~ Endless Inspiration. Matchless legacy ~

Hon'ble Saharasri Ji (1948 – 2023)

Sahara India Pariwar expresses its collective sense of grief at the loss of its beloved Chief Guardian, Hon'ble 'Sahasri' Ji, who left for his heavenly abode on 14th November, 2023.

The strength of his character, the influence of his personality and the power of his presence have all left a lasting memory. As he passes from the turmoil of life to eternal tranquillity, he leaves behind a legacy that remains as a profound and precious imprint in the hearts of billions to whom his life brought hope and encouragement.

The man who enlightened us to the supremacy of human emotions over business interests, will continue to guide us, inspire us to new frontiers, for he exemplified human spirit in its true essence - unconquerable and supremely courageous.



Top terrorist among 2 ultras killed in anti-infiltration operation in Uri

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A key terrorist launch commander, active across the line of control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir for over three decades, was among the two terrorists neutralised by the security forces during an anti-infiltration operation 'Kali' in the Uri sector of North Kashmir's Baramulla district, a senior army officer said on Thursday.

Meanwhile, another encounter was going on at Samno, D.H Pora area of Kulgam district till the time of filing the report. In Uri, the slain terrorist commander has been identified as Bashir Ahmad Malik while another killed terrorist was identified as Ahmad Gani Sheikh.

"His neutralization is a major blow dealt by us to the terrorist infrastructure across the line of control and its sympathizers and supporters," Col Raghav Commanding Officer 8RR told reporters during a press briefing in Baramulla.

Flanked by SP (HQs) Baramulla, Divya D Col Raghav said, "The joint operation was launched in the early hours of 15 November on specific intelligence from 'own sources and Special Branch, Srinagar, with respect to the likelihood of infiltration of terrorists across Line of Control in Uri sector'."



"Joint operation parties were deployed, and in the early hours of November 15, our surveillance tracked the movement of terrorists across the LoC," he said. The Army Officer said that upon infiltrating, the terrorists were engaged, leading to an exchange of gunfire. "Following the exchange, a detailed search of the area revealed numerous terrorist casualties, though the exact number remains unconfirmed due to the proximity to the LoC," he said.

The officer said two bodies were recovered, along with warlike stores, including AK series rifles, two pistols, a few Chinese grenades, ammunition, medical supplies, eatables, Pakistani currency, and identification papers. The army officer said, "The salient aspect of this operation is the neutralization of Bashir Ahmed Malik. He was an important cog in the Pakistan-enabled cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. He was an important terrorist launch commander for various terrorist organizations

from Leepa in the North to the areas in PoJ&K, opposite Rajouri in the South," an army official said.

Bashir Ahmad Malik was chiefly responsible for facilitating the infiltration of a number of terrorists who caused the death of many Indian citizens, both security forces personnel as well as civilians. Referring to the repeated incidents of infiltration in the region Col Raghav said "We have a robust line of control security grid and we are on a high vigil."

The Indian Army is well prepared to defeat any such infiltration attempts and we will not let the enemy succeed with his devious designs," he added. He said the weather during the operation was inclement and the area of this operation was treacherous in terms of terrain. Earlier, on October 30, security forces had killed an infiltrator along LoC in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. On October 26, security forces foiled another infiltration bid and neutralised five Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists along the LoC in the Kupwara district.

Uddhav accuses ECI of practising 'double standards' in implementing model code

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



Two days after his party flagged the issue of religious plank used by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls, Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday upped the ante by accusing the Election Commission of India (ECI) of practising "double standards" while implementing the model code of conduct for the poll, to favour the BJP.

Citing how his late Sena supremo Bal Thackeray was disenfranchised in 1995 for six years for his communal speeches in the 1986 State Assembly by-polls, Uddhav demanded to know if the ECI - which had acted against his father for "pro-Hindutva" campaign -- had changed its rules in acting those violating the model code of conduct. In his criticism of the ECI, Uddhav said that the ECI had failed to act against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his appeal to the voters in the recent Karnataka Assembly polls to "say Bajrangbali ki jai while voting."

Assembly polls Union Home Minister Amit Shah had gone to town, promising the voters that if the BJP was voted back to power in Madhya Pradesh it "would take all the voters in the state" free of cost to Ayodhya for darshan at the upcoming Lord Ram temple there. "Has the ECI changed the rules? Does the ruling BJP know about the changes made by the ECI and we don't? The Election Commission should clarify whether what happened in 1986 was as per the rules or what is happening today is as per the rules. Then the ECI had concluded that the words used by the late Sena chief were corrupt practice. And my father came to be disenfranchised for six years in 1995," Uddhav said. "We strongly believe that the model code of conduct has

been relaxed (this time around). If that is the case, we should know about it.... Giving the BJP a free hit and dismissing us as a hit wicket does not amount to holding free and fair elections," the Shiv Sena (UBT) president said.

Earlier in the day, the Shiv Sena (UBT) shot off a letter to the ECI, alleging that the double standards applied by the Commission were "intriguing" yet "understandable" since it is publicly perceived to be in alignment with the BJP's actions during elections or otherwise.

"We will be obliged if the Commission were to clarify to the Shiv Sena about the use of religion in the course of state and the Lok Sabha election in 2024. That will help all political parties for we will all get to know what the Commission believes are the contours of the standards required when it comes to the use of religion, religious symbols, idioms and language, including propagating Hindutva, consistent with the standards adopted by the Commission in the past. That will ensure that the Commission does not apply double standards in this

regard," Shiv Sena (UBT) general secretary Anil Desai stated in his letter to the ECI. Drawing the ECI's attention to the promise made to voters by senior BJP leader Amit Shah, during his MP Assembly poll campaign, that if they voted for the BJP, it would arrange free-of-cost darshan of Ramlala at Ayodhya, Desai said: "Pertinently, Amit Shah also reminded the voters about the cost implication of having darshan of Ramlala and promised that everyone will have free darshan of Ramlala once the BJP is re-elected in Madhya Pradesh"

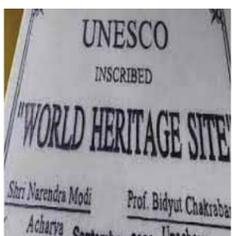
"Incidentally, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, while addressing a public rally during the Karnataka assembly elections, overtly appealed to the people at large to chant Bajrang Bali ki Jai and press the voting button on EVM," Desai wrote. ".....Shah's promise for free Darshan of Ram temple should not be confined to the people of Madhya Pradesh but be made applicable to all Hindu citizens of India that too as many times as they wish and according to their convenience," the Sena (UBT) leader said.

No end to row over Visva Bharati Tagore plaque

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Notwithstanding Centre's move to bury the Shantiniketan plaque controversy by directing the Visva Bharati university authorities to remove the earlier tablets bearing only the names of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then Vice Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty on them (instead of the Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore who founded the grand institution that recently received the UNESCO World Heritage status) — there was no sign of the dispute resolving.

This, following a new directive from the Union Government to the University authorities to remove the controversial plate and form a four-member committee of educational experts to suggest the design of a new plaque that would have the name of Rabindranath Tagore inscribed on it --- but only in English and Hindi languages and not Bengali in which the



Asia's first Nobel Laureate wrote. "Rabindranath Tagore wrote mostly in Bengali, he set up Shantiniketan in Bengal and despite the institution being a central university winning a UNESCO world heritage status the people mostly visit it are Bengalis... so I would request the authorities to consider having the details engraved in Bengali alongside English and Hindi," said Supriya Tagore one of the descendants of the poet. The non-BJP politicians from Bengal immediately picked up the cue and demanded rethink

on the Centre's decision. Earlier the Union Education Ministry directed the Visva Bharati authorities to replace the three controversial plaques that had triggered a huge public outcry in the State barely a few months ahead of the general elections inscribed on them the names of the Prime Minister who is also the Chancellor of the central university, the then Vice Chancellor --- whose term ended a few days ago --- but not the name of the founder of the UNESCO awarded World Heritage Site.

Though Visva Bharati spokesperson Mahua Bandyopadhyay said that she "cannot confirm anything about the plaques unless we have a written communication from the Union education ministry," inside sources confirmed the Centre's decision that seemed to have put the BJP which was eyeing 35 parliamentary seats in Bengal in a politically precarious situation.

LG slams AAP Govts in Punjab, Delhi for Capital pollution woes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As Delhi's air quality oscillated between the 'very poor' and 'severe' categories throughout the day, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena came down heavily on the AAP governments in Punjab and Delhi on Thursday, alleging that the former is playing "truant" on the issue of stubble burning and the latter involved in "over-hyped events" like the odd-even road-rationing scheme, while the national capital is gasping for breath due to alarming levels of air pollution. Saxena also accused the Punjab government of "playing truant". Setting the stage for a fresh confrontation between the LG's office and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) dispensation in Delhi, Saxena asserted that blaming others for the pollution problem will not help and the solution lies within the city itself. As the air quality of Delhi fluctuated between the "very poor" and "severe" categories on Thursday because unfavourable meteorological conditions hindered the dispersion of pollutants, the LG highlighted that the problem can be mitigated by reducing the "dust that our unrepaired roads, unpaved pavements and construction sites cause" and curbing vehicular emissions. He said Delhi can do little to stop crop-residue smoke from other states and added that "blaming others should not be an alibi for gross inaction over the years". "We can do little to stop crop residue smoke from other states, apart from pleading with them. Despite states, especially Punjab, playing truant, we are, but petitioners for mercy. AQI yet hovers around 400, making the capital gasp," he said in a post on X. Responding to LG's statement, the AAP government said the Arvind Kejriwal government has taken a slew of measures

over the past several years which has led to a significant improvement in the air quality as was appreciated in the Economic Survey 2022-2023 tabled in the parliament. Stressing that firecrackers add to the menace, the LG said the most affected in this "gas chamber" are those who commute on roads to earn their daily bread. "The poor and the hapless living in slums and unauthorised colonies whose lungs are frying because they can't afford to sit at home and buy air purifiers. "The real solution to pollution in Delhi lies in Delhi itself. We can mitigate the choking smog by reducing the dust that our unrepaired roads, unpaved pavements and construction sites cause. We can employ effective means to curb our vehicular emissions," he added. "Since the deadly smog in 2016, this has become a recurrent issue subjected to nothing but platitudes and rhetoric.

Smog towers not practical solution to curb air pollution: DPCC to NGT

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that smog towers are not a "practical solution" to curb pollution in the national capital mainly due to its enormous cost. In the report, DPCC's senior scientist Nandita Moitra said the Delhi area, which is 1,483 sq km, may require more than 47,229 smog towers costing Rs 11,80,725 crore (approx) with a recurring cost of about Rs 15 lakh per month for each tower. It has also said that the two smog towers installed at Anand Vihar and Connaught Place have not been effective. The DPCC referred to reports from the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) in Bombay and Delhi to highlight that within a 100-meter radius, a smog tower can only reduce pollution by 17 per cent. The matter will be heard next on

November 20.

Given these findings, the committee has suggested accepting the results of the IIT's studies and using the already erected towers as museums for the dissemination of technical information about the control of air pollution.

"In case 17% reduction in 100 m radius is to be considered favourable Delhi needs more than 40,000 such towers to cover its geographic area. This cannot be a practical solution and the result of the experiment should be accepted and Smog Tower already erected may be used for dissemination of the technical information about control of air pollution as museum," the DPCC's report said. Reduction of pollution by just 17 per cent within a 100-meter radius at a capital cost of Rs 25 crore and a recurring cost of Rs 10 to 15 lakh per month is "not at all justified. It is not even a drop in the ocean," the DPCC report said.

MEA: India is looking at sending more humanitarian aid to Palestinian people

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As Israel-Hamas conflict rages, India on Thursday once again called for de-escalating the situation and underlined the need for observing international humanitarian law in the face of increasing civilian casualties in the conflict.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at his weekly media briefing that India is looking at sending more humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

Israel is carrying out a military operation in Gaza following the multi-pronged attacks on Israeli cities by Hamas militants on October 7. Asked about New Delhi's view on Israeli troops undertaking an operation at the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City, Bagchi said the issue is not about one particular facility and that India has always underlined the need for following international law.

"The issue is not about one facility or a specific facility. India has always underlined the need for civilian casualties to be avoided, for humanitarian law to be observed, and to encourage any efforts to provide humanitarian relief to those caught in the conflict," he said.

"We have also, on the larger issue, talked about efforts to de-escalate the situation, deliver humanitarian assistance, our concern at the humanitarian (situation and) increasing civilian toll," he said.



Israel continued its operation at the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City on Wednesday night. Israel has been maintaining that the hospital was being used as a base by Hamas.

Hamas killed around 1,400 people in Israel and kidnapped more than 220 others. Around 11,500 people have been killed in Gaza in the Israeli offensive, according to the Hamas-run authorities in Gaza.

There has been mounting criticism of Israel for the death of a large number of civilians including women and children in Gaza in its military operations.

"We had also talked about how India had sent 38 tonnes of humanitarian relief materials. We are looking to send more assistance," he said. Bagchi noted that India strongly condemned the attacks by Hamas on Israel. "We had also strongly condemned the horrific terrorist attack on October 7 and our zero tolerance for terrorism and the need for immediate and unconditional release of the hostages," he said.

MCC announces 'Special Stray Vacancy Round' for vacant NEET PG 2023 seats



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) has announced a 'Special Stray Vacancy Round for the vacant MD/ MS/ Diploma/ MDS Seats of AIQ and State Quota' round for NEET PG Counselling 2023, aiming to fill remaining postgraduate medical seats. As per the schedule, registration for the special counselling will begin from Friday.

The move follows concerns that despite NEET-PG 2023 Cut-off to zero, over 1400 seats for the NEET PG are yet to be filled. According to a statement issued here by the MCC, eligible candidates can apply through the official website, mcc.nic.in. The registration process will close on November 22, with the choice filling and locking period running from November 18 to November 22. Seat allotments will be revealed on November 24, and successful candidates must report to their allocated institutes between November 25 and November 30.

"All the NEET PG 2023 eligible candidates are hereby informed that to prevent wastage of precious medical seats, the Union Health Ministry has decided to conduct the Special Stray Vacancy Round. It is pertinent

to mention that this Special Stray Vacancy Round will be the last round for Postgraduate courses for this academic year i.e 2023," said the MCC in an official notice. As per the statement, candidates without a seat in either the All India Quota or state quota are eligible, except those who didn't join seats allotted through MCC round-3 onwards while those candidates who fail to join their allotted seat in this round will forfeit their security deposit and be debarred from the NEET exam the following year. Also, "data of allotted candidates in this round will be shared with states, and candidates allotted seats by MCC won't be allowed admission in state counselling." This round doesn't offer an opportunity for upgrade; candidates who joined in earlier rounds won't have a chance to upgrade their seats, clarified the notice. In September, the Ministry had reduced to NEET-PG 2023 Cut-off to zero, for candidates to be eligible for counselling across all categories. As per the ministry, reducing the qualifying percentile for NEET PG 2023 to zero aimed to increase the pool of qualifying candidates but not dilute the merit system for admission to PG medical courses.

Nana apologises after video of him slapping boy goes viral

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after a video clip showing him slap a teenaged boy for attempting to take a selfie with him at Varanasi went viral, veteran actor Nana Patekar on Thursday apologised to the boy with folded hands, terming it as a case of 'mistaken' identity that took place during the course of a shooting of his upcoming film sequence.

After he was trolled viciously on the social media for smacking a young fan who attempted to click selfie with him, a chastened 72-year-old Patekar put out a video, in which he asked the boy to "forgive" him for his misbehaviour and said it was a case of "mistaken" identity.

The video that had gone viral showed Patekar - dressed in a brown blazer and a hat - slapping a boy who comes from behind starts taking a selfie with him on the sets of his upcoming film "Journey" shot on a street leading to the Dashashwamedh Ghat at Varanasi. The video showed that the actor - who apparently did not kindly to the boy's act, hits him on his head from behind.

In the video posted on his Instagram handle, Patekar said: "The video which is circulating on social media has been misinterpreted by many. What actually happened was due to a misunderstanding during the rehearsal of a shot from my upcoming film 'Journey'".

Whale calf dies after rescue, carcass found on Ganpatipule beach

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Hours after its rescue, a five-ton whale calf died in the Arabian Sea off Ratnagiri coast and its carcass washed ashore on Ganpatipule beach in Ratnagiri district of coastal Konkan region, on Thursday. The whale calf, measuring around 30-feet and weighing an estimated 5000 kilograms, was initially found stuck in the soft sands of the Ganpatipule beach in the early hours of Monday. In a massive rescue operation, the district fire brigade, police, fisheries department, Indian Coast Guard, environmentalist, a private company, and local volunteers managed to push the whale calf back into the sand, virtually inch-by-inch, till it could comfortably swim into the sea.

Delhi Government sends Atishi's report on Bannoli land acquisition to CBI, ED

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has sent to the CBI and the ED a report of Vigilance Minister Atishi alleging "prima facie complicity" of Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar in the Bannoli land acquisition matter, requesting a probe. Sources said Vigilance Minister Atishi wrote to the directors of the ED and CBI recommending an investigation into the alleged involvement of Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, DM South West Delhi, Hemant Kumar, and Division Commissioner Ashwani Kumar in Dwarka E-

way Land compensation award, sources said on Thursday. The Vigilance Minister mentioned that after the preliminary investigation by the Department of Vigilance, it appeared that in view of the scale of the alleged corruption and prima facie establishment of the abuse of authority by the high-ranking officials, this case should come under the purview of CBI's Prevention of Corruption Act 1988. While, 93% of payment of the land purchased by the beneficiaries, may have been done in cash. Which might involve money laundering as well making it a case fit for investigation by the ED.

According to the sources, the minister mentioned that after her preliminary investigation on CM Shri Arvind Kejriwal's directions, she found that since the land was purchased by the beneficiaries at only 7% of the circle rate in 2015, there is a likelihood that the remaining 93% payment may have been done in cash. It appears that the exorbitant award of land compensation is not only a case of corruption but might involve money laundering as well making it a case fit for investigation by the ED.

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E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <http://tender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S. No.	JOB NO.	NAME OF WORK	AMOUNT
1	09/DGM(NTC)/SM(NTC)/2022-23	Selection of Parking Contractor to operate the Noida surface parking sites (off street/on street) in Cluster-VIII (Sector-74,75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 94, 104 & 120) area of Noida	9011112.00

Which can be uploaded by date 04.12.2023 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 05.12.2023 at 11.00 AM.

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RE-ELECTED PM

MONEY 10
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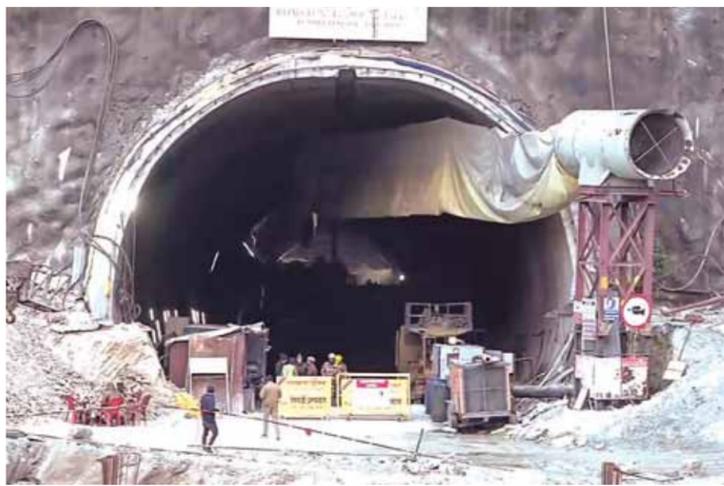
PNS ■ DEHRADUN

As rescuers continued their efforts on the fifth day to rescue 40 workers stranded by debris inside the under-construction Silkyara tunnel in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand on Thursday, authorities are also seeking the help of experts from Norway and Thailand who were involved in rescuing the junior football team from a cave in Thailand in 2018.

A heavy-duty drilling machine bored through 12 metres of rubble of the collapsed tunnel on the Char Dham route in Uttarakhand on Thursday, raising hopes for the rescue of 40 workers trapped inside for over four days. Officials said in the evening that a six-metre section of a steel pipe had been inserted into the bored passage. Another section was being welded into it.

The plan is to insert 800 mm and 900 mm diameter pipes, one after the other, with the help of the giant drill till an escape passage is created for the workers stranded beyond the collapsed portion of the under-construction tunnel.

Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways VK Singh visited the site of the mishap to check on the rescue efforts. The authorities are doing their best, Singh said and expressed hope that all the stranded workers will soon be rescued safely. The Union Minister, who also spoke to some of the stranded workers, said that efforts are being made to expedite the rescue operation. The minister said the site where the tunnel is being constructed has been stable for the past four and a half years.



Security personnel at the under-construction tunnel between Silkyara and Dandalgaon on the Brahmkhal-Yamunotri national highway, days after it collapsed trapping several workers inside, in Uttarkashi district, on Thursday

Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways VK Singh visited the site of the mishap to check on the rescue efforts.

The authorities are doing their best, Singh said and expressed hope that all the stranded workers will soon be rescued safely. The Union Minister, who also spoke to some of the stranded workers, said that efforts are being made to expedite the rescue operation. The minister said the site where the tunnel is being constructed has been stable for the past four and a half years.

He said experts in the country and abroad have been consulted on the rescue operation. In Dehradun, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is constantly monitoring the situation. The Uttarakhand Government has decided to review all under-construction tunnels in the State, he said. "We need such tunnels and many of them are being built in the state. We will review wherever they are being constructed," Dhami said.

A stretch about 40 metres long has been filled with debris. After attempts to prepare an

escape tunnel through this stretch failed earlier, three IAF C1-30 aircraft transported a heavier and more powerful drilling machine to Uttarkashi. This machine was assembled and made operational inside the tunnel. Officials said that a nine-metre stretch had been covered from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. At least six-metre pipe pushing had been completed, and welding for the second pipe was in progress in the evening.

A six-bed makeshift health facility has been set up and 10 ambulances with doctors also stationed outside the tunnel to

provide immediate medical care to the trapped workers on their evacuation, officials said. Doctors have advised that the workers would need both physical and mental rehabilitation upon being rescued.

The victims might experience panic attacks because of being trapped in closed spaces for long, said Dr Ajay Agarwal, director, Internal Medicine AT Fortis Hospital in Noida. Officials of the executing agency NHIDCL informed that all the workers stranded in the tunnel have adequate food, oxygen, and drinking water along with electricity supply. All the stranded workers are reported to be in stable condition. The officials hope to rescue the stranded workers at the earliest, but the actual time it will take to complete the rescue operation will depend on how the drilling operation goes.

The 4,531-metre-long Silkyara tunnel, under construction under the Radi Pass area, is to join the Gangotri and Yamunotri axis at a cost of ₹853.79 crore under the ambitious Char Dham project. Officials said that once complete, the tunnel will considerably benefit the pilgrims, providing all-weather connectivity and shortening the distance by 26 kilometres and one hour of travel time through steep, mountainous, and narrow roads prone to accidents and landslides.

The 40 workers have been stranded since a portion of the tunnel collapsed on November 12.

India Faces Final Rival: Aussies

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Five-time champions Australia excelled on the big stage yet again as they pulled off a scrappy three-wicket win to shatter South African dreams and reach their eighth ODI World Cup final here on Thursday. On a challenging turner, David Miller absorbed extreme pressure on his way to a rearguard 101, taking South Africa to a fighting total of 212 after losing their first four wickets for 24 runs in the second semi-final. It was a below-par total, but the Proteas did make a match out of it with a spirited bowling effort. However, as they often do, Australia held their nerve to close out the game in 47.2 overs, setting up a mouth-watering showdown against fierce rivals India in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Living with the chokers' tag for decades, South Africa came up short in another ICC knockout game but were able to take the game right down to the wire. They dropped as many as five tough catching chances, proving to be the difference in a low-scoring game. Australian skipper Pat Cummins (14 not out off 29) and Mitchell Starc (16 not out off 38) survived some tense moments before taking the team over the line.

The win extends Australia's remarkable run in the tournament, having bounced back



Australia's Travis Head plays a shot during Cricket World Cup second semi-final match against South Africa at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday

from defeats in their first two games against India and South Africa.

Australia began the chase on an aggressive with Travis Head (62 off 48), and his opening partner David Warner (29 off 18) slamming 60 runs in the first six overs. South African spinners brought their team into the game with Aiden Markram (1/23) dismissing David Warner and Keshav Maharaj (1/24) ending Head's stay in the middle. Leftarm wrist spinner Tabraiz Shamsi (2/42) then further complicated the matters by taking two big wickets of Maruns Labuschagne (18) and the dangerous Glenn Maxwell to spice up the contest.

At 137/5, Australia had Steve Smith and Josh Inglis in the middle and 74 runs to get before Gerald Coetzee (2/47

brought another twist into the game with twin strikes. In the end, the experience of Cummins and Starc came in handy.

Earlier, under gloomy and windy conditions, South Africa showed familiar signs of choking when their top-four Quinton De Kock (3), Temba Bavuma (0), Rassie van der Dussen (6) and Aiden Markram (10) departed cheaply to have them reeling at 24/4 in 12 overs.

Mitchell Starc (10-1-34-3) and Josh Hazlewood (8-3-12-2) were breathing fire making full use of the conditions, but after a 40-minute rain delay, it was the Miller show. Miller's 116 ball-effort was his sixth ODI century and the first one for Proteas in a World Cup knock-out game.

Delhi NCR in fatal grip of AQI levels

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As the Air Quality Index (AQI) worsened to a severe category, the Delhi Government announced on Thursday the formation of a six-member Special Task Force (STF) to ensure the rigorous enforcement of measures outlined in the Centre's air pollution control plan to combat pollution in the coming days. According to Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai, the STF will be led by the Secretary (Environment), and its members will include senior officials from the Departments of Transport, Traffic, Revenue, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), and Public Works Department (PWD).

On the other hand, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that smog towers are not a "practical solution" to curb pollution, stating that the Delhi area, which is 1,483 sqkm, may require 47,229 smog towers costing approximately ₹11,80,725 crore, plus a recurring cost of about ₹15 lakh per month for each tower. In the report, DPCC's senior scientist Nandita Moitra referred to reports from the



Smog reduces visibility in Delhi on Thursday

Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) in Bombay and Delhi to highlight that within a 100-metre radius, a smog tower can only reduce pollution by 17 per cent. The matter will be heard next on November 20. The Arvind Kejriwal Government has been advocating smog towers to combat pollution.

The average AQI was recorded at 419 on Thursday, compared to 401 on Wednesday. It was 397 on Tuesday, 358 on Monday, 218 on Sunday, 220 on Saturday, and 279 on Friday. Neighbouring Ghaziabad (376), Gurugram (363), Greater Noida (340), Noida (355), and Faridabad (424) too recorded very poor to severe air quality. Punjab on Thursday reported 1,271 farm fires in the last 24

hours, taking the total number of such cases to 31,932.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena came down heavily on the government and said blaming other States for Delhi pollution is not a solution, and the real solution lies in Delhi itself. Delhi needs action, not mere posturing, the LG posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, adding that politics can wait.

"We can do little to stop crop residue smoke from other States, apart from pleading with them. Despite States, especially Punjab playing truant, we are but petitioners for mercy. AQI yet hovers around 400, making the Capital gasp," the LG wrote. Saxena also accused the Punjab Government of "playing truant."

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), calm winds and low temperatures are exacerbating the accumulation of pollutants, with relief unlikely in the coming days. Recent findings from a joint project by the Delhi Government and IIT-Kanpur found that vehicular emissions accounted for about 38 per cent of the Capital's air pollution on Wednesday, reducing to 25 per cent on Thursday.

Secondary inorganic aerosols — particles such as sulfate and nitrate formed in the atmosphere due to the interaction of gases and particulate pollutants from sources like power plants, refineries, and vehicles — are the second major contributor to Delhi's foul air, accounting for 30 to 35 per cent of the air pollution in the city over the last few days.

Earlier in the day, Rai held a meeting with departments on the effective implementation of anti-air pollution measures and announced the formation of a Special Task Force to combat pollution in the national capital after the meeting. The STF will coordinate with all the departments involved in the enforcement of pollution control measures and submit a daily report to the government, Rai told reporters.

Israel goes for final kill in Gaza against Hamas

AP ■ KHAN YOUNIS

Israeli forces dropped leaflets warning Palestinians to flee parts of southern Gaza, residents said on Thursday, signalling a possible expansion of their offensive to areas where hundreds of thousands of people who heeded earlier evacuation orders are crowded into UN-run shelters and family homes.

Meanwhile, soldiers continued searching Shifa Hospital in the north, in a raid that began early on Wednesday. They displayed guns they say were found hidden in one building, but have yet to release any evidence of the central Hamas command centre that Israel has said is concealed beneath the complex. Hamas and staff at the hospital, Gaza's largest, deny the allegations. Broadening operations to the south — where Israel already carries out daily air raids — threatens to worsen an already severe humanitarian crisis in the besieged territory. Over 1.5 million people have been internally displaced in Gaza, with most having fled to the south, where food, water and



Smoke rises after an Israeli strike on the Gaza Strip on Thursday

electricity are increasingly scarce. It is not clear where else they could go, as Egypt refuses to allow a mass transfer onto its soil. The war, now in its sixth week, was triggered by a wide-ranging Hamas attack into southern Israel on October 7 in which the militants killed over 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and captured some 240 men, women and children. Israel responded with a weeklong air campaign and a ground invasion of northern Gaza, vowing to remove Hamas from power

and crush its military capabilities. More than 11,200 Palestinians have been killed, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, with most believed to be buried under the rubble. The official count does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths, and Israel says it has killed thousands of militants. The war has inflamed tensions elsewhere. On Thursday, gunmen shot and wounded

four people at a checkpoint on the main road linking Jerusalem to Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. The three attackers were killed, according to police, who said the assailants had assault rifles, handguns and hatchets, and were preparing a large-scale attack in Jerusalem. Israeli troops stormed into Gaza's largest hospital on Wednesday, searching for traces of Hamas inside and beneath the facility, where newborns and hundreds of other patients have suffered for days without electricity and other basic necessities.

Troops searched the underground levels of the hospital on Thursday and detained technicians responsible for running its equipment, the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said in a statement. The military said its soldiers were accompanied by medical teams bringing in incubators and other supplies. After encircling Shifa for days, Israel faces pressure to prove its claim that Hamas used the patients, staff and civilians sheltering there to provide cover for its fighters.

Indian origin journalist patents Virtual Newsroom

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Over the past decade, journalism has indeed undergone a significant transformation in print, broadcast, and, most notably, the online arena. This online space now delivers news and articles directly to the reader's palm, condensed into capsule items for convenience. The latest addition poised to revolutionise journalism is the advent of Artificial Intelligence. In this regard, Lalit Jha, a senior US-based Indian-origin journalist, has worked on evolving the 'Virtual Newsroom System', dedicated to aiding and addressing the demands of journalists.

Jha collaborated with his son, Georgian computer scientist Om Jha, to patent it. This patent addresses concerns by providing a virtual newsroom system that streamlines content

transactions within a unified platform, offering a straightforward solution for journalists and organisations to buy and sell content seamlessly in one integrated environment.

"Journalism is on the brink of transformative evolution," said Jha, who is also the Chief US Correspondent of the Press Trust of India based in Washington.

This pioneering leap in journalism harnesses innovative AI and machine learning, utilising a virtual newsroom system to verify news authenticity. It maintains a database of media outlets, journalists, and topics. When news is received, it assigns scores to each based on stored information and calculates an overall truth score, influencing how news is presented. Its goal is to revolutionise the industry, making high-quality content more accessible to media outlets and

simplifying the pitching process for writers worldwide, said Lalit.

"Notably, 58 per cent of journalists prioritise content and news accuracy as their foremost concern. An additional 27 per cent focus on maintaining credibility and combating fake news. An additional 27 per cent focus on maintaining credibility and combating fake news," Lalit adds.

Om Jha shared his perspective, stating, "When we envisioned this AI system, our goal was to improve operational efficiency and boost transparency across news, content creation, and dissemination." The Virtual Newsroom patent powers the innovative 5WH platform. What sets this patent apart is its AI-powered recommendation system, which brings an unprecedented level of efficiency to the media industry. The Virtual

Newsroom system assesses submitted content with dynamic ratings to determine eligibility for registration. It further recommends search results through intricate keyword analysis, geographical relevance, and demographic make-up of the target audience. Simultaneously, it also features dynamic pricing to match publishers with content that fits their budgets. Dr Raj S Davé, the team's attorney, echoed the significance of this achievement, saying, "It has been a privilege to help the Jhas and 5WH secure such a unique patent. It is a significant moment for the media industry, which rarely sees technology-driven patents of this scope."

As the media landscape undergoes a technological renaissance, 5WH, powered by the Virtual Newsroom patent, is poised to lead the way. This

groundbreaking patent promises to bring a revolution in journalism, connecting journalists and editors through technology, ensuring that high-quality content reaches a global audience seamlessly. 5wh.com operates as a multilingual e-commerce platform where professional journalists can sell their ready-to-use products, services, and creative work to news media outlets.

The website has established a virtual newsroom through a unique blend of IT and human intelligence. The platform employs a stringent vetting process for journalists and uses multiple layers of quality control to ensure the delivery of reliable and authentic content to media outlets. The content offerings encompass a wide array of media types, including text, audio, photographs, videos, and animations.

Biden Xi meet hits glacier

PTI ■ WOODSIDE (CALIFORNIA)

US President Joe Biden has once again called his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping a "dictator", just hours after they met for the first time in more than a year and held candid and productive discussions to revive bilateral ties. The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. "Well, look, he is a dictator," Biden told reporters in response to a question when reminded about the similar remarks he had made about Xi early this year.

"I mean, he is a dictator in the sense that he is a guy who runs a country that is a communist country that's based on a form of government totally different than ours," Biden said. "Anyway, we made progress," he

said about the four-hour-long meeting, the first in-person summit since they met on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia in November 2022.

Biden previously compared Xi, 70, to dictators during a June political fundraiser in California as he discussed Xi's reaction to US fighter jets shooting down a Chinese spy balloon over American airspace in February. The latest remarks could spark a possible backlash from China. The last time Biden called Xi a dictator, at a June fundraiser in Northern California, Chinese officials called the remarks absurd and a provocation. Biden's comment could also threaten to derail the positive energy coming out of the meeting, which Biden described earlier in the news conference as "some of the most construc-

and productive discussions we have had." Biden and Xi have agreed to resume high-level military-to-military communication and counter-narcotics cooperation as they met for four hours in a bid to establish a working relationship amidst Beijing's aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific region.

The two leaders also affirmed the need to address the risks of advanced artificial intelligence (AI) systems and improve AI safety through US-China government talks during their meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. Biden said since their last meeting in Bali, on the sidelines of the G20, the key members of the two governments have had important discussions on issues that matter to both the nations and to the world.

Rajnath calls for lawful commerce in international waters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday reiterated India's commitment to freedom of navigation, overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce in the international waters in accordance with international laws, including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. His remarks were in apparent reference to China's aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific region and South China sea.

Rajnath made these observations in Jakarta, Indonesia during the 10th Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting - Plus (ADMM-Plus). In a related development, as a reflection of the vibrant Indo-US defence relationship and excellent personal rapport between US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and Rajnath, the

former walked across the conference room to meet Rajnath on the sidelines of ADMM plus meeting.

Both leaders used this opportunity to quickly review the tremendous progress achieved in India US defence partnership in recent years. They discussed how India and US could contribute together to ASEAN centrality in the Indo Pacific and the cause of "Peace Prosperity and Security" - The theme of ADMM Plus 2023 meeting.

They also discussed ways to expand the India US partnership to address emerging challenges and further strengthen the common efforts towards a more secure world. The two leaders had earlier met in New Delhi on November 10 where they had resolved to advance defence technology cooperation with joint research in emerging areas.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Austin travelled to India last

week to attend the fifth edition of the "2+2" ministerial dialogue with their Indian counterparts.

Ways to expand the cooperation between India and the US figured in the "2+2" dialogue as well.

In his address at the ADMM conclave, Rajnath affirmed the ASEAN centrality and appreciated its role in promoting dialogue and consensus in the region, the defence ministry said here.

The Defence Minister called for regional security initiatives that are consultative and development-oriented to reflect the larger consensus among various stakeholders. He committed towards nurturing practical, forward-looking and result-oriented cooperation with ADMM-Plus for enhancing maritime security in the region. Highlighting that the conflicts extract a terrible toll in terms of human lives lost and livelihoods destroyed, disturb the stability at regional as well as



global level and have adverse implications for food security, energy security, Rajnath reiterated India's commitment to work with ASEAN and Plus countries to ensure peace, prosperity and security, which is an apt theme for this year's ADMM Plus. He cited Mahatma Gandhi's famous quote on peace "there is no way to peace, peace is the only way".

Rajnath stressed the role of dialogue and diplomacy to have enduring peace, and in ensuring global stability. He reaffirmed India's message to the world at large, that "this is not an era of war", and spoke about the imperative to give up the "us versus them" mindset. He appreciated ASEAN Member States' enthusiastic participation in India-ASEAN

activities, particularly the Initiative for Women in UN Peacekeeping Operations, and Initiative for Marine Plastic Pollution Response.

He also appreciated ASEAN Member States' active participation in the maiden ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise held in May this year, as well as in the Expert Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) activities, of which India and Indonesia are co-chairs in the current 2020-2023 cycle.

Recognising that terrorism is a serious threat to international peace and security, including in the ASEAN region, India proposed to co-chair the EWG on Counter-Terrorism. This proposal was endorsed by ADMM-Plus as terrorism remains a serious concern to countries in the region. Rajnath also held bilateral meetings with his Indonesian and Vietnamese counterparts on the sidelines of the conclave, officials said.

During his meeting with Defence Minister of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto, Rajnath appreciated Indonesia's leadership of ASEAN this year, and the excellent organisation of the ADMM-Plus.

The two Ministers took stock of the bilateral defence relationship and re-committed to further strengthen cooperation, particularly in the maritime domain. They also reviewed the regular exchanges in the form of training, staff talks and exercises, and discussed avenues for promotion of defence industry collaboration. Both countries have co-chaired Expert Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) for the cycle 2021-2024. Rajnath Singh also held talks with Minister of National Defence of Vietnam General Phan Van Giang. The two Ministers reviewed the progress in the implementation of the 'Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence

Partnership towards 2030' signed during the visit of Raksha Mantri to Vietnam in June 2022.

They committed to work together for the deepening of the multifaceted bilateral defence ties, spanning across a wide spectrum covering training, capacity building, defence industry cooperation, UN Peacekeeping, bilateral ship visits and exercises.

Rajnath met with Secretary General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Hourn on the sidelines of 10th ADMM-Plus. While reiterating India's continued support to ASEAN Centrality, the defence minister appreciated ASEAN Member States' enthusiastic participation in India-ASEAN activities including the 1st ASEAN-India Informal Defence Ministers' Meeting, maiden ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise, India's Initiatives for Women in UN Peacekeeping Operations and for Marine Plastic Pollution Response.

India set example of using scientific research for development: Jitendra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India has set an example for the world on how scientific research can be used for development in every sector, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said here on Thursday.

Speaking at the curtain-raiser event of the India International Science Festival set to take place in Faridabad from January 17-20, Singh said India is the first country to use technology for development in every sector.

"India has set an example for the world on how scientific research can be used for development purposes," said the Union Minister of State for Science and Technology. He added that whether it is the roads, railways, Smart City project, digital health, deep sea exploration, groundwater mapping, or crop imaging, the applications of science and technology are quite visible to all.

On the occasion of the ninth India International Science



Festival (IISF), the minister said the aim would be to reach out to the public and try to connect the masses with science and technology. The theme of IISF 2023 is 'Science and Technology - Public Outreach in Amrit Kaal' aimed at building a platform for inspiring the public at large and students, educators, scientists, researchers, industry professionals, entrepreneurs and science communicators. The IISF 2023 will have 17 themes to showcase the country's scientific achievements in diverse fields.

Singh said the event will host various activities for all stakeholders such as seminars by national and international experts, interactions with speakers, exhibitions, competitions, workshops, knowledge-sharing activities, technology shows, etc.

"The IISF is dedicated towards fostering creativity in science, technology and innovation for the advancement of prosperous India," he added. Since 2015, the IISF has hosted eight editions at different places in India and expanded as a mega science festival.

Financial, cyber fraud within ambit of organised crime in proposed law

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Major financial scams, ponzi schemes, cyber crimes, vehicle theft, land grabbing and contract killing will come under the ambit of organised crime in the proposed new criminal law, and if such offences result in the death of any person, the convict will be punishable with death or imprisonment for life.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs headed by BJP MP Brijlal observed that the existing laws were inadequate to tackle many serious offences like organised kidnapping, land grabbing, contract killing, extortion as also many major financial scams and human trafficking, and lauded the proposed punishments as 'very effective addition'.

According to clause 9 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), unlawful activity, including kidnapping, robbery, vehicle theft, extortion, land grabbing, contract killing, eco-



nomical offences, cyber crimes having severe consequences, trafficking in people, drugs, illicit goods or services and weapons, human trafficking racket for prostitution or ransom by effort of groups of individuals acting in concert, singly or jointly, either as a member of an organised crime syndicate or on behalf of such syndicate, by use of violence, threat of violence, intimidation, coercion, corruption or related activities or other unlawful means to obtain direct or indirect, material benefit including a financial benefit, shall constitute

organised crime. It also explains that economic offences include criminal breach of trust; forgery, counterfeiting of currency and valuable securities, financial scams, running ponzi schemes, mass marketing fraud or multi-level marketing schemes with a view to defraud the people at large for obtaining monetary benefits or large scale organised betting in any form, offences of money laundering and hawala transactions. In Section 120A of the Indian Penal Code, there is no explanation about organised crime.

INS Sumedha undertakes 31 days anti-piracy patrol

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Indian Navy ship INS Sumedha is on an extended range operational deployment and is currently operating in the Atlantic Ocean along the West Coast of Africa. During this period, INS Sumedha operated in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) undertaking a 31 days anti-piracy patrol.

This is the second such patrol being undertaken by the Indian Navy in this crucial maritime region. The maiden GoG anti-piracy patrol was undertaken by INS Tarkash in Sep - Oct 2022, navy officials said here on Thursday.

The region is critical for India's national interests as it is an important source for India's energy requirements. Sumedha's deployment also ensured enhancing Navy to Navy connect with regional navies including Senegal, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Angola



and Namibia. The deployment was also used to further the capability of the regional partners through joint training undertaken by the ships' crew reiterating India and Indian Navy's focus on helping our friends.

Another highlight of the deployment was the ships participation in the maiden India-European Union (EU) Joint Exercise in the GoG. INS Sumedha's operational deployment to a crucial geographical region of immense relevance to India has ensured our National Interests are further bolstered.

'All institutions must contribute in building developed India by 2047'



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said people of the nation want to move forward rapidly towards building a developed India by 2047 and called upon important organisations, including Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), to contribute towards the goal.

Addressing a gathering at the 3rd Audit Diwas Celebrations organised by CAG, the President noted that CAG has taken many forward-looking steps, including the establishment of the Centre for Data Management and Analytics, in which digital technology and other modern methods are being used in line with the future.

"Today our countrymen want to move forward rapidly towards building a developed India by the year 2047. All important institutions and communities of the country, including CAG, have to contribute to achieve this goal," Murmu said. Audit Diwas commemorates the occasion of the appointment of the first Auditor General of India on November 16, 1860 and creation of the CAG organisation. Recognising the significance of the day in the annals of the Indian history, since 2021, the CAG has celebrated November 16 as Audit Diwas.

The President said the entire team of CAG is expected to contribute as a controller and an examiner who is both a

companion and a guide in the country's developmental journey.

She stated that the CAG team will have an important role in making India the third largest economy in the world. She further said the impact of today's market system characterised by global competition is relevant to all institutions and enterprises. The ability to compete on the basis of ethics should continuously increase in all enterprises and activities of the country. Removing obstacles in achieving the national goals of accelerated growth and development while ensuring financial propriety and legality is the touchstone of effective contribution by every institution and individual responsible for good governance, including the CAG, the President added. She also emphasised that the auditors should be considered as facilitators of good governance, not critics.

CAG Girish Chandra Murmu said that in cognisance of the paradigm shift in governance to a digital bedrock, the apex auditor too has leveraged technology. "...This year we achieved a remarkable milestone. Effective April 2023, we have transitioned to 100 per cent digital auditing processes, utilising our unique enterprise-wide audit process and knowledge management IT System (One IAAD One System - OIOS), creating a single source of truth for our audit activities," he said.

Vaishnaw denies shortage of berths for non-AC coaches

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Dismissing reports of a shortage of berths for passengers opting for non-AC coaches, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday said there has been a nearly three-fold increase in the number of special train trips this festive season as compared to last year.

The railways is operating 6,754 additional train trips this festive season between October 1 and December 31 to clear the rush of passengers as compared to 2,614 in the same period last year, he said. Till date 2,423 trips have been completed and the remaining trips will be made in the coming days, the minister said.

"Every year we do a very serious planning to make arrangements for passengers for Diwali and Chhath. We monitor the reservation and waiting list trends three months before the beginning of the festive season and take a call on making arrangements for the additional train trips," Vaishnaw said during an interaction with journalists.

The railways also takes into account last year's passenger figures in the planning process. All these factors suggested that this festive season the railways would expect a huge rush and plans were made accordingly, he said. According to Vaishnaw, 36 lakh people have travelled till date from the beginning of the festive season and the number is approximately double that of last year. Railway sources said that more people are travelling this festive season as compared to last year due to better economic situation. They said the railways has made extraordinary efforts not only for running addi-

tional train trips but handling passenger rush at prominent railway stations such as New Delhi and Mumbai.

Vaishnaw dismissed many news reports that the number of sleeper coaches are being reduced in trains leading to problems for passengers opting for non-AC berths. He said there is a standard composition of coaches in a train since the time new LHB coaches were introduced.

No WL by 2027 as Railways to add 3,000 more trains

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Indian Railways on Thursday announced that by the year 2027 the national transporter will do away with the waiting lists (WL) and travellers will get confirmed journey tickets while it plans to enhance addition of 3000 more trains to cater to the demands of non air-conditioned passengers. Further, a comparative study between April to October this year said that less than five per cent passengers were of AC air segment whereas 95 per cent chose non AC, general or sleeper class to meet their demand of journey across the country. Looking at the demand of journey during the peak seasons like festival vacations the railways is now working to alloted confirmed berths to passengers. For this while work on track infrastructure is at fast pace, railways now intends to increase its existing strength of 10748 trains to 13000 by augmenting capacity every few months.

India hopeful of positive outcome in appeal against death to former Navymen by Qatar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday said the appeal process against the death sentence handed down to eight former Indian Navy personnel by a Qatari court is under process and it was hopeful of a positive outcome from it.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India is engaged with the Qatari authorities on the matter and that the government will continue to extend all legal and consular assistance to the Indian nationals.

The eight Indians were on October 26 given death sentences by Qatar's Court of

First Instance. India described the ruling as "deeply" shocking and vowed to explore all legal options in the case.

Days later, an appeal was filed against the death sentence. "The case is currently in a legal process there. As we mentioned, an appeal has been filed in Qatar's Court of Appeal. We are also engaged with the Qatari authorities on the matter and we will continue to extend all legal and consular assistance (to them)," Bagchi said. "I would again urge everyone not to engage in speculation considering the sensitive nature of the case," he said.

The judgement in the entire process has been made confidential by the Qatari side.

"The appeal process is underway and we would hope for a positive outcome," Bagchi said, replying to a question on the matter at his weekly media briefing. He also described as "factually incorrect" some reports that suggested the appeal in the case has been adjudicated.

The Indian nationals, who worked with private company Al Dahra, were arrested in August last year reportedly in an alleged case of espionage. Neither the Qatari authorities nor New Delhi made the charges against the Indian nationals public.

In its reaction to the ruling by the Qatari court, MEA last month said it is attaching "high importance" to this case

and is exploring all legal options. The charges were filed against the eight Indian navy veterans on March 25 and they were tried under Qatari law.

All of the former Navy officers had "unblemished stints" of up to 20 years in the Indian Navy and had held important positions including that of instructors in the force, former military officials had said. In May Al-Dhara Global closed its operations in Doha and all those working there (primarily Indians) have since returned home.

In the past, the Navy had taken up the case of the former naval personnel with top brass of the government for securing their release.

India pushes for cessation of violence, constructive dialogue in Myanmar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday expressed deep concern over the fighting between Myanmar's anti-junta groups and government forces close to the country's border, which resulted in Myanmar nationals seeking refuge in Mizoram, and pushed for a cessation of violence and a constructive dialogue. "We reiterate our call for the return of peace, stability and democracy in Myanmar," external affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi told a regular media briefing while responding to questions on the recent fighting. "As a result of the fighting [at] Rihkhawdar area in Chin State, opposite Zokhawthar in Mizoram on the India-Myanmar border, there has been movement of Myanmar nationals to the Indian side. We are deeply concerned with such

incidents close to our border," he said.

A group of resistance fighters took control of two military camps at Rihkhawdar on Monday after several hours of fighting.

The fighting resulted in some 5,000 Myanmar nationals, including more than 40 soldiers, seeking shelter in Mizoram. The soldiers were flown by the Indian side to another border crossing and sent back.

On Thursday, there were fresh reports that at least 29 more Myanmar soldiers entered India to flee an attack on their base by resistance fighters. The UN has said the intensified fighting since last month has displaced about 90,000 people. Bagchi said India's position on the situation in Myanmar "is very clear - we want cessation of the violence and resumption of the situation through constructive dialogue".

Media must act as responsible pillar of democracy, call out fake narratives in open: Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Thursday said there are "individuals and media outlets" who consistently spread fake propaganda against 'Bharat', both domestically and internationally, and stressed that media must act as a responsible pillar of the democracy, calling out fake narratives in the open.

"It is our collective responsibility to challenge such narratives, expose the falsehoods, and ensure that truth prevails," he said. "It is essential to safeguard the interests of our nation and avoid providing space to anti-India views that can threaten the unity and integrity we hold dear," Thakur added. The minister was addressing an event organised here by the

Press Council of India (PCI) to mark the National Press Day.

"Even as we celebrate the freedom of the press, we cannot turn a blind eye to those who seek to undermine the spirit of our nation. There are individuals and media outlets that consistently spread fake propaganda against Bharat, both domestically and internationally," Thakur said. "It is our collective responsibility to challenge such narratives, expose the falsehoods, and ensure that truth prevails," he added. The minister said that in the era of artificial intelligence where technology shapes the way information is disseminated, it becomes imperative for the media to remain cautious. "We live in a world where misinformation can be amplified with the click of a button," he said.

MP lays foundation stone of ABSS project at Suremanpur stn

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

MP of Ballia Virendra Singh 'Mast' laid the foundation stone apart from performing bhoomi puja for the redevelopment works under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) at Suremanpur railway station in Ballia-Chhapra Junction route on Thursday. Besides, he also flagged off train 14523 Barauni-Ambala Hariharth Express which got a two-minute stoppage at this important station.

The function was also attended by Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER), Vineet Kumar Srivastava, Chief Project Manager (Gati Shakti) Kaushalesh Singh, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Sheikh Rehman, Senior Divisional Security Commissioner (RPF) Dr Abhishek, Senior Division Electrical Engineer (General) Pankaj Keshwani, Senior Divisional Engineer-II Satyam Singh, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Yashveer Singh, Deputy Chief Engineer (Gati Shakti) IC Subhash and a large number of regional citizens were present.

In his presidential address, the Ballia MP praised the Prime Minister and Railway Minister for inclusion of Suremanpur railway station



Ballia MP Virendra Singh 'Mast' addressing a function at Suremanpur railway station of Varanasi Division (NER) on Thursday.

under ABSS redevelopment project and for providing stoppage of Hariharth Express (14523/14524) at Suremanpur Railway Station.

He said that basic facilities are already available for the passengers at Suremanpur station and along with this, Suremanpur railway station will be redeveloped and beautified at a cost of Rs 18.41 crore under ABSS. "In this plan, modern amenities like station facade, circulating area, waiting hall, disabled friendly facilities, toilets, two lifts/one pair of escalators, wide foot over bridge, two/four wheeler parking and eco-friendly building

using green energy etc will give more facilities to this station," Singh said.

Expressing his happiness over the stoppage of Hariharth Express, he said that Gondia Express and Purvanchal Express trains will also get stoppages at Suremanpur railway station from Friday and November 20 respectively.

"With the stoppage of these trains, the people of Suremanpur and surrounding areas will get the benefit of direct travel to Ballia, Ghazipur City, Varanasi, Sultanpur, Nihalgarh, Lucknow, Bareilly, Moradabad, Roorkee,

Saharanpur, Ambala Cantt, Kolkata, Raipur and Gondia. It will be very convenient for the local passengers to travel to Chhapra, Ballia, Varanasi, Sonpur, Hajipur, Samastipur and Barauni," he said.

Earlier, the DRM welcomed the Ballia MP for participating in the programme of laying the foundation stone at Suremanpur station and inaugurating the halt of Hariharth Express. He said that on the efforts of the MP and the demand of the regional people, the Railways has started providing better transportation facilities at Suremanpur.

34-year-old man killed by friends

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 34-year-old man was killed allegedly by his friends following a dispute at a party in the Nawabganj area. After the recovery of the body the family members created an uproar. The police officers pacified the people.

Jamuna Prasad Patel's son Ajit Singh stayed at home and did farming. On the said night Sunil Yadav and Gore Yadav called him for a party. On the invitation of his friends, Ajit reached the place where liquor

party was going on.

Sunil Yadav and Gore Yadav allegedly started abusing Ajit in an intoxicated state. When Ajit protested and started going towards home Sunil Yadav, Neeraj Yadav and Gore Yadav allegedly ran the pickup over him. When Ajit got injured and fell on the ground, the pickup ran over his head due to which he died on the spot. After the incident the trio fled from there. Hundreds of people gathered at the spot. The police explained to the people and then they allowed

the body to be taken after five hours.

On the complaint of Ajit's wife Chandrama Devi the Nawabganj police has registered a case. Inspector Nawabganj said investigation is on. The forensic investigation team has collected samples. A search for the accused is on.

Meanwhile one person was beaten up with stick due to a land dispute in Dharav Nara village in the Dighia police post under the Manda police station. The police have taken cognizance of the matter and

registered a case.

Rajesh Kumar Sahu of Dharav Nara village had a dispute with the people in the neighbourhood regarding land for many years due to which he was beaten up and left bleeding.

The family members took him to a hospital. Dighia outpost in-charge Ashish Yadav said a case has been registered against the accused after the video went viral. The victim has been sent for medical examination. Further action will be taken soon.

26-year-old man's genitals chopped off after dispute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 32-year-old woman allegedly chopped off her neighbour's genitals following a dispute with him in Sharipur village in Kaushambi.

The police have detained the woman and seized the knife used in the crime. The Kaushambi police said a thorough probe was being carried out to find out the exact reason behind the attack.

The injured man, aged 26, is undergoing treatment in Prayagraj. The police said the victim's father lodged an FIR at Manjhanpur police station

against the woman under Sections 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapon) and 308 (culpable homicide) of IPC.

The victim's father alleged that the accused called up his son for some work at her house where they had a dispute over some issue.

He said he found his son in an unconscious state inside his neighbour's house and took him to a private hospital in Kaushambi.

However, doctors referred him to Prayagraj. The police claimed that the woman's husband was living in UAE and

added that the victim had an argument with the accused.

T I M E T A B L E RELEASED: The timetable for the extension of Gorakhpur Lucknow Vande Bharat Express to Prayagraj Junction has been released. The 22549 Vande Bharat will depart from Gorakhpur at 6.05 am, reach Basti at 6.52 am, Ayodhya at 8.15 am, Lucknow at 10.20 am and Prayagraj Junction at 1.35 am.

In return the 22550 Vande Bharat will depart from Prayagraj at 3.15 pm, reach Lucknow at 6.15 pm and Gorakhpur at 10.40 pm. The

timetable has been given the green signal by the board. However, the date from which Vande Bharat will start running to Prayagraj has not been announced yet.

Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Prayagraj Division of North Central Railway Amit Singh said the technical team has completed the inspection for running Vande Bharat from Sangam City to Delhi and Saharanpur, from Chitrakoot to Ayodhya via Prayagraj. The facilities being developed for the maintenance of Vande Bharat in Prayagraj have also been found satisfactory.

Preparations begin for 4-day Chhath Puja

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Preparations are in full swing for the four-day Chhath Puja which will start on Friday with the Nahay-Khay (bathing-eating) event. Hectic efforts are going on in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) to make Surya Sarovar ready for the festival. Earlier, Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma, along with newly-appointed Municipal Commissioner (MC) Akshat Verma and others inspected Ravidas and adjoining ghats regarding the preparations for Dala Chhath Puja festival.

However, it will be a challenging task for the local administration to make the main Ganga ghats ready for the festival as the first arghya of the Chhath Puja will be offered to Surya Bhagwan at the sunset on November 19, while second and last on the next day at the time of sunrise which would mark the end of the festival. Due to the recent rise in the water level of river Ganga, huge quantities of silt were collected at the ghat stairs. Though hectic efforts are going on at some of the ghats with the help of water pumps to remove the collected silt from the stairs, it appears that the chances are little that the devotees would get proper places to offer their



DC KR Sharma inspecting Ravidas Ghat on the eve of beginning of Chhath Puja festival in Varanasi on Wednesday.

arghya prayers there. In recent years, the 88-odd internationally famous Ganga ghats witnessed the rush of thousands of people there during the Chhath Puja.

Meanwhile, the rush of people started to purchase various puja articles and it is expected that it would be increased from Friday when the four-day festival begins. It is expected that the rush at the ghats of rivers Ganga and Varuna apart from some ponds would be heavy on this popular festival of this region of Purvanchal (eastern UP) and adjoining Bihar. During their inspection at Ravidas Ghat on

Wednesday, the DC and MC jointly launched CNG work of GAIL. They also reviewed the progress of jetty work. The DC instructed the concerned officers to speed up the ongoing work of leveling and barricading the raw ghat near Ravidas Ghat apart from maintaining excellent cleanliness of the permanent changing rooms built on the ghat side and making additional temporary changing rooms for the devotees as per the need. "It should be completed on time and all the street lights installed on the ghat side should be checked and made functional. Besides, additional lights should be

installed as per requirement and signage boards should be put up for the toilets situated on the ghat side so that there is no inconvenience to the devotees and tourists," Sharma instructed the concerned officers and directed them to complete the works soon. During their inspection, the DC and MC were accompanied by Additional Municipal Commissioner Dushyant Kumar Maurya, Nagar Swasthya Adhikari Dr NP Singh, Zonal Officer (Bhelupur), Executive Engineer of Municipal Corporation, Junior Engineer (Street Lights) and other officials.

LIC claims ₹17,469 cr PAT for half year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Board of Directors of Life Insurance Corporation of India, LIC approved and adopted the standalone and consolidated financial results for the six months ending September 30, 2023. In an official release issued to the press it claimed that the profit after tax (PAT) for the half year ended September 30, 2023 was ₹17,469 crore. The current period profit includes an amount of ₹13,768 crore (net of tax) pertaining to the accretions on the available solvency margin transferred from non-par fund to shareholders account. The PAT for similar six month period ended September 30, 2022 was ₹16,635 crore is not comparable since it included an amount of ₹4,542 crore (net of tax) pertaining to the accretions on the available solvency margin for the last quarter of FY 2021-22 which was transferred from non-par fund to shareholders account on September 30, 2022.

In terms of market share measured by First Year Premium Income LIC continues to be the market leader by market share in Indian life insurance business with overall market share of 58.50 per cent. For six months ended September 30, 2023, LIC had a market share of 40.35 per cent in individual business and 70.26 per cent in the group business. The total premium income for six month period ended September 30, 2023, was ₹22,05,760 crore as compared to ₹2,30,456 crore for the six month period ended September 30, 2022,

during the previous year. The total individual business premium for the six month period ended September 30, 2023, increased to ₹1,34,783 crore from ₹1,27,738 crore for the comparable period of previous year. The group business total premium income for six months ended September 30, 2023, was ₹70,977 crore as compared to ₹1,02,718 crore for six months ended September 30, 2022. A total of 80,60,725 policies were sold in the individual segment during the half year ended September 30, 2023, as compared to 83,59,029 policies sold during the six months ended September 30, 2022.

On an annualised premium equivalent (APE) basis the total premium was ₹22,627 crore for the six month period ended September 30, 2023. Of this 64.69 per cent (₹14,638 crore) was accounted for by the individual business and 35.31 per cent (₹7,989 crore) by the group business. Within the individual business the share of par products on APE basis was 89.24 per cent (₹13,063 crore) and balance 10.76 per cent (₹1,575 crore) was due to non-par products. The non-par APE has increased from ₹1,315 crore for the six month period ended September 30, 2022, to ₹1,575 crore for the six month period ended September 30, 2023, registering a growth of 19.77 per cent. Therefore, the non-par share of individual APE which was 8.98 per cent for the six month period ended September 30, 2022, has grown to 10.76 per cent for the six month period ended

September 30, 2023. The value of new business (VNB) for the six month period ended September 30, 2023, was ₹3,304 crore as compared to ₹3,677 crore for the six month period ended September 30, 2022. The net VNB margin for the six month period ended September 30, 2023, was 14.6 per cent as compared to 14.6 per cent for the six months ended September 30, 2022. The Indian embedded value (IEV) as on September 30, 2023, has been determined as ₹6,62,605 crore as compared to ₹5,44,291 crore as on September 30, 2022, registering an increase of 21.74 per cent over the previous year. The solvency ratio as on September 30, 2023, improved to 1.90 as against 1.88 on September 30, 2022. For the half year ended September 30, 2023, the persistency ratio on premium basis for the 13th month and 61st month were 78.49 per cent and 62.53 per cent, respectively. The comparable persistency ratios for the corresponding half year ending September 30, 2022 were 77.62 per cent and 62.77 per cent respectively. For the half year ended September 30, 2023, the persistency ratio on number of policies basis for the 13th month and 61st month were 66.80 per cent and 50.35 per cent, respectively. The comparable persistency ratios for the corresponding half year ended September 30, 2022, were 65.21 per cent and 51.61 per cent, respectively. Therefore, the persistency has improved both on premium and number of policies basis for 13th month. The assets under management (AUM)

increased to ₹47,43,389 crore as on September 30, 2023, as compared to ₹42,93,778 crore on September 30, 2022, registering an increase of 10.47 per cent year on year. The overall expense ratio for the half year ended September 30, 2023, was 15.14 per cent as compared to 16.69 per cent for the half year ended September 30, 2022. The yield on investments on policy holders funds excluding unrealised gains was 9.06 per cent for half year ended September 30, 2023, as against 8.32 per cent for half year ended September 30, 2022. The net NPA in the policyholders fund was ₹8.77 crore as on September 30, 2023, as compared to ₹12.72 crore as on September 30, 2022.

Siddhartha Mohanty, Chairperson, LIC said: "During the first six months of this financial year, the LIC had been able to implement strategies successfully to enhance the share of non-par products in overall individual business. The current VNB margins were an indicator of initiatives delivering the objective of maintaining profitability as LIC changed direction. He said the organisation was conscious of the market dynamics in certain parts of the business and were working towards profit-oriented consolidation. The distribution mix was also more diversified with increase in share of bancassurance and alternate channels." He said the LIC continued to remain focused on creating higher customer value through digital innovations. He said the company was thankful to all its stakeholders for their continued support.

Vector-borne diseases: Testing in affected areas to be stepped up

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Alok Ranjan on Thursday said on Thursday that in view of increase in vector-borne diseases it has been decided to step up testing in all affected areas, both rural and semi-urban. He said the medical team will visit each house and if they find anyone suffering from suspected vector-borne disease blood samples will be collected. He advised the people to ensure that they wear full sleeve shirts and trousers and avoid visiting green surroundings during day time. He said people need to ensure there is no stagnant water around their houses.

COPD DAY: Chest physician Dr Ashish Shukla while addressing presspersons on World COPD Day on Wednesday informed that India's most recent National Health Policy aimed to reduce early deaths from non-communicable diseases, including chronic respiratory conditions, by 25 per cent by 2025. He said chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) was a major concern and the second leading cause of death and disability. He said the recent study revealed that a staggering 54 per cent of COPD-diagnosed patients had no knowledge

about the disease. He said this highlighted a clear gap in the effective management of COPD where awareness played a crucial role in instigating the process of detection, diagnosis and intervention. He added that the World COPD Day 2023 served as a global call to action to raise awareness about the condition and stress upon the importance of early lung health in COPD management.

Highlighting the role of better disease awareness for the early detection and treatment of COPD he said in a country with diverse medical practices, awareness played a crucial role in promoting disease diagnosis and rational treatment. He said in festive season the potential exposure to triggers like smoke and airborne pollutants can even result in a flare-up of the disease or a lung attack which can take patients a month or longer to completely recover from it. Dr Shukla said bronchodilator inhalers are crucial for treating COPD and programmes like pulmonary rehabilitation can greatly enhance quality of life.

ELECTION: Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Rajesh Kumar while addressing a meeting at the Collectorate on Thursday informed that as per the directives of the Principal Secretary, Labour department

in view of the state elections in Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh it had been decided that the voters working in Uttar Pradesh will be allowed to cast their votes on November 25. He said all employees working in government office, semi-government private sector under Lok Pratinidhitva Adhinyam 1951 Section 135 B will be allowed to cast their votes.

CONCERN: City president, Samajwadi Party, Fazal Mehmood while addressing presspersons on Thursday expressed concern over substantial increase in pulmonary diseases on account of bursting of firecrackers during Diwali and burning of garbage in the city.

CAMP: Secretary of Sakhi Kendra Neelam Chaturvedi, while addressing presspersons on Thursday said the Kendra had decided to hold a week-long awareness camp for women domestic help. She said domestic service was now accepted as an important category of livelihood and added that steep decline in agrarian produce and livelihood security in rural areas has caused migration of rural people to the urban areas. She appealed to women domestic help to get themselves registered in the camps so that Sakhi Kendra can take up their issues.

UP Doctors' Cricket League inaugurated



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

President, Indian Medical Association (IMA), Kanpur Chapter Dr Nandini Rastogi while inaugurating the four-day Uttar Pradesh Doctors' Cricket League on Thursday at the IIT-Kanpur Grounds said it was indeed a wonderful sight to see medical practitioners playing the role of cricketers and take active part in sports.

She said that it is the first time that doctors from different cities of the state had spared their valuable time to take part in this event. She said there is no doubt that playing cricket increased endurance and stamina and above all improved physical fitness.

The opening day match was between Kanpur and Prayagraj. Kanpur won the match and Dr Naveen Gude was declared the Man of the Match. The finals will be played on November 19. The T-20 matches are being played as per the BCCI rules.

DRM conducts safety inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava conducted the window trailing safety inspection of Banaras-Chhapra railway section on Thursday in order to ensure safety and security in railway operations, movement of Chhath Mela special trains and to maintain vigilance during Chhath Puja festival at different stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER).

At the end of his inspection, the DRM reached Chhapra Junction railway station and did a thorough inspection there. During his stay, he inspected the control room for Chhath Puja, CCTV monitoring room and circulating area for crowd management, night shelters, waiting room, additional reserved/unreserved ticket counters, fire-fighting equipment, licenses of vendors located at the station etc. Srivastava also inspected the cleanliness, availability of drinking water at water booths,



pay and use toilets and security arrangements of the station and gave necessary directions to the concerned officials.

During the inspection, he directed the Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel to queue up the passengers while boarding the trains to deal with the excessive crowd during Chhath Puja.

After this, he did a thorough inspection of Chhapra Coaching Depot and while reviewing the complete arrangements for the safety of the working employees, he observed all types of safety measures in the rakes maintained in the coaching depot.

He also tested smoke detectors, fire detectors and alarms in modern LHB units and expressed satisfaction at finding them in good condition. He also tested the safety knowledge of the employees working in the coaching depot and their knowledge about new safety reforms.

He appreciated the quality level of maintenance of rakes carried out in the coaching depot. Along with this, he reiterated the oath to the employees working in the coaching depot to be safety conscious. During this, the refresher training of the employees was reviewed and satisfaction was

expressed on the knowledge of the employees from the safety point of view.

On this occasion, Chief Project Manager (Gati Shakti) Kaushalesh Singh, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Sheikh Rehman, Senior Divisional Security Commissioner Dr Abhishek, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) Pankaj Keshwani, Senior Divisional Engineer-II Satyam Singh, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecom Engineer Yashveer Singh, Deputy Chief Engineer (Gati Shakti) IC Subhash and other senior officers were also present.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Peace pipe

The Biden-Xi meeting on APEC sidelines yields 'real progress' in bilateral relations

Even as Israel's aggression continues in Gaza, US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping made good use of the opportunity provided by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in the US. A pleasant surprise, their bilateral had many positive takeaways and a lot of things were agreed upon. The two countries had drifted apart after former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan last year which was criticised by China as "unnecessary provocation" and "interference". Though it is not confirmed that the latest meeting discussed the West Asia crisis, the Ukraine war and Palestine conflict are two issues that cannot be brushed under the carpet. To put it in perspective, the US and China have diametrically opposing views on these conflicts but the latest meeting at least opens up a channel for dialogue. Biden and Xi engaged in over four hours of talks, marking their first face-to-face meeting in a year. The leaders aimed to address long-standing issues and set the tone for stabilising strained bilateral ties. The meeting coincided with the annual APEC summit, emphasising the global significance of the discussions. One of the key outcomes was the commitment to restore military-to-military communications between the nations. The leaders agreed to reopen the channels severed following Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022. This signals a willingness to enhance dialogue and understanding in the military domain.



The discussions also delved into the sensitive issue of Taiwan, with Biden expressing concerns over China's substantial military buildup around the island. He urged China to respect Taiwan's electoral process, particularly as the island is gearing up for presidential and parliamentary elections in January. Xi, on the other hand, emphasised Taiwan's integral connection to China and called for an end to arms sales to the self-ruled island. Yet another headway was made in the agreement to reopen military contacts which extends beyond high-level dialogues. It opens the door for engagements even at middle levels, allowing for interactions between military officials, including the US Pacific forces commander and his Chinese counterpart; the move is expected to facilitate operational engagements. In a joint effort to combat the opioid crisis, Biden and Xi reached an agreement to cooperate on tackling the source of fentanyl, a highly addictive synthetic opioid responsible for numerous drug overdoses in the US. China will target specific companies producing the chemicals used to manufacture the drug, reinforcing international collaboration on a critical public health issue. Biden raised concerns about the status of US citizens believed to be wrongly detained in China, emphasising the importance of human rights. The leaders engaged in a frank exchange on these issues, and this could herald a new era of openness.

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PICTALK



First ship of the indigenous missile destroyers Project 15 of the Indian Navy, completes 26 years

Celebrating Kerala's 67 years of statehood



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

It has been a tumultuous journey for Kerala. A lot is happening in the state which does not augur well for its reputation. The big question is, where it is headed to?

The action of the self-styled guardians of secularism, socialism, democracy and renaissance in India, the CPI-M, reminds one of the adage that the fence itself is eating the crops. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his council of ministers, whose track record over the last 30 months has been a disaster, are jumping from the frying pan to fire. On 1st November 2023, Kerala turned 67 and the event was celebrated with fanfare and gaiety. The star-studded Keraleeyam, a socio-cultural-political event that cost the exchequer Rs 30 crore was the main attraction of the birthday of the State. Those who are uninitiated about the history of the State should understand that the Kerala that you see today came into being 67 years ago with the integration of Travancore, Kochi and Malabar province, a part of northern Kerala which was part of the then Madras presidency. While Chief Minister Vijayan was inaugurating the event at the central stadium at Thiruvananthapuram, thousands of government staff and pensioners staged a demonstration in front of the Secretariat, adjacent to the venue of the mega event, demanding salaries and pensions due to them. At the same time, officers of the State Government were filing an affidavit in the High Court of Kerala at Kochi confessing to the Court that the State is ruined financially. The Government owes the staff and pensioners of Rs 25,000 crore as arrears of salary and pension. The welfare pension inaugurated with fanfare remains unpaid, sending the people in the lower middle class and below the poverty line into a state of tippy. Vijayan says that Keraleeyam is an event to showcase Kerala to the outside world. The chief minister also said that the State is a role model for countries in Europe, East Asia and the United States of America "because of its social welfare measures" and the best health care offered to the poor and lower middle-class sections of the society. If the words of Vijayan are any indication, then there is no need to look beyond Kerala to understand what a



developed society is! The COVID-19 pandemic period saw the chief minister addressing the media every evening. He claimed that Kerala is the only State which recorded the minimum number of cases. The trumpeters of the chief minister and the then health minister Shylaja for the "excellent arrangement made in the State to check the spread of the pandemic and minimise the number of casualties. But soon it turned out that Kerala is one of the States with the maximum number of deaths and COVID-19 cases. Even an exclusive hospital built by the House of Tatas to attend to COVID-19 patients and gifted to the State remained unused for more than six months as there were no staff to take care of the 600-bed hospital. Despite these shortcomings, the CPI-M-led Left Democratic Front managed to return to power in the 2021 assembly election and that too with an increased majority. The CPI-M went out of the way and distributed free kits to all poor families and even to the expatriates from States



THE BOMB BLAST DURING JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' PRAYER MEETING HELD AT KALAMASSERY IS YET ANOTHER PROOF OF TERRORISTS GETTING THE UPPER HAND IN THE STATE

like Assam, Bengal and Bihar. But what was left unsaid was that the rice, cereals, sugars, and ghee/butter were from the Central Government which was repacked and distributed by the party cadre. In real life, the migrant labourers who claim that they are from Bengal, Bihar and Assam are from Bangladesh. There are nearly two lakh such workers in a small town like Perumbavoor. The LDF government in its anxiety to keep some sections in good humour addresses the migrant workers as Guest Labors. Since the arrival of this Guest Labor crime rates have shot up in the State. What adds to the worries of the average Malayali is that women are employed as drug pushers throughout Kerala. The bomb blast during Jehovah's Witnesses' prayer meeting held at Kalamassery on 29 October which claimed the lives of five persons is yet another proof of terrorists getting an upper hand in the State. Dominic Martin, the person who surrendered to the police claiming responsibility for the blast has made the bomb blast a jigsaw puzzle. Martin claimed that he belonged to

the Jehovah's Witnesses and perpetrated the crime because of the anti-national stance of the sect. What added to the conundrum was Martin's surrender to the police within two hours of the blast and the JW leadership rebutting his claim that he was a member of the sect. There are many unanswered queries concerning this blast. T A Sreekumar, the Kerala spokesman of JW said that at no point in time, Martin was a member of the sect. The police seem to be in a hurry to establish his role in the blast. The general impression about democracy is that despite dissidence and differences of opinion, the political system has a melodious harmony. But what Kerala feels right now is cacophony. According to B V Kumar, former director general of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and was described as the country's top sleuth, there is no God in God's Own Country of late as He has gone for gold smuggling which is rampant across the State and a monopoly "business" of a certain community. (The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SAFETY ON HILLY ROADS

Sir—I express deep sorrow for the loss of 37 lives in the tragic accident involving a passenger bus plunging into a 300-foot gorge in Doda district, J&K. My heartfelt condolences go to the bereaved families, and I extend wishes for a speedy recovery to the 19 injured. India, unfortunately, grapples with a high number of road accidents, with at least one out of 10 global road accident fatalities occurring in the country, as per the World Health Organisation. Driving and traveling on Indian hilly roads, especially in the northern regions, can be frightening due to poorly developed and maintained roads, inadequate infrastructure, unattended hazard zones without safety measures, heavy traffic, unfit vehicles, and reckless driving habits. To prevent accidents, safety must be the foremost priority. Addressing issues such as corruption, the apathy of concerned authorities, and fostering responsible driving habits is crucial for enhancing road safety in hilly terrains.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

MIGRANTS AS POLITICAL TOOL

Sir—To survive, chauvinism and far-right ideology first oppose refugees. Subsequently, they adopt racism and portray religious and caste minorities as threats to the nation. With these three pillars, conservative nationalism stands tall in the country and globally. However, politicians relying on these pillars face a deep shock when their false promises remain unfulfilled. For instance, Italy's PM Giorgia Meloni won the election promising to control refugees, but the number of illegal immigrants doubled during her tenure. Britain's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda was ruled illegal, causing a rebellion. Despite international conventions protecting refugees and migrants, politicians continue to exploit these issues for votes. Rishi Sunak's government should heed the Supreme Court's

India clears semi-final in style



The riveting encounter witnessed between India and New Zealand in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 semifinal was a testament to the sheer brilliance and sportsmanship of both teams, encapsulating the essence of cricketing excellence. The semi-final clash was nothing short of a roller-coaster ride, with both sides displaying exceptional skills, determination, and a relentless pursuit of victory. The electrifying atmosphere and intense com-

petition showcased the true spirit of cricket, captivating the hearts of millions of fans worldwide. India and New Zealand exhibited remarkable sportsmanship and resilience, contributing to a spectacle that will be etched in the memories of cricket enthusiasts for years to come. The teams' display of talent, strategic gameplay, and unwavering spirit illustrated the pinnacle of sportsmanship, regardless of the final result. Furthermore, amidst the nail-biting tension and exhilarating moments, the camaraderie and mutual respect between the players were exemplary, setting a positive example for fans and aspiring cricketers worldwide. Although the outcome may not have aligned with the expectations of many, both teams must be lauded for their exceptional efforts, dedication, and commitment to the sport. As cricket aficionados, we eagerly anticipate the upcoming matches and hope that the spirit of fair play and thrilling competition continues to flourish in the cricketing arena.

Maimul Safui | Howrah

decision and abandon the policy of sending asylum seekers to Rwanda. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

NEW KARNATAKA BJP CHIEF

Sir—After much dilly-dallying, the BJP high command has appointed BY Vijayendra, son of the party's Karnataka stalwart and former chief minister BS Yediyurappa (BSY), as the state party chief, replacing the incumbent Nalinkumar Kateel. Despite assertions to the contrary, it is clear that the relatively "inexperienced" Vijayendra, being a lingayat, was pitchforked to the post with an eye on the 2024 general elections and, of course, because of BSY. In hindsight, the decision is also a clear signal that the party cannot do without BSY in Karnataka. After the latter was forced to quit as chief minister in 2021, the lingayat com-

munity in the state, a solid party vote-bank, appeared miffed with the BJP notwithstanding the selection of another community bigwig, Basavaraj Bommai, as the chief minister; Bommai was no match for the charismatic and popular BSY. Despite BSY campaigning for the party, the results were there to see in the assembly polls, where the ruling BJP's tally nosedived to 66 from its earlier 121. Be that as it may, the young Vijayendra has a record of being a good organiser, leader, and the party is banking upon him to reorganise the ramshackle party in the days leading to the elections. His greatest strength is, of course, BSY. Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Circular economy: A win-win for all

In a world grappling with environmental challenges and resource scarcity, the concept of a circular economy has emerged as a beacon of hope

Do you know what happens to the millions of new products that are returned by online buyers for being faulty? Well they are disposed off and add to the height of landfill sites. But now the circular economy is changing this. It is an innovative economic model that offers a sustainable solution to the traditional linear economy, where resources are extracted, used, and disposed of. Circular economy focuses on minimising waste and maximising resource efficiency through recycling, reusing, and repurposing. The circular economy is not just a theoretical concept; it's being put into practice by businesses and governments around the world. It offers a transformative approach to economic activity that benefits both the environment and the society. By embracing the principles of durability, reusability, recycling, and sharing, we can shift away from our current linear economy, characterised by wastefulness and resource depletion. Businesses, governments, and individuals collaborate to create a more sustainable and prosperous



future for all. There is always excess inventory across multiple brands in the B2B market. Online e-commerce has only added to the returns and faulty products. Now many companies are working to provide these products after refurbishing and repacking them at a discounted price. Businesses, governments, and individuals must collaborate in transitioning towards a circular economy, aiming to forge a more sustainable and prosperous future for all. Specialising in managing excess inventory across various brands in the B2B market, many companies now offer solutions for liquidating surplus stock efficiently and effectively. They not only help the manufacturing company swiftly dispose of excess inventory, thereby freeing up valuable space and resources but also

help customers buy branded products at throwaway prices, not to mention that it helps the environment by keeping these products away from the landfills. "In addition to delivering a reliable and professional service, we take pride in its commitment to sustainability. By facilitating the resale and redistribution of excess inventory, we contribute to waste reduction and minimise the environmental impact of surplus stock. This commitment aligns with the growing trend towards sustainable and ethical business practices," says Yuvraj Aman Singh, founder of Rocking Deals, the company that specialises in refurbishing and repackaging branded products. Indeed, the circular economy model has a unique approach to the traditional buying and selling model, offering an eco-friendly and cost-effective alternative for consumers. This business model enables customers to save money by acquiring products at reduced prices, particularly beneficial for those seeking high-quality items at a more affordable cost. Emphasising

unboxed and pre-owned products also promotes a more sustainable lifestyle, aligning with the increasing awareness of the environmental impact of consumer choices. "Our business actively contributes to the circular economy by extending the lifespan of products that might otherwise end up in landfills. This approach not only benefits the environment but also reduces the demand for new products, subsequently lowering the resources required for their production," Says Yuvraj Aman Singh who fashioned Rocking Deals, on the circular economy model. It would be even better if the government also actively supported the concept by giving tax benefits and other sops to the people who become part of the circular economy, after all, they are helping the environment and reducing their carbon footprint. The circular economy is the way forward, a win-win for all – companies, customers and the environment! (The author is a development writer and a business coach, views are personal)



PRABHA GUPTA



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA-US DIALOGUE FOCUSES ON CONFLICTS

Ample time was dedicated to the various battles raging across geographies



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The recently concluded 2+2 dialogue between India and the US, underscores the warmth in the bilateral relations both countries have carefully nurtured in the last decade or so, in a bipartisan manner. It is by no means a coincidence that the dialogue took place, despite the US facing at least two, tough scenarios in Europe and West Asia, even as President Biden met his Chinese counterpart on the sidelines of the APEC summit this week. The dialogue established beyond doubt that the way forward plan for both countries is a firm reiteration of the role Indo-Pacific players (without China) will have to warm up to.

A joint statement issued post the dialogue read, "The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of a free, open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific and renewed their shared desire to consolidate their dialogue and collaboration through the Quad. They emphasised the important role of the Quad as a force for global good for the peoples of the Indo-Pacific. The Ministers look forward to India hosting the next in-person Quad leaders' Summit in 2024. The Ministers appreciated the ongoing efforts of the I2U2 countries to enhance food and energy security and improve the movement of people and goods across hemispheres. The Ministers also noted that the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor will enhance connectivity between Asia and Europe and will unlock new potential for economic growth in the two continents. They welcomed the relaunch of consultations between the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the U.S. Department of State on Africa, aimed at exploring potential trilateral cooperation in Africa. They also looked forward to convening the next round of East Asia Consultations between the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the U.S. Department of State at an early date."



The dialogue dedicated ample time to the various battles raging across geographies, straining fragile multilateral balances, pulling down the financial systems of many developing countries, especially in the global South and pushing deadlines for the crucial conversations on climate change and the shift to cleaner energy. On Ukraine and Israel, it seems, India and the US have come to the same page as the statement read "The ministers expressed mutual deep concern over the war in Ukraine and its tragic humanitarian consequences." They again underscored the growing impacts of this war on the global economic system and food security, with consequences predominantly affecting the global South. Both countries further pledged to continue humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine and concurred on the need for post-conflict reconstruction in Ukraine. Noting horrific terrorist attacks against Israel, the Ministers reiterated that India and the United States stand with Israel against terrorism and called for adherence to international humanitarian law, including about the protection of civilians."

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden met his counterpart Chinese President Xi Jinping, trying to diffuse the frostiness in the US-China relationship. China has chosen its sides on the geo-political chess board. It supports Russia's actions in Ukraine and is backing terrorists in West Asia. It would like to coerce fence-sitters to join its camp, vis a vis the US. India, like the US, faces a tough challenge, being in a democratic set-up, where they have to carefully articulate their foreign policy goals, while not hurting domestic influence groups. Both countries also face a tough electorate next year, as the incumbent federal governments seek re-election. The silver lining is that the business-as-usual attitude in the US India dialogue, signals a bright future for the bilateral relationship.

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

How to restore Palestinian dignity?

Only through unity within and among Arab countries can Palestinians achieve a life of dignity. Palestinians need life, like those in prosperous Arab countries



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

Under the shadow of violence and injustice, the Palestinian people face a heart-wrenching reality yet again. While Israel's actions are undeniably wrong, the collective assault and destruction inflicted upon Palestine could have been avoided without resorting to such brutal measures. However, abstract discussions and philosophical debates offer little solace to the families of those who have been kidnapped and murdered by Hamas. If our children were subjected to such atrocities, how would we react? How would we demand justice? The time for empty words and inaction has long passed. It is indisputable that the Palestinian people deserve to live in peace and security, free from the constant threat of violence. Yet, justifying Hamas's actions, regardless of funding sources or other factors, is equally reprehensible and misguided.

The debates surrounding the Palestinian struggle have long faded into the abyss of history. While the creation of Israel was undoubtedly a monumental injustice against the Palestinian people, such acts of oppression and manipulation are far from unprecedented. The hand of the powerful has repeatedly redrawn the political map of West Asia (Middle East), leaving the Arab people to navigate the treacherous waters of change and upheaval. What sets the Arab-Israeli conflict apart is the insidious brew of religious, cultural, and racial hatred, fueled by centuries of animosity and exacerbated by a series of devastating wars. The world, in its perplexing hypocrisy, simultaneously laments the dehumanising brutality of war while celebrating the prowess of victors and mocking the vanquished. After the Arabs' successive defeats, they became the punchline of jokes that echoed around the globe, their inferior military capabilities the subject of derision and disdain. Fueled by desperation and wounded pride, a few misguided souls embarked on a path of vengeance, their actions ultimately fueling the flames of terrorism and further enraging the international community.

The conflict's gravity lies not solely in its intractable nature but also in its strategic significance, with the region's vast oil reserves and the geopolitical chess match between global powers adding an explosive dimension. The existence of rogue terrorist organisations, with their shifting allegiances and unwavering determination to achieve their goals, further complicates the situation, transforming the region into a tinderbox ripe for the spark of international conflict. The Palestine-Israeli dispute is a tragic testament to the enduring power of prejudice, the destructive consequences of unchecked ambition, and the devastating impact of political manipulation. It is a conflict that demands urgent attention, a resolution that transcends the narrow interests of any one faction, and a commitment to fostering understanding and tolerance amidst the maelstrom of hatred and violence.

Look at the consequences of celebrating the Arab Spring. True that was not an unforeseen eruption, but rather the culmination of years of accumulated dissatisfaction with oppressive governance and economic stagnation. The uprisings were not primarily driven by the pursuit of democracy, but rather by fundamental necessities such as employment, food, and security. The United States and other Western powers



WITHIN HOURS OF HAMAS ATTACKS, NETANYAHU INITIATED A MILITARY OPERATION ON GAZA, RESULTING IN OVER A MONTH OF EMERGENCY. THE OUTCOME MAY SEE PALESTINIAN LAND DIMINISHING INTO ISRAEL

(The writer is a Sri Lanka-born journalist and author. He was the editor of Sri Lanka Guardian and worked as a Communications Consultant for the Government of Sri Lanka; views are personal)

were overly eager to embrace the uprisings, failing to comprehend the profound political and economic issues that had ignited them. The uprisings have resulted in a power vacuum in numerous regions of West Asia, which has been filled by extremist groups and authoritarian regimes. The United States' foreign policy in West Asia has been a significant contributor to the region's instability and requires significant rethinking.

In the current landscape, the question arises: What truly matters today? The hatred against Jews isn't about rallying against Israel but urging for Arab unity in times of need. It's not about eliminating Israel but finding a compromise for both sides, granting a chance for those exploited as propaganda tools to live. Attacking Israel doesn't significantly contribute to the Palestinian struggle; while Israel is wrong, it's essential to recognise that they aren't the sole perpetrators. They are paying the price for the actions of older generations now gone.

The Palestinian struggle to reclaim independence has been further hindered by a multitude of internal obstacles, including disunity, corruption, and systemic irregularities. These factors have undoubtedly exacerbated the protracted and complex nature of the conflict, arguably to a greater extent than Israel's preemptive strikes and strategic manoeuvres.

The deeply entrenched disunity among Palestinian factions has been compounded by ideological differences, personal rivalries, and the meddling of neighbouring Arab nations, who have exploited the Palestinian cause to advance their political agendas. The Palestinians have become mere pawns in a game of regional power politics, their aspirations for self-determination sac-

rificed at the altar of strategic interests. Similarly, corruption within Palestinian institutions fuels the flames of frustration and disillusionment, eroding public trust and legitimacy. Sectarian violence and human rights abuses tarnish the cause and complicate international support, rather than eliciting symbolic sympathy. These internal challenges intertwine with external factors like vested interests of neighbouring Arab countries, creating a labyrinth for the Palestinian people. The crisis in Palestine differs from Ukraine. Palestinians suffer not only from Israel but also from internal divisions and hypocritical Arab nations playing old colonial games. Yasser Arafat rightly noted, "The biggest enemy of Palestinians is the internal divisions among them." This tragedy isn't just due to Israeli occupation but also their own mistakes. The Hamas brutality sparked a new wave of attacks, but responsible parties in Palestine largely ignored this, focusing on pure hatred against Israel. This deep-rooted disunity burdens the people, not liberating them.

The sight of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, taking to the streets to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people, including American citizens, is truly inspiring. However, similar scenes have played out across the United States in response to the US's wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and other parts of West Asia. While these protests have been overwhelmingly popular, they have unfortunately failed to alter the course of US foreign policy. This is evident in the US's unwavering support for brutal embargoes against countries like Cuba and Venezuela, despite widespread opposition from even its closest allies. Yet, this is the first time in over 70 years, since the creation of Israel over Palestine that

such a groundswell of public support has emerged for the Palestinian cause. This surge of support is undoubtedly due to the Israeli government's disproportionate response to the most brutal attacks against Jews since the Holocaust. Within hours of the Hamas attacks, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu initiated a military operation on Gaza, resulting in over a month of emergency. The outcome may see Palestinian land diminishing into Israel. Criticising Israel's responses requires a recall of old political doctrines - a cruel attack doesn't demand a civilised counterattack. The ongoing conflict deepens crisis; the focus should be on resolution. Despite some analysts predicting the West's decline, this crisis presents an opportunity for the West to shift attention away from its ongoing international failures and the protracted conflict in Ukraine.

Arab nations with economic power rarely invest in Palestine, offering few employment opportunities. Palestinian leaders compromise unity for power, neglecting plans to uplift the poorest. Have any Palestinian political leaders compromised national unity to secure their power, despite continuing to fight like Kilkenny cats? Undeniably, collective punishment won't solve problems. Killing indiscriminately won't succeed; history proves it wrong. They murdered and buried the innocent, believing them to be truly dead. But in time, they will realise that they were seeds, a truth they never comprehended. Ceasing fire is imperative, but it alone cannot heal the wounds of this conflict. Only through unity within and among Arab countries can Palestinians achieve a life of dignity. Palestinians need life, like those in prosperous Arab countries.

Freebies, a surefire recipe for disaster

Due to political reasons, the Govt is less likely to be interested in curbing freebies, so other organs of the state like the judiciary should come forward to oppose it

Election is the time for political parties to inform voters about their policies and proposed programs, through their election manifestos. In the past, all political parties have been wooing voters with their promises in the form of programs, but the nature of election promises has changed in the last decade and a half. In these promises, instead of policies and programmes, the announcement of cash transfers and free schemes has taken precedence over policies and programs. Announcement of various freebies, including cash transfers to women, farmers, students and sometimes minorities and weaker sections, free electricity, free water, free travel to the entire women etc., has now become a common phe-



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

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nomenon. In Madhya Pradesh, apart from waiving off the loans of farmers, the Congress party has also announced many other free schemes like free electricity, gas cylinder subsidy, Rs 1500 per month to women, unemployment allowance of Rs 3000 to youth etc. Similar announcements have been made by different political parties in Madhya Pradesh and other states going into elections. Every possible effort is being made to woo the voters. In such a situation, it is a matter of concern, whether this is a healthy trend for our democracy. Will our governments be able to fund these free schemes? Will the debt burden on state governments increase **Increasing debt in states** This trend of freebies is now

spreading in many states of India. In the elections to be held this month, political parties have made a series of announcements of freebie schemes. We are hearing daily about free electricity, free transport, transfer of money to women, unemployment allowance to youth, etc. along with free vehicles and many other freebie schemes. Some time ago, the Reserve Bank of India and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) published data in their respective reports about the increasing debt of the states due to freebies and have expressed concern over these freebie schemes and rising debt burden of the states. According to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act,

the target debt-GSDP (gross state domestic product) Ratio, in any state, should not exceed 20 percent. But as per CAG, in most of the states of the country, this ratio is much more than the targeted one. It reached 48.98 per cent in Punjab, 42.37 per cent in Rajasthan, 37.39 per cent in West Bengal, 36.73 per cent in Bihar, 35.30 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, 31.53 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 27.80 per cent in Telangana, 27.27 per cent in Tamil Nadu and 26.47 per cent in Chhattisgarh. If the debt on state government enterprises and the guarantees given by the state government are also added, then by 2020-21 the debt to GSDP ratio in Rajasthan would be 54.94 per cent and in Punjab, it would be 58.21 per cent. In Andhra

Pradesh also it has been estimated at 53.77 per cent, it is 47.89 per cent in Telangana and 47.13 per cent in Madhya Pradesh. In West Bengal and Bihar, it's 40.35 per cent and 40.51 per cent respectively, and in Tamil Nadu, it is 39.94 per cent. CAG also reported that the debt of the states is continuously increasing compared to the target ratio. Regarding Andhra Pradesh, the Reserve Bank says that after Punjab, Andhra Pradesh is the second state in the country with the highest spending on free schemes. It is noteworthy that in Punjab, 45.5 per cent of the total tax revenue is being spent on free schemes and in Andhra Pradesh expenditure on freebies is 30.3 per cent of total tax revenue. Talking about the

state's GDP, in Punjab 2.7 percent of the state GDP is spent on free schemes annually and in Andhra Pradesh it is 2.1 percent. Apart from this, in Madhya Pradesh, 28.8 per cent of the tax revenue is spent on subsidies, and in Jharkhand, it is 26.7 per cent. **Impact on essential expenditure** When a province spends such a large proportion of its tax revenue on free schemes, not only capital expenditure on infrastructure would go down, due to increasing debt of the state governments, but social services like education and health as well as transport and other essential services will also be impacted. For the development of any state, it is imperative to increase investment in infrastructure. Lack of

infrastructure affects investment and hence the development of the state. Therefore, it is necessary to speed up the development of the country by curbing the free schemes offered by the states. **Impact on ratings** Due to increasing debt the economic rating of the country is being impacted. If this continues, our country will not only have difficulty in getting new investments but our companies and government will also have to pay higher rates of interest on borrowing from foreign countries. That is, increasing debt is not only creating fiscal imbalance but is also affecting the ability of state governments to run welfare schemes and is also blocking the path for the development of the country and industry in particular.

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Table with 3 columns: Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s), Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date, Property address. Includes entries for Anurag Nagpal, etc.

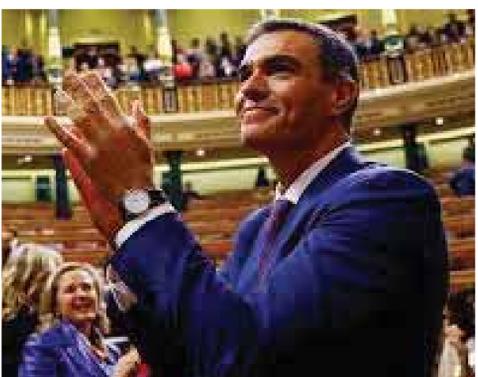
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Spain's Pedro Sanchez reelected PM

AP ■ MADRID

Spain's acting Socialist prime minister, Pedro Sanchez, was reelected by a majority of legislators in a parliamentary vote Thursday, allowing him to form a new minority leftist coalition government. Sanchez was backed by 179 lawmakers in the 350-seat lower house of parliament. Only right-wing opposition deputies voted against him. The vote came after nearly two days of debate among party leaders that centred almost entirely on a highly controversial amnesty deal for Catalonia's separatists that Sanchez agreed to in return for vital support to get elected prime minister again. Sanchez won the vote after clinching the support of six smaller parties — including two Catalan separatist parties — in recent weeks, allowing him to achieve the majority of lawmakers needed



to be reelected and form another minority coalition government with the left-wing Sumar (Joining Forces) party. Spain's inconclusive national elections on July 23 left a highly fractured parliament. The centre-right Popular Party received the most votes in the elections but failed to get enough support to form a government because of its alliances with the far-right Vox party, which finished third. The Socialists finished second with 121 seats. It remains to be seen if Sanchez can maintain enough support to last the next four years. The

amnesty deal that Sanchez's Socialists signed with two key Catalan separatist parties that command 14 votes would clean the slate for hundreds of Catalan separatists in legal trouble following the northeast region's illegal 2017 secession bid that sparked Spain's biggest crisis in decades. The amnesty law would benefit former Catalan regional president Carles Puigdemont, who is a fugitive from Spanish law and considered public enemy No. 1 by many Spaniards. Despite lingering disagreements, the two Catalan parties as well as two Basque ones said they would back Sanchez on Thursday but let him know that he must fulfil the economic and political deals reached with each of them. The two Basque parties pointed out that their support was also key to keeping a progressive government in power and making sure the right

wing remained out of office. Spain's judiciary has criticised the proposed amnesty. The European Union is reviewing it. The proposal sparked street protests backed by the Popular Party and Vox, which accuse Sanchez of betraying the nation just to stay in power. Protests outside the Socialist party's headquarters in Madrid turned ugly last week and again on Wednesday night. "The only real reproach that the right makes against us is that with these agreements we will have won the government. Which is what is going to happen today," Sanchez said prior to the vote. The speaker of the house will now convey the result to King Felipe VI. Once published in the State Gazette, Sanchez will be sworn as the new prime minister before the king, most likely on Friday.

Israel signals wider offensive in Gaza's south

AP ■ KHAN YOUNIS

Israeli forces dropped leaflets warning Palestinians to flee parts of southern Gaza, residents said Thursday, signalling a possible expansion of their offensive to areas where hundreds of thousands of people who heeded earlier evacuation orders are crowded into UN-run shelters and family homes. Meanwhile, soldiers continued searching Shifa Hospital in the north, in a raid that began early Wednesday. They displayed guns they say were found hidden in one building, but have yet to release any evidence of the central Hamas command centre that Israel has said is concealed beneath the complex. Hamas and staff at the hospital, Gaza's largest, deny the allegations. Broadening operations to the south — where Israel already carries out daily air raids — threatens to worsen an already severe humanitarian crisis in the besieged territory. Over 1.5 million people have

been internally displaced in Gaza, with most having fled to the south, where food, water and electricity are increasingly scarce. It's not clear where they could go, as Egypt refuses to allow a mass transfer onto its soil. The war, now in its sixth week, was triggered by a wide-ranging Hamas attack into southern Israel on October 7 in which the militants killed over 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and captured some 240 men, women and children. Israel responded with a weeks-long air campaign and a ground invasion of northern Gaza, vowing to remove Hamas from power and crush its military capabilities. More than 11,200 Palestinians have been killed, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, with most believed to be buried under the rubble. The official count does not differentiate between civil-

ian and militant deaths, and Israel says it has killed thousands of militants. The war has inflamed tensions elsewhere. On Thursday, gunmen shot and wounded four people at a checkpoint on the main road linking Jerusalem to Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. The three attackers were killed, according to police, who said the assailants had assault rifles, handguns and hatchets, and were preparing a large-scale attack in Jerusalem. Israeli troops stormed into Gaza's largest hospital Wednesday, searching for traces of Hamas inside and beneath the facility, where newborns and hundreds of other patients have suffered for days without electricity and other basic necessities. Troops searched the underground levels of the hospital on Thursday and detained technicians responsible for running its equipment, the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said in a statement.

UNSC adopts resolution calling for humanitarian pauses throughout Gaza

United Nations (PTI): The UN Security Council has called for urgent humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout Gaza to allow unhindered humanitarian access in the strip, finally overcoming deadlock and adopting a resolution in the month-long Israel-Hamas conflict. The 15-nation Council adopted a resolution on Wednesday that called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups, especially children, as well as ensuring immediate humanitarian access. The Malta-drafted resolution was adopted with 12 votes in favour, none against and three abstentions from Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

called for humanitarian pauses to allow full access for aid to the Gaza strip was vetoed by the US. US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield, in her explanation of the vote, said that the text does not include condemnation of Hamas but this is the first time the Council has ever adopted a resolution that "even mentions the word 'Hamas'." She said that while Washington fully supports the resolution's call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups, "ultimately, the United States could not vote yes on a text that did not condemn Hamas or reaffirm the right of all Member States to protect their citizens from terrorist attacks." UK's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Barbara Woodward said while the resolution is absolutely necessary, Britain "regrets" that the first resolution passed by the Council on the issue could not clearly condemn Hamas' terrorist attacks of October 7. "The barbarity of those attacks should be clear to us all. That is why we have abstained today. But let me be absolutely clear, it was vital and overdue for the Council to speak on this crisis and we strongly support the resolution's purpose: to get aid in, and hostages out," Woodward said. Russia's Permanent Representative Ambassador Vasily Nebenzia said that Moscow abstained on the draft resolution and "could not but respond to calls, including from countries in the region, for the Security Council to adopt at least some humanitarian pact. "That is the only reason why we turned a blind eye to the many shortcomings of the draft, the main one being the absence of a call for an immediate ceasefire."

Turkish panel to debate Sweden's NATO membership attempt

Ankara (Turkey) (AP): The Turkish Parliament's foreign affairs committee was scheduled on Thursday to start debating Sweden's bid to join NATO, drawing the previously non-aligned country closer to membership in the Western military alliance. Once green-lighted by the committee, Sweden's accession protocol will need to be ratified by Parliament's general assembly for the last stage of the legislative process in Turkey. Turkey has stalled ratifying Sweden's membership in NATO, accusing the country of being too lenient toward groups that Ankara regards as threats to its security, including Kurdish militants and members of a network that Ankara blames for a failed coup in 2016. Turkey has also been angered by a series of demonstrations by supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in Sweden as well as Quran-burning protests that roiled Muslim countries. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lifted his objection to Sweden's bid during a NATO summit in July and sent the accession protocol to Parliament for ratification last month. Turkey's reversal of its position came after Stockholm pledged deeper cooperation with Turkey on counterterrorism and to support Turkey's ambition to revive its EU membership bid. In addition, NATO agreed to establish a special coordinator for counterterrorism. NATO requires the unanimous approval of all existing members to expand, and Turkey and Hungary are the only countries that have been holding out. Hungary has stalled Sweden's bid, alleging that Swedish politicians have told "blatant lies" about the condition of Hungary's democracy. It was not clear when the bill would reach the full assembly, where Erdogan's ruling party and its allies command a majority.

Nevada's attorney general investigating fake electors in 2020 for Donald Trump

AP ■ LAS VEGAS

Nevada's attorney general is investigating six Republican electors who submitted a document to Congress falsely declaring Donald Trump the winner of the 2020 presidential election, a person with knowledge of the case said Wednesday. It was not immediately clear if the ongoing probe was a criminal or civil matter. But the probe adds to official scrutiny of fake electors in several swing states won by President Joe Biden in 2020, including investigations in Georgia, Michigan and Arizona. Fake electors were charged in Georgia and Michigan, and Trump faces charges both in Georgia and in a federal investigation of his conduct related to the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riot. The person was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. Politico and NBC News first reported the

existence of the investigation. Attorney General Aaron Ford, a Democrat, did not respond Wednesday to messages. He has said in the past that his office was cooperating and participating with a U.S. Justice Department investigation of the efforts to keep Trump in office. He told the Democratic Attorneys General Association last January he feared that making any comment would be seen as partisan. Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo, a Republican, vetoed a bill last June passed by the Democratic Legislature that would have made it a felony to falsely certify that a losing candidate has won an election. Among those who served as false electors in 2020 are current state GOP chairman Michael McDonald, national party committee member Jim DeGraffenreid, Clark County party chair Jesse Law and Shawn Meehan, a national and Douglas County committee member.

UK says its Rwanda migrant plan can still work after court defeat

AP ■ LONDON

Britain's interior minister said on Thursday that the UK government can revive its blocked plan to send asylum-seekers to Rwanda without breaching international law, with the first flights taking off next year. Home Secretary James Cleverly said the government is "absolutely determined" to begin Rwanda deportation flights before a national election that must be called by the end of 2024. Many legal experts said that the rushed thinking, and critics urged the government to ditch a plan they say is costing millions and harming Britain's international reputation. On Wednesday, the UK Supreme Court quashed the government's plan, saying Rwanda is not a safe country

where migrants can be sent. Britain's top court said asylum-seekers faced "a real risk of ill-treatment" and could be returned by Rwanda to the home countries they had fled. Despite the justices' unanimous verdict, the British government doubled down on the policy, which it says will deter people from around the world making life-threatening journeys across the English Channel in small boats. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said he would sign a treaty with the Rwandan government to close loopholes in the plan, including a block on Rwanda sending migrants home. The government says once that risk has been removed, it will pass a law through Parliament declaring that Rwanda is a safe country. Sunak also said he was

prepared to "revisit" international relationships to remove "obstacles" if the deportation policy continues to be blocked. Some members of the governing Conservative Party want the prime minister to take the country out of the European Convention on Human Rights if the Rwanda plan is stymied. Cleverly said he believed the plan could take effect without Britain leaving the European convention. The only countries ever to quit the rights accord are Russia — which was expelled after invading Ukraine — and Belarus. "I don't believe that will be necessary," Cleverly told the BBC. "We are taking action to address the specific deficiencies in the judgment... to make sure we are in conformity with international law." He said the government was confident that

"the legally binding treaty, which is binding on both countries, will be robust, will address the issues raised by the Supreme Court." Legal experts were skeptical. Jonathan Sumption, a former UK Supreme Court justice who is known as a conservative, said the government's strategy "won't work" because the government was asking Parliament "to change the facts." "The courts have perused hundreds of pages of documents to arrive at this conclusion. For Parliament simply to say the facts are different" would be constitutionally really extraordinary," Sumption told the BBC. Refugee law expert David Cantor said if the government failed to heed the Supreme Court, it would set "a very dangerous precedent."

US, China agree to resume military-to-military communications

PTI ■ WOODSIDE/BEIJING

US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping have agreed to resume high-level military-to-military communication and counter-narcotics cooperation as they met for four hours in a bid to establish a working relationship amidst Beijing's aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific region.

The two leaders also affirmed the need to address the risks of advanced artificial intelligence (AI) systems and improve AI safety through US-China government talks during their meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. Biden said since their last meeting in Bali, on the sidelines of the G20, the key members of the two governments have had important discussions on issues that matter to both the nations and to the world. "But as always, there's no substitute for face-to-face discussions. I've always found our discussions straightforward and frank, and I've always appreciated them," Biden said. Observing that he has known Xi for a long time, Biden said they haven't always agreed, which was not surprising to anyone. "But our meetings

have always been candid, straightforward, and useful. I've never doubted what you've told me in terms of your candid nature in what you speak. I value our conversation because I think it's paramount that you and I understand each other clearly, leader to leader with no misconceptions or miscommunication," said the US president. The two leaders exchanged views on key regional and global challenges, the White House said.

President Biden underscored the United States' support for a free and open Indo-Pacific that is connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient.

The President reaffirmed the United States' ironclad commitment to defending our Indo-Pacific allies. The President emphasised the United States' enduring commitment to freedom of navigation and overflight, adherence to international law, maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea and East China Sea, and the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, he said.

While the Chinese official media has announced the agreements reached between Xi and Biden, the Chinese leader in opening remarks at his meeting with the US President

pitched for reducing the stifling tensions between the top two economies, especially at a time when the Chinese economy was facing a slowdown which his government is struggling to fix. "It is unrealistic for one side to remodel the other. Conflicts and confrontations have unbearable consequences for both sides. I'm still of the view that major country competition is not the prevailing trend of current times and cannot solve the problems facing China and the United States," Xi said.

Xi also spoke of his concerns about the US policy towards Taiwan.

The Taiwan issue has always been the most important and sensitive issue in Sino-US relations, the US should hold on to its promise of not supporting "Taiwan independence", stop arming Taiwan, and support China's peaceful reunification, Xi told Biden.

"China will eventually be reunited and will inevitably be reunited," Xi said according to an official press release here.

On Taiwan, Biden repeated to Xi that he would not change the one-China policy, which he said previous US presidents had also upheld. He said he believes China will not interfere in the upcoming Presidential elections in



Taiwan. "I didn't expect any interference, any at all. We had that discussion as he was leaving," Biden said.

For his part, Xi called on the United States to "not scheme to suppress or contain China" during Wednesday's extensive talks, Chinese state media reported.

"China has no plans to surpass or unsettle the United

States, and the United States should not scheme to suppress or contain China," Xi said.

Biden was asked, given that his relationship with Xi goes back more than a decade, whether he trusted him.

"I trust but verify, as the old saying goes," he said. "We're in a competitive relationship, China and the United States, but my responsibility is to

make this rational and manageable so it doesn't result in conflict." In his opening comments, Xi called on China and the US to find the right way to get along with each other.

The problems facing human society cannot be solved without cooperation between major countries, Xi told Biden, according to an official press release here.

Xi invites Biden to join BRI in summit talks

PTI ■ BEIJING/WOODSIDE

Chinese President Xi Jinping has invited his US counterpart Joe Biden to take part in his pet global initiative the BRI and expressed his readiness to take part in the Washington-backed multilateral cooperative initiatives.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) initiated by Xi in 2015 in which China is reported to have invested over a USD trillion has been widely criticised by the US, India and other countries as several countries including Sri Lanka and Pakistan, its biggest beneficiaries, reeled under mounting debt burden. The US, India and many of the EU countries are not part of the BRI.

On the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September, Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with President Biden and other world leaders launched the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) to connect India, the Middle East and Europe with railways, shipping lines, high-speed data cables and energy pipelines.

In his four-hour-long meeting with Biden on Wednesday on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, termed as "strategic and historic" by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, President Xi did not directly refer to the IMEEC but said, "China is also ready to participate in US proposed multilateral cooperative initiatives".

On the back foot, as the Chinese economy reeled under a prolonged slowdown with a flight of FDI and supply chains, Xi is on a charm offensive in the US to woo the "good times" of China-US ties back.

His talks with Biden were

also seen as an effort to address apprehensions back home that the US and China were headed for a major confrontation.

Briefing the Chinese media on the Xi-Biden talks, Wang, who accompanied Xi, said "the two presidents had an in-depth exchange of views face-to-face. They offered views guiding the most pronounced issues confronting China-US relations, including adopting a correct perception of each other, properly managing differences, and advancing dialogue and cooperation".

"They had all-round discussions on addressing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Ukraine crisis, climate change, artificial intelligence and other global challenges," Wang said.

However, in his lengthy opening remarks at his summit with Biden as well as equally long speech at a banquet, Xi made no references to the US strategic heft into the Indo-Pacific and Beijing's oft-repeated allegation that Washington is inciting "bloc confrontation" against China by forming groupings like Quad (US, India, Australia, Japan) and AUKUS (Australia, UK and US). China is also peeved over the emerging close ties between the US and India.

Xi, 70, however, was blunt in asserting China's claims over the self-ruled Taiwan. The Taiwan question remains the most important and most sensitive issue in China-US relations. China takes seriously the positive statements made by the United States in the Bali meeting, "China will realise reunification, and this is unstoppable," he told Biden.

But at the same time, he called for jointly managing disagreements effectively and respecting each other's redlines.

Cameron meets Zelenskyy in first overseas visit as top UK diplomat

AP ■ KYIV

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday in his first overseas trip in his new job and pledged to continue providing military support for Ukraine's war effort for "however long it takes."

Cameron, a former prime minister who returned to government in a surprise appointment Monday in a Cabinet shuffle, said he wanted to make the trip to Kyiv his first diplomatic visit. "I admire the strength and determination of the Ukrainian people," he told Zelenskyy, according to a video posted by the president. Cameron said the UK would continue to provide moral and diplomatic support "but above all, the military support that you need not just this year and next year but however long it takes." Zelenskyy thanked Cameron for visiting. Zelenskyy has



tried to keep the world's focus on Ukraine's fight as attention has turned to the Middle East and Israel's war against Hamas. "A good meeting," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. "Weapons for the front, strengthening of

air defense, protection of our people and critical infrastructure. I am grateful to the UK for its support!" The UK has been one of the strongest supporters of Ukraine in defending itself from Russia. As of

last month, the UK said it was second to the US in providing military funds to Ukraine, giving 4.6 billion pounds (\$5.7 billion) worth of assistance and training 30,000 Ukrainian troops on British soil.

26 killed in fire at coal mining company building in China

Beijing (PTI): A fire ripped through a building of a coal mine company in north China's Shanxi province on Thursday, killing at least 26 people and injuring 38, state media reported. The fire started on the second floor of the five-story building located in Lishi District of Lyuliang City at around 6.50 am (local time). The on-site rescue operation ended at 1:45 pm (local time) on Thursday, according to the information office of the city.

An earlier report by the state-run Xinhua news

agency said 60 people were sent to the hospital for treatment. Chinese President Xi Jinping who is currently in the US has ordered all-out efforts to rescue the injured.

Xi, who is currently visiting the US, asked authorities to inspect and remove risks in key industries to safeguard people's lives and property as well as social stability, official media reported. The building belongs to a private coal mine company. Industrial accidents are common in China due to lax safety standards and poor enforcement, the report said.

4 militants killed in northwest Pak

Peshawar (PTI): Four wanted militants, including a "high-value terrorist commander", were killed by security forces in restive northwestern Pakistan, the army said on Thursday. During an intelligence-based operation in the general area, Badaber, Peshawar, the troops effectively engaged the militants and four terrorists were "sent to hell" including a "high-value terrorist commander", the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the army - said in a statement.

It identified the slain terrorists as Samiullah alias Shenay, terrorist commander Salman alias Ahmed, terrorist Imran alias Muhammad and

terrorist Hazrat Umar alias Khalid. The militants were "wanted by law enforcement agencies," it said.

"Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the slain men, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including extortion and targeted killings in the area," it added. In another operation on Thursday, an intense exchange of fire took place between terrorists and troops in the Kulachi area of the Dera Ismail Khan district. A soldier was killed in the operation. On Wednesday, seven terrorists were killed by security forces in an operation in the Tank district.

Cipher case: Pak court extends stay against jail trial of Imran

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan high court Thursday extended until November 20 the stay against the jail trial of former prime minister Imran Khan in the cipher case. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) bench comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz extended the stay during the hearing of 71-year-old Khan's intra-court appeal against the jail trial.

The appeal was filed against a single-member bench of the same court which last month upheld the trial of Khan in the Adiala Jail Rawalpindi where he has been incarcerated. According to Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, the IHC "extended the stay of the cipher case trial under official secret act till Monday, November 20".

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman is currently detained in Adiala jail in Rawalpindi on judicial remand. Khan's close aide and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, 67, who was also arrested in the cipher case is imprisoned in the same jail. Khan and Qureshi have pleaded not guilty to the charges. The caretaker government has approved the jail trial

of Khan and Qureshi in the case based on an alleged violation of the Official Secrets Act while dealing with a secret diplomatic cable by the Pakistan embassy in Washington in March 2022. The duo were booked by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in the case in August.

The single bench, led by IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, on October 16 had observed no apparent malice behind conducting Khan's jail trial in the cipher case and directed him to approach the trial court if his reservations persist. Subsequently, Khan filed an intra-court appeal against the single bench's decision. The purported cipher (secret diplomatic cable) contained an account of a meeting between US State Department officials, including Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South & Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu and Pakistani envoy Asad Majeed Khan last year.

Khan, who served as prime minister of Pakistan from August 2018 to April 2022, is accused of misusing the contents of the cipher to build a narrative that his government was ousted due to a conspiracy hatched by the US, a charge denied by Washington.

Cambodia inaugurates new Chinese-funded airport serving popular tourist destination of Angkor Wat

AP ■ SIEM REAP

Cambodia on Thursday inaugurated its newest and biggest airport, a Chinese-financed project meant to serve as an upgraded gateway to the country's major tourist attraction, the centuries-old Angkor Wat temple complex in the northwestern province of Siem Reap.

The Siem Reap-Angkor International Airport is located on 700 hectares (1,730 acres) of land about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Angkor Wat and boasts a 3,600-metre-long runway. It can handle 7 million passengers a year, with plans to augment it to handle 12 million passengers annually from 2040. The airport began operations October 16, with the first flight to land coming from neighbouring Thailand. The old airport it replaces was about 5 kilometres from the famous tourist

site. Thursday's inauguration was presided over by Prime Minister Hun Manet, Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Wang Wentian, the governor of China's Yunnan province, Wang Yubo, and other officials.

Speaking at the ceremony, Hun Manet said the old airport was located too close to the Angkor temples and it was feared that vibrations from passing flights were damaging their foundations.

Tourism is one of the main pillars supporting Cambodia's economy. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia received some 3.5 million international tourists in the first eight months of 2023, while for the whole of 2019 — the last year before the coronavirus pandemic — it received some 6.6 million foreign visitors. "Hopefully, 2024 will be the year of the beginning of the advance and rebirth of the

tourism sector in our Siem Reap province," Hun Manet said. China is Cambodia's most important ally and benefactor, with strong influence in its economy, shown by numerous Chinese-funded projects, hotels and casinos in the capital, Phnom Penh, and elsewhere around the country. China's state banks have financed airports, roads and other infrastructure built with Chinese loans. More than 40 per cent of Cambodia's USD 10 billion in foreign debt is owed to China.

The new airport, built at a cost of about USD 1.1 billion, was financed by Angkor International Airport (Cambodia) Co., Ltd., an affiliate of China's Yunnan Investment Holdings Ltd, under a 55-year build-operate-transfer deal. Yunnan governor Wang Yubo, speaking for the Chinese government, said the airport's launch showed the

deep friendship between the people of the two countries, while promoting bilateral economic ties.

The project is part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the ambitious programme that involves Chinese companies building transportation, energy and other infrastructure overseas funded by Chinese development bank loans. Its goal is to grow trade and the economy by improving China's connections with the rest of the world in a 21st-century version of the Silk Road trading routes from China to the Middle East and onto Europe. Another Chinese-funded airport is being constructed at a cost of USD 1.5 billion to serve the capital. The new Phnom Penh international airport, formally known as the Techo International Airport, is set on 2,600 hectares (6,425 acres) and scheduled for completion in 2024.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Mukesh Kumar Dawar and Mrs. Bharti Dawar are the unequivocal owners of Flat bearing no. A-2/308, Duplex on Third Floor and Fourth Floor, Category-HIG, Plinth area measuring 178 Sq. Mtrs., situated in the layout plan of Samant Bhadra Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd., also known as Sunrise Apartments, Plot No. 37, Sector- 13, Rohini, Delhi. This legal ownership was established through a Relinquishment Deed dated 29.08.2022 vide doc. No. 10338 executed by Mrs. Raj Rani Dawar, Relinquishment Deed dated 01.09.2023 vide Doc. No. 10195, executed by Mr. Sanjay Kumar Dhar, Mr. Pankaj Kumar Dawar and Mrs. Monika Khanna in favour of Mr. Mukesh Kumar Dawar and Mrs. Bharti Dawar dated 29.08.2023 vide Doc. No. 10302, executed by Mrs. Raj Rani Dawar in favour of Mrs. Bharti Dawar. Mr. Mukesh Kumar Dawar and Mrs. Bharti Dawar intend to transfer the ownership by way of Sale Deed of the aforementioned property to Mr. Hunny Gandhi and Mrs. Asha Gandhi. Subsequently, Mr. Hunny Gandhi and Mrs. Asha Gandhi are in the process of mortgaging the said property with RBL Bank Ltd. (Our Client). Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 7 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 7-day period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 7-day period by contacting Law Veritas: North Associates & Legal Consultants at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +910120-301683 /4562809; e-mail: accounts@vlnorth.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Shaktika Chawla W/o Late Sh Vidya Prakash Chawla, Cont. 9911923358, Email: manichawla08@yahoo.co.in, R/o DDA MIG Flat No 41-D Third Floor Block-A/N Shalimar Bagh Delhi issued by DDA in favour of my husband Late Sh P P Chawla have been lost. An F.I.R to this effect has been lodged in police station on dated 14/11/2023. Any person(s) claiming any right, having any objection or found in possession of original document may write/contact with above named person at above address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice & can personally contact: Deputy Director (IAS housing) MIG, D-Block, 3rd Floor, DDA Vikas Sadak, INA, New Delhi

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY E-TENDER CALL NOTICE. Name of the work: "Allotment of 06(Six) nos. of Mechanical Iron Ore/Iron Ore Pellet plots at IOHP." License Fees: Rs. 2,91,66,060. Wharfage Fees: Rs. 18,98,620/-.

UPSIDA कार्यालय प्रधान महाप्रबंधक (अभियन्ता)-एस. उ. राय अत्याधिक विकास प्राधिकरण, ए-1/4 लखनपुर, कानपुर. ई-निविदा सूचना. एवढादा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्रतिक्रिया के विनिर्णय जन्मने से स्थल औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में विद्युत विकास, अनुसंधान एवं रख-रखाव कार्य हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/परिषदों/नगर निकायों में पीडीएल विद्युत लाइसेंसों एवं अनुसंधान ठेकेदारों/परमों से ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है जो दिनांक 17.11.2023 को अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे से दिनांक 06.12.2023 को अपरान्ह 5:00 बजे तक अवलोकित की जा सकती है।

SC AGROTECH LIMITED. Regd Address: RZ-1484/28 Ground Floor Tughlakabad Ext New Delhi-110019. Email: sheel102@gmail.com, Web: www.scagrotech.com. Regulation 33 Financial Result of M/s SC Agrotech Limited. Statement of Standalone Audited Financial result for the Quarter and Half Year ended on 30th September 2023.

We are not out of woods yet and have miles to go: RBI on inflation

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A Reserve Bank Bulletin on Thursday said retail inflation has moderated due to monetary policy action and supply side interventions, but "we are not out of the woods yet and have miles to go". An article on the state of the economy in the November Bulletin also noted that the global economy is showing signs of slowing down in the ongoing quarter as manufacturing languishes while services sector activity appears to have reached the end of its post-pandemic expansion. Going forward, it said tightening financial conditions is a significant risk to the global outlook. "In India, the momentum of the change in GDP is sequentially expected to be higher in Q3, 2023-24, with festive demand remaining ebullient,"

the article authored by a team lead by RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra said. The authors said investment demand appears to be resilient with the government's infrastructure spending, an uptick in private capex, automation, digitalisation, and indigenisation providing a boost. Referring to the headline inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI), the article said a combination of monetary policy action and supply side interventions guided inflation down from the high reaches to which it had climbed through the first seven months of 2022-23. In fact, November 2022 was the first month when headline inflation dropped back into the RBI's tolerance band of 2-6 per cent in the whole calendar year. "We are not out of the woods yet and



have miles to go, but readings of around 5 per cent and 4.9 per cent in September and October, respectively, are a welcome relief from the average of 6.7 per cent in 2022-23 and 7.1 per cent in July-August 2023," it said. The RBI, however, said the views expressed in the article are of the

authors and do not represent the views of the central bank. The article further said India's external sector has remained viable, with a modest Current Account Deficit (CAD) financed by resilient capital flows, one of the least volatile currencies in the world and a healthy level of foreign exchange reserves. The momentum of growth has picked up, taking GDP well above pre-pandemic levels to becoming the fifth largest economy in the world at market exchange rates, it added. "Steadfast policy initiatives are showing results, with the financial sector exhibiting soundness and supporting the credit needs of a resurgent economy," it said. The 37th edition of the State of the Economy article marks the third year of its revival after a long hiatus of 25 years.

FPIs' investment value in Indian equities rises 15% to USD 651 bn in Sept qtr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The value of foreign portfolio investors' holdings in domestic equities reached USD 651 billion in the three months ended September 2023, which was 15 per cent higher than the year-ago period, according to a Morningstar report. This could be attributed to the good performance of the domestic equity markets as well as strong net FPI inflows. According to the report, the value of FPIs' investments in Indian equities rose from USD 566 billion as of September 2022 to USD 651 billion at the end of September 2023.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the value of such investment rose 4 per cent from USD 626 billion recorded in the three months ended June this year. Despite the growth, FPIs' contribution to Indian equity market capitalisation fell marginally during the quarter under review to 16.95 per cent from 17.33 per cent in the previous quarter. Picking up from the June

quarter, foreign investors continued their buying spree in the Indian equity markets for the most part of the September quarter with a net infusion of USD 5.38 billion. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pumped USD 5.68 billion into Indian equities in July on steady earnings growth recovery, stable macro fundamentals, and the challenges faced by the Chinese economy and concerns over its recovery. Additionally, the resilient state of the domestic economy and the markets amid global uncertainty also attracted foreign investors toward Indian equities. However, the pace of investments from FPIs ebbed substantially in August to USD 1.48 billion on concerns on the global macro front on the back of higher crude oil prices and the resurfacing of inflation risks. "The firming up of bond yields in the US also led some foreign investors to drift away from riskier markets in favour of the greater certainty and better risk/reward profile of US Treasuries."

Markets rally for 2nd day on IT stocks buying

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher for a second straight day on Thursday following gains in IT, tech and consumer durable shares amid a mixed trend in global equities. Softer-than-expected US inflation data and easing bond yields have also brought optimism in equity markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 306.55 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 65,982.48. During the day, it jumped

682.44 points or 1 per cent to 66,358.37. The Nifty gained 89.75 points or 0.46 per cent to 19,765.20. "The Indian market continued its positive resurgence, tracking global gains. Softer-than-expected US inflation data and easing bond yields have bought optimism that spending will emerge like in technology. "Taking the cues further, IT stocks showed a significant jump in the broader market. The market is sensing that export-based sectors like IT

and pharma could be future winners. While cut in inflation will also benefit domestic placed staples and consumer sector," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Among the Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra and Bajaj Finserv were among the major gainers. Axis Bank, Power Grid, ITC and ICICI Bank were the major laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.52 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.52 per cent. Among the indices, IT jumped 2.59 per cent, teck rallied 2.13 per cent, healthcare (0.98 per cent), realty (0.98 per cent), oil & gas (0.84 per cent), telecommunication (0.68 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.64 per cent). FMCG, bankex and metal were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul settled in the green, while Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

Sahara matter will continue even after Roy's death: Sebi

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Sebi chairperson Madhavi Puri Buch on Thursday said the Sahara matter will continue for the capital markets regulator even after the death of the group's founder Subrata Roy. Roy died in Mumbai on Tuesday after a prolonged illness at the age of 75. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a FICCI event, Buch said for Sebi, the Sahara matter was about an entity's conduct and added that it will continue regardless of whether an individual is there or not. When asked why the refunds have been too less, Buch said the monies were returned through a Supreme Court-appointed committee basis the evidence of the claims made by investors. It has been reported that refunds

of only Rs 138 crore have been made to investors even though Sahara group was asked to deposit over Rs 24,000 crore with Sebi for further refund to investors. Sahara group has faced many allegations, including that of running a Ponzi scheme. Troubles for Roy started in November 2010 with Sebi asking two entities of Sahara group not to mobilise funds from equity markets or from issuance of any security to the public while restraining Roy from approaching the public for raising money. Roy was arrested in 2014 on the orders of the Supreme Court after he failed to appear before it in a contempt case arising out of non-refund of more than Rs 20,000 crore to investors by the two companies.

BUSINESS BRIEF

REVLON INDIA PLANS NEW HEIGHTS

NEW DELHI: Revlon India plans to take business to New Heights with Meghna Modi at the helm of affairs. Eldest daughter of the Chairman, Umesh Kumar Modi, Meghna is a graduate of London Business School and Harvard Business School. She worked at Bain Consulting in Boston, before coming back to India.



NFL EDUCATES FARMERS ABOUT USE OF DRONES

NOIDA: As a part of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) of the Government of India, NFL is educating farmers about the use and benefits of the drones in agriculture sector. The company is participating in the drone campaign in the tribal districts in the states of J&K, HP, Bihar and West Bengal. The company has taken drones to the rural areas in these states and is doing demonstrations in the fields with these drones.

ATS HEIGHTS PRIVATE LIMITED

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ANNEXURE I

Format for publishing financial results in newspapers
[Regulation 52 (8), read with Regulation 52 (4), of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015]
(Amounts in INR Lakhs, unless otherwise stated)

S. No.	Particulars	For the Quarter ended	For the Quarter ended	For the Year ended
		30.09.2023 Unaudited	30.09.2022 Unaudited	31.03.2023 Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	1.13	22.92	26.19
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	(14.62)	(17.90)	(427.77)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	(14.62)	(17.90)	(427.77)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	(12.27)	1.17	(280.79)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(12.27)	1.17	(280.79)
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	1.00	1.00	1.00
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	(2,762.54)	(2,496.83)	(2,739.74)
8	Securities Premium Account	-	-	-
9	Net worth	(2,761.54)	(2,495.83)	(2,738.74)
10	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	2,27,939.41	2,15,204.20	2,18,477.59
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-	-
12	Debt Equity Ratio	(68.70)	(86.23)	(71.56)
13	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -			
	1. Basic:	(122.72)	11.65	(2,807.90)
	2. Diluted:	(122.72)	11.65	(2,807.90)
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-
15	Debenture Redemption Reserve	-	-	-
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	(0.002)	(0.0004)	(0.012)
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	(0.09)	(0.005)	(0.030)
18	Current Ratio	1.06	1.10	1.08
19	Long Term debt to working capital	1.01	0.93	0.93
20	Bad Debts to Account Receivable ratio	NA	NA	NA
21	Current liability ratio	0.93	0.90	0.91
22	Total debts to Total assets	0.60	0.78	0.65
23	Debtors Turnover Ratio	NA	NA	NA
24	Inventory Turnover Ratio	NA	NA	NA
25	Operating Margin %	NA	NA	NA
26	Net profit margin %	-1086%	-1514%	-1072%

Note

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/annual financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly/annual financial results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s) and the listed entity.
- For the other line items referred in the Regulation 52 (4) of the Listing Regulations, pertinent disclosures have been made to the Stock Exchange(s).
- # - Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of Profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules / AS Rules, whichever is applicable.

Getamber Anand

SD/-
Director
Date: 14-11-2023
Place: Noida

Rajesh Raizada

SD/-
Director
Date: 14-11-2023
Place: Noida

ATS INFRABUILD PRIVATE LIMITED

CIN: U45400DL2007PTC168922

ANNEXURE I

Format for publishing financial results in newspapers
[Regulation 52 (8), read with Regulation 52 (4), of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015]

S. No.	Particulars	For the Quarter ended		For the Year ended
		30-09-2023 Unaudited	30-09-2022 Unaudited	31-03-2023 Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	145.00	146.19	2,196.80
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items*)	(100.09)	(80.35)	(1,305.74)
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items*)	(100.09)	(80.35)	(1,305.74)
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items*)	(100.29)	(70.74)	(1,320.39)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after Tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after Tax)]	(100.29)	(70.74)	(1,314.29)
6	Paid-up Equity Share Capital	1.00	1.00	1.00
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	(2,475.57)	(1,037.42)	(2,280.02)
8	Net worth	(2,474.57)	(1,036.42)	(2,279.02)
9	Paid-up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	16,270.32	16,061.00	16,064.14
10	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-	-
11	Debt Equity Ratio*	(0.92)	(15.50)	(7.05)
12	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -			
	1. Basic: (in Rs)	(1,002.91)	(707.39)	(13,203.94)
	2. Diluted: (in Rs)	(1,002.91)	(707.39)	(13,203.94)
13	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-
14	Debenture Redemption Reserve	0.00	0.00	-
15	Debt Service Coverage Ratio*	(0.038)	(0.043)	(0.441)
16	Interest Service Coverage Ratio*	(0.27)	(0.22)	(0.90)
17	Current Ratio	0.88	1.56	1.49
18	Long Term Debt to Working Capital Ratio	-	0.95	1.06
19	Bad Debt to Accounts Receivable Ratio	-	-	-
20	Current Liability Ratio	1.00	0.59	0.60
21	Total Debt to Total Asset Ratio	0.05	0.36	0.36
22	Debtor Turnover Ratio	2.07	2.23	40.98
23	Inventory Turnover Ratio	0.003	0.002	0.08
24	Operating Margin	-141.62%	-114.40%	-79.90%
25	Net Profit Margin	-69.17%	-48.39%	-60.11%

Note:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/annual financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly/annual financial results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s) and the listed entity.
- For the items referred in sub-clauses (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the Regulation 52 (4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the pertinent disclosures have been made to the Stock Exchange(s).
- # - Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of Profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules / AS Rules, whichever is applicable.
- * - The pertinent items need to be disclosed if the said disclosure is required as per Regulation 52 (4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.
- Previous periods figures have been reclassified wherever considered necessary

For and on behalf of Board of Directors of
ATS Infrabuild Private Limited

SD/-
Getamber Anand
Director
DIN- 00120610

SD/-
Naveen Joshi
Director
DIN- 07922648

Place: Noida
Date: 14.11.2023

SHOOTING FEDERATION SLASHES BONUS POINTS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) will award just two bonus points to Olympic quota winners in fire-arm category and one to air weapons shooters after making a major amendment to its selection policy for the 2024 Paris Games. Earlier, an Olympic quota winner earned as many as 10 bonus points for clinching a World Championship gold, while a fourth-place finisher got five points. Similarly in World Cups, a gold medallist earned six bonus points, a silver medallist four and a bronze medallist two. These bonus points gave shooters who earned quota places for the country in events such as the World Cups, World Championships and Asian events, a huge advantage over other Olympic aspirants, who could not cover that gap in trials to select the squad for the global showpiece. The federation, its hands tied by its own policy, was also left with no choice but to send athletes with the most points even when it knew they were not in the best of form. But with shooters going without a medal in the last two Olympics -- 2016 Rio and 2020 Tokyo -- the NRAI has amended the policy. As per the amended policy, only



one or two bonus points, depending on the event, will be added to the average of three scores for quota winners in Olympic trials, which the federation will conduct in May to select the squad for the showpiece event. The NRAI governing body, in its meeting on Wednesday, decided that the final average score (FAS) will be the average of the three best Olympic selection trial scores out of four trials to which the bonus point will be added. An Olympic quota in shooting is won by the country and not by an individual. However, not taking away from their effort of winning a quota for the country, the federation will still give a bonus point to quota winners,

while also ensuring the gap between them and the next in line is within limits in a sport where scores in decimals can make a difference between victory and defeat. The events that come under the category of air weapons are 10m air pistol and 10m air rifle, while events such as 50m rifle 3-positions, sports pistol and rapid-fire pistol come under the fire-arm category. "The policy is based on each shooter getting Final Average Score (FAS). The FAS will be computed by taking the average of the top 3 Olympic selection trials scores plus the (Olympic) quota bonus point (QBP) to arrive at FAS," read the amendment. This means only 0.33 bonus points in air gun and 0.66

in fire-arm events per trial will be added to the Olympic quota winners' FAS. "This (NRAI technical) committee does not wish to take away the individual achievement of the sportsperson from achieving this laudable milestone of winning an Olympic quota place. "The winner of the quota place will be entitled to get Quota points while calculating FAS -- fire arm events (2 points), air gun events (1 point). "Similar points will also be available to the shooter, who was eligible to win a quota but was not awarded as India had already earned maximum of two quotas, provided the rank of the shooter was within first three ranks (in quota-winning

tournaments). "All such shooters will be deemed to be Quota holders and will enjoy all the privileges and benefits of Quota holders." In shooting sport, a country is eligible to win only two Olympic quotas per discipline. In some disciplines, such as men's and women's 50m rifle 3-positions, Indian shooters have already earned those slots each for the country. With several Olympic qualifying events still to go, those winning medals in them will be treated at par with the quota winners and be awarded bonus points as per the amended policy. The federation also set the eligibility for the Olympic selection trials in May, which will be a competition between the top-five shooters in each category. They will include, "All Quota Holders/Deemed Quota holders of an event; an athlete whose domestic ranking is between 1 and 3 and has participated in two ISSF Championships... "An athlete whose ISSF Qualification Ranking for Olympics points are amongst the top 3 shooters (Indian) after the conclusion of ISSF Final Qualification Championship (Rifle & Pistol) in April 2024; an athlete whose domestic ranking is 4 or 5."

Bhullar takes sole lead at Indonesian Masters

PTI ■ JAKARTA

Ace Indian golfer Gaganjeet B. Bhullar on Thursday shot a stunning bogey-free eight-under-63 in the first round to grab sole lead at the BNI Indonesian Masters here at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club. Bhullar, who has won four of his 10 Asian Tour titles in Indonesia, put himself ahead of countryman Honey Baisoya, Phachara Khongwatmai from Thailand and American Paul Peterson, all made a round of 65. Bhullar's previous wins in Indonesia came in the President Invitational (2009) and the Indonesia Open in 2013, 2016 and 2022. Starting with a birdie on the 10th, Bhullar added two more on the 17th and the 18th holes to turn in 3-under. He added five more on his second nine, the front side of the course on the third, fourth, sixth, eighth and ninth for a sizzling 63.



The 35-year-old said: "The whole year I have been feeling strong mentally and physically. Though I have been playing well but not really delivering, I am sure my subconscious mind will figure it out." Bhullar said an adjustment to his putting helped him trigger the windfall of birdies. "I figured out something with my stroke on the first few holes and kept on repeating the same action. In the end, the result was eight under par. It

was more to do with the way I was looking at the lines. "I changed the way I was visualising the putt. Nothing changed in my stroke, just the ability to change reading the lines from a different point of view," he explained. Baisoya, who is currently 77th on the Merit List, and looking to get into Top-65 to ensure playing rights for 2024, brought home a round of 65 with seven birdies and one bogey. Peterson had six birdies and no bogeys, while Phachara had five Indians, Karandeev Kochhar, SSP Chawrasia, Veer Ahlawat, Rashid Khan and Yashas Chandra carded 2- under 69 each to be tied 30th on a low-scoring opening day. Ajeetesh Sandhu (70) was tied 51 while S Chikkarangappa (71) was tied 69. But things did not go well for Anirban Lahiri, who after 2-over 73 was tied 94 and Shiv Kapur, still struggling with an injury, shot 6-over 77.

Prannoy loses in Japan Masters

PTI ■ KUMAMOTO (JAPAN)

Indian shuttler HS Prannoy lost a closely-fought second round match against Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei to bow out of the Japan Masters Super 500 badminton tournament here on Thursday. The Asian Games bronze medallist Indian, who returned to action after recovering from a back injury, squandered an opening game advantage to lose 21-19 16-21 19-21 to world no. 12 Chen in a 73-minute men's singles match that went down the wire. Prannoy's defeat brought curtains on India's campaign at the tournament. The world number 8 Indian looked in control in the first

game as he opened up a 4-0 lead and managed to stay 11-8 ahead at the break. Chen kept fighting to keep himself close but Prannoy sealed the opening game. Chen got his act together after the opening reversal and took 5-0 lead quickly. Though Prannoy managed to draw parity at 10-10, Chen reeled off four quick points to create a gap, which the Indian couldn't bridge. The Chinese Taipei player carried the momentum in the decider, leading 12-4 at one stage. Soon Prannoy produced his trademark fight-back to slowly and steadily draw parity at 19-19. Chen, however, recovered in the nick of time to win the decider 21-19 and pocket the match.

Israel, Switzerland draw in Euro qualifier

AP ■ FELCSUT

A European Championship qualifying game between Switzerland and Israel ended with a 1-1 draw, a match that brought the Israeli team to Hungary after all scheduled games in Tel Aviv were postponed due to the Israel-Hamas war. The match was one of two "home games" Israel is hosting in Felcsut, a Hungarian village of around 1,900 people, as it chases a qualifying place in the Euro 2024 continental championship. If the team qualifies, it will be its first time since joining the European soccer federation in 1994. Ahead of the game, fans draped in Israeli flags gathered outside the heavily-guarded stadium, singing chants as their team's bus arrived. The mood was celebratory, but some fans - some of whom traveled from as far away as Israel to attend the match - were solemn in describing the significance of the contest. "We're going through a very, very difficult time right now, and it just felt right," said Aaron Morali, an Israeli fan who drove two hours from Vienna, Austria to watch the game. "We're Jewish, we're here... It was very important for us to come here."

Some fans in the stands held up signs bearing the faces of Israelis kidnapped during the Oct. 7 Hamas assault inside Israel that killed around 1,200 people. As fears of antisemitic acts are on the rise across Europe, the security of the Israeli team was a decisive factor in bringing the rescheduled qualifying games to Hungary. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has a holiday home only steps away from the 3,500-seat Pancho Arena in Felcsut, has long claimed that Hungary is one of the safest places in Europe for Jewish people, and maintains close relations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. As the game approached, heightened security transformed the ordinarily quiet village, making the presence of police and other security forces apparent to local inhabitants. "The village is a bit upside down, everybody going in and out of the facility is checked," said Riccardo Mate, a Felcsut resident. After Wednesday's game, Israel remains in third place in Group I of Euro 2024 qualifying, behind Switzerland and Romania with 16 points each. The top two teams automatically qualify for Euro 2024 in Germany.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that Mrs. Kanchan Parjivan & Mrs. Sona Bhutan (hereinafter referred to as the said Mortgagees/Borrowers) are the absolute owners of Entire Second Floor, built on Plot No. E-26, admeasuring 220 Sq. Yrds., Mansarovar Garden, Delhi (hereinafter referred to "said property") by virtue of Sale Deed dated 10.01.2020 regd. as Doc. No. 4391, Previous Original Sale Deed executed by Mrs. Bharat Builders in favour of Smt. Asya Kaur, SMC of Late Sham Lal Makhaia & estamp certificate no. IN-DL57537/1026734S dated 03.07.2020 of SPA 08.05.2020 have been misapplied. The Borrower will create mortgage in respect of the said property in favour of our clients Indusind Bank Limited, New Tower, 8th Floor, Hyatt Regency Complex, Block-A, District Centre Bhikai Cama Place, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110066.

Any person who finds the said documents should intimate the undersigned and if any person, Bank/IF has any claim or objection in respect of the said property are hereby called upon to intimate to the undersigned within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice. If any such documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, of such person, Bank/IF shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Any objections raised after the completion of the 10 days shall not be binding upon the said property or my client.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas, Sola Developers Pvt. Ltd. company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956, having its office at HS-16, Kalash Colony, New Delhi-110048 is in the process of undertaking the development of Commercial Plot/City Colony in Sector-48, Faridabad, Haryana over a licensed area measuring 2.74375 acres, vide License No. 79 of 2022, dated 24.06.2022 falling in the revenue estate of village Khan Kalling in addition to already licensed area 0.925 acres, vide license no. 80 of 2023, dated 13.04.2023 and 3.64375 acres, license no. 191 of 2023, dated 21.09.2023 making total licensed area 7.3125 acres in Sector-48, Faridabad, Haryana granted by the Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh.

And whereas, there is no third party right has been created in the said Commercial Plot/City Colony. And whereas, the earlier approved layout plans is now proposed to be revised by the office of Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana Chandigarh. And whereas, the office of Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana Chandigarh has required seeking of objection against the revision of layout plan of 3.66875 acres & 3.64375 acres and approval of proposed layout plan of total area 7.3125 acres as a pre-condition for allowing such proposed and revision in the layout plans. Accordingly, vide this public notice objections are hereby invited from any of the allottees in the said colony on the proposed and revision of the layout plan of the said colony. A copy of the proposed and revised layout plan, approved in-principle and earlier approved layout plan, no. 9139 dated 13/04/2023 & 9629 dated 21/09/2023 available for perusal on our website i.e., www.sohagroup.in. The said layout plans also be perused at the office of undersigned as well as in the office of District/Senior Town Planner, Faridabad, HUDA Complex, Sector-12, Faridabad.

CORRIGENDUM
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Demand notice publication under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. 0002050035058031405006673 & 000255000044NAME of the Borrower M/s BODY DRENCH INDIA PVT. LTD. PANKAJ ARORA (DIRECTOR), & were the Demand notice dated February 23, 2023 & its publication July 26, 2023 published at Pioneer (English) & Pioneer (Hindi), July 26, 2023 published at The New Indian Express, Bengaluru (English) & Vijayavani, (Vernacular language), July 27, 2023 published at The Free Press Journal, Mumbai (English) & Navshakti (Vernacular language) under the securitization, reconstruction of financial asset and enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the power conferred under section 13(2) the property address mention in the entire sarfaesi proceedings is 1103 AND 1104, 11TH FLOOR SAS TOWER TOWER-B SECTOR-38, GURGAON 122001, respectively. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said the Property address mention in above mention notice and it's publication is 1103 AND 1104, 11TH FLOOR SAS TOWER TOWER-B SECTOR-38, GURGAON 122001, instead of COMMERCIAL PROPERTY NO-1103 (ALONG WITH TWO CARS PARKING SPACE) AND 1104, 11TH FLOOR SAS TOWER TOWER-B SECTOR-38, GURGAON HARYANA We therefore, request you to please read the same as COMMERCIAL PROPERTY NO-1103 (ALONG WITH TWO CARS PARKING SPACE) AND 1104, 11TH FLOOR SAS TOWER TOWER-B SECTOR-38, GURGAON HARYANA.

Date : November 17, 2023
Place : Gurgaon
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

CORRIGENDUM
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

1. Demand notice publication under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. 0083050119711Name of the Borrower KRISHNA STEEL CORPORATION, NARESH KUMAR SINGHAL, KUSUM SINGHAL & were the Demand notice dated June 19, 2023 & its delivered dated June 24, 2023 & Symbolic possession notice dated November 21, 2022 & its publication dated November 24, 2022, Pioneer (English) & Pioneer (Hindi) under the securitization, reconstruction of financial asset and enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the power conferred under section 13(2) the property address mention in the entire sarfaesi proceedings is PLOT NO 59 IN (KHASRA NO 50/41/2 & KHASRA NO 43/24/2/1, KHEWAT NO 52/107, PLOT NO 118A/108), NEAR RAILWAY CROSSING, DHARAM KANTA RD, MUJESSAR, FARIDABAD 121001 & PLOT NO-114 SEC-21C FARIDABAD HARYANA FARIDABAD 121001, respectively. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said the Property address mention in above mention notice and it's publication is PLOT NO 19 (KHASRA NO 50/41/2 & KHASRA NO 43/24/2/1, KHEWAT NO 52/107, PLOT NO 118A/108), NEAR RAILWAY CROSSING, DHARAM KANTA RD, MUJESSAR, FARIDABAD 121001 & PLOT NO-114 SEC-21C FARIDABAD HARYANA FARIDABAD 121001. We therefore, request you to please read the same as PROPERTY NO:-1- PLOT NO-19, SITUATED AT KHASRA NO.50/41/2,VAKA MAUJA MUJESSAR TEHSIL BALLABHGARH DISTRICT FARIDABAD HARYANA NEAR RAILWAY CROSSING, DHARAM KANTA ROAD, SALE DEED NO. 4197 DT 18.07.2021, PROPERTY NO. 2- LEFT SIDE HALF PORTION OF LOT NO-5, OUT OF TOTAL PLOT AREA 170.5 SQ YARDS ONLY 164 SQ YARDS AREA TRANSFERRED SITUATED AT SITUATED AT KHASRA NO-43/24/2/1, KHEWAT NO-52/107 VAKA MAUJA MUJESSAR TEHSIL BALLABHGARH DISTRICT FARIDABAD HARYANA OR ALLIHS PLOT NO-118A/108 KHASRA NO-43/24/2/1, KHEWAT NO-52/107, VAKA MAUJA MUJESSAR TEHSIL BALLABHGARH DISTRICT FARIDABAD HARYANA NEAR RAILWAY CROSSING, DHARAM KANTA ROAD, MUJESSAR, FARIDABAD HARYANA, SALE DEED NO. 4289 DT 20-07-2011, PROPERTY NO.3- PLOT NO-114, SEC 21C, FARIDABAD HARYANA, REG NO.-20301 DT 10.03.2010.

Date : November 17, 2023
Place : Faridabad
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

ICICI Bank						
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No 23, Shal Tower 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi- 110005						
PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET						
[See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of movable assets						
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Movable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.						
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described movable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder:						
Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrowers/ Guarantors	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00034874752 UVPUN00041122284	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET0681 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5650765.2 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
2.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00034889485 UVPUN00041122262	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1063 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5744425.4 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
3.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00034889542 UVPUN00041122306	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1061 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5744425.4 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
4.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00034889700 UVPUN00041122265	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1062 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5744425.4 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
5.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035024940 UVPUN00041122158	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1416 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
6.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035024948 UVPUN00041122149	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1415 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
7.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035024964 UVPUN00041122182	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1419 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
8.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035024971 UVPUN00041122207	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1420 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
9.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035024984 UVPUN00041122134	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1412 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
10.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035025005 UVPUN00041122109	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1413 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
11.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035025012 UVPUN00041122112	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1409 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5857240.2 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
12.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035025021 UVPUN00041122128	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1410 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
13.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035027693 UVPUN00041122101	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1411 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5851874.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
14.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035054044 UVPUN00041122238	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1423 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5955672.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
15.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035054053 UVPUN00041122086	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1421 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5963965.26 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
16.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035054069 UVPUN00041122220	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1422 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5963965.26 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
17.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035054113 UVPUN00041122248	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1424 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5963442.1 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
18.	Empire Transport Services Ltd (Borrower) M P Enterprises And Associates Ltd, Abhishek Madhukar Pathak (Co Borrower)- LAN No. LVPUN00035025002 UVPUN00041122191	JBM CITY LIFE BUS CNG BS IV AC Registration No.: UP16ET1418 Mfg: 2016	Rs. 5858071.9 as on November 16, 2023	Rs. 17,50,000/-	December 01, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM	December 22, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link - <https://bidkaro.net>) of our auction agency BidKaro. The Mortgages/ notices are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till December 21, 2023 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule. The Prospective Bidders must submit their offer along with Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) in a sealed envelope that mention "Offer for purchase of Asset" to ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No 23, Shal Tower 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110005, on or before December 21, 2023 before 05:00 PM. The marketing agency Bidkaro, 4th Floor, 419, D Mall, Sec 10, Rohini, Delhi-110085 has also been engaged as auctioneer for proper conduct of auction. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi. For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Bank Limited on 8584874809/ 9372730494/ 8126013708 or BidKaro on 9990710226. Tenders which are acknowledged by the Bank/e-auction vendor official and registered before the cut-off time with complete details shall only be considered for auction. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s



ROHIT THE LEADER DESERVES THIS WORLD CUP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

How many hundreds did Rohit Sharma miss in this World Cup? At least five if not more. But how many hearts did he win with his new found no-holds barred attacking approach? May be a billion. With a perfect balance between head and heart, Rohit has taken India into the tournament final. The high-risk approach has cost him personal milestones but having put team above self, the 'Hit-Man' didn't deviate from his game-plan as he is on a mission to complete what he termed at the start as unfinished business. He will be 36 years and 203 days old on November 19, a day which would possibly be his 'last dance' and effectively a last chance to win the coveted 50 over World Cup title. The next 50-over World Cup is too far away and someone that oozes practicality from literally every bone of his body, it would be a long shot to think that at 40 he would be game to play 100-over per day matches in 2027. Hence November 19, 2023, could be the 'Red Letter Day' in 16 and half years of Rohit's chequered career punctuated with lot of ups and downs. "In the next two months, I want to create a lot of memories with this team," Rohit had told PTI



just before the Asia Cup. And boy did he make some fabulous memories in last six weeks giving India its own customized version of 'La Decima' (10 in Spanish and Italian) in this year's global cricket meet. Nasser Hussain pointed out during his chat in Sky Sports what the Indian skipper had told Dinesh Karthik after the last

World T20 semi-final thrashing at the hands of eventual champions England. "We need to change our approach," Rohit had told Karthik, who was part of that squad. A change of approach is always a result of change of mindset and when the captain walks the talk, it becomes very easy for

others to follow. When Rohit first became a full-time skipper, in one of his earlier press meets, he had said a very pertinent thing. "I won't tell anyone to do anything that I myself won't do," Rohit has said back then. But Rohit has always been like that, his childhood coach Dinesh Lad said.

"I remember an incident from his U-19 days. It wasn't from a game. We were all standing somewhere and there was this gleaming Mercedes parked on the other side of the road. Rohit looked at it for some time and said: 'Yeh main ek din khari-doonga (I will buy this car one day)'. "I had to retort. I said, 'Rohit kya

paagal ho gaya hain tu. Abhi kuch khela hi naahi hain tune (Are you mad Rohit. You haven't played anything yet)." Little did he realise that this was not an average 17-year-old. And in less than three years, he had a luxury car in his garage after the T20 World Cup triumph. Lad himself admits that he never realized that there was this bullish but quiet confidence in his ward. "He has always been selfless even when he would captain his school team. What you are seeing today isn't something that happened overnight. Forgetting about own milestones and playing the role for his team has been his forte," Lad said. Lad said that after the initial high of 2007 T20 World Cup and the year-end CB Series in Australia, Rohit faced a lull between 2009 and 2011, with the lowest point being missing out on a World Cup selection. "I remember him telling me, 'Sir, you won't have any complaints that I don't work hard. I will devote a lot of time on my game', he promised. And you can say, he has kept his promise," the proud coach said. Those who come up through the ranks, facing a lot of hardships, know a lot about adjustments, and the Indian skipper is one such character.

The Shami Storm: India's bowling superstar in WC

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As Mohammed Shami walked back to the top of his run-up, Virat Kohli geed the fans at the Wankhede Stadium to go full throat with their chants - Shaamii! Shaamii! They obliged merrily. It was a visible validation of Shami's status in this World Cup - India's superstar with the ball, the bowling equivalent of Kohli with the bat. It wasn't just because of his immaculate effort against New Zealand on Wednesday night, but now Shami is a single man force de frappe, even ahead of Jasprit Bumrah. His numbers do back that position. Shami has taken 23 wickets from six matches, including three fifters, at a mind-boggling strike-rate of 10.9, easily the best in this tournament on those two counts. But then the numbers don't tell the whole story either. Shami was not even part of the playing 11 in the first four matches because of India's desire to field a batting all-rounder at No. 8, an additional security measure to counter any top-order dysfunction. In line with that thought, R Ashwin was included in the match against Australia, while Shardul Thakur played against Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. It required a force majeure - Hardik Pandya's injury against Bangladesh - for the Indian management to shake away their obsession. They needed to find a batsman and bowler in place of absent all-rounder Pandya for the match against New Zealand at Dharamsala. Shami came to the picture then and made an instant impression against the Kiwis with a five-wicket haul. It was also a huge credit to Shami's mindset to come back



from a frustrating time at the sidelines and perform against top-class opposition. India's batting coach Vikram Rathour said as much. "Shami is a special bowler, and he is bowling really well. It was tough to get him into the team because of team combination. But he was in a great mind-space even when he was not playing," said Rathour. Shami chose the same opposition to make an impact on an even bigger occasion at Mumbai - the World Cup semifinals. New Zealand were chasing 398 alright, but a smooth Wankhede pitch and deep batting line-up of the opposition meant that India could not afford to relax. They needed wickets to maintain the pressure. Shami gave them the perfect start, dismissing Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra caught behind by KL Rahul - the former was snared with one that went away wee bit, while the latter fell to the one that came in just enough. However, India were pushed onto the backfoot after Kane Williamson and Daryl Mitchell milked 181 runs for the third wicket. The Black Caps were more than a good shout away from the victory then.

India is the best team: Williamson

PTI ■ MUMBAI

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson doffed his cap to pacer Mohammed Shami and the India team after his side was outplayed in the World Cup semifinal here, saying that the bowling stalwart was one of the best in the world and Rohit Sharma's side the "best team". India crushed New Zealand by 70 runs to book their place in the final to be played on Sunday, with their opponents in the summit clash to be decided after the Australia-South Africa showdown in Kolkata on Thursday. New Zealand could only manage 327 in 48.5 overs chasing 398, with Shami producing a magical seven-wicket spell for his unprecedented third five-wicket haul in World Cup matches. Shami also took his tally to 23 wickets despite missing four matches at the start of the tournament to become the leading wicket-taker in the World Cup. "He has been incredible. He has only played probably half the games and he might be close to top wicket-taker (position) and coming on first change, behind two outstanding new-ball bowlers," Williamson told the media after the loss. "He is, without a doubt, one of the top operators in the world and the way he moves the ball and he keeps bringing the stumps into play. It has been quite phenomenal, really, the amount of wickets he has got in such a small amount of games in this tournament. "That Indian team in all departments are firing without a doubt and I am sure they will be looking forward to their next opportunity in a few days' time," the Kiwi skipper added.



Terming India as the 'best team in the world', Williamson said it is "tough" on the opposition to see all home team cricketers playing their best cricket. "They are the best team in the world and they are all playing their best cricket, so that is tough. They have not missed a beat really," he said. "To come into a semifinal, you go through your round-robin and you try and get to the stage and it starts again but the way they came out and played, yeah, shows the mindset that they have and the space that they are in," he added. With Virat Kohli entering the record books by notching up his 50th ODI century and surpassing Sachin Tendulkar in the process, Williamson said it was tough to find words to describe the modern-day great's brilliance. "I am) trying to find the words to describe it really, and not just that, actually the way he goes about it, it is about winning games for his team and he is getting close and there is a lot of attention and that comes with a lot of his success," he said. "He is the best, isn't he? And he seems to be getting better, which is a worry for opposition all around the world, but you admire it," he added.

Kohli can break Tendulkar's 100 centuries record: Shastri

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Star batsman Virat Kohli might now be holding the record for most ODI hundreds, but former India head coach Ravi Shastri firmly believed that the 35-year-old is well on his way to break another big landmark -- Sachin Tendulkar's 100 international hundreds. Along with his 50 ODI centuries, Kohli also has 29 hundreds in Tests and one in T20Is for a total of 80 scores above 100. Kohli had broken Tendulkar's mark of 49 one-day hundreds against New Zealand in the World Cup semifinals here on Wednesday. "Who would have thought when Sachin Tendulkar got 100 hun-

dreeds that anyone would come close? And, he's got 80; 80 international hundreds, 50 of them in the one-day game, which makes him the highest. Unreal," said Shastri during The ICC Review. "Nothing's impossible because such players, when they start reeling off hundreds, then they score them pretty quickly. His next 10 innings, you might see another five hundreds. "You have three formats of the game, and he's part of all those formats. To think that he still has three or four years of cricket ahead of him is simply mind-boggling." Shastri was also in awe of Kohli's ability to soak in the pressure. "I think his composure, his



been wonderful," he added. Shastri had worked closely with Kohli during his reign as the coach and pointed out that with a strict diet cardio and fitness control, he maintains his fitness at the top level, allowing him to run between the wickets freely. "One of the features of his batting has been his running between the wickets. The fact that he doesn't have to hit boundaries and sixes, he can run hard between the wickets because of his physical fitness. "That takes the pressure off him. Even when he's not getting the boundaries, he's still rotating the strike. He always has that uncanny ability of making it up towards the back end of the innings," he added.

Not surprised to see India going hard from get go: Mitchell

PTI ■ MUMBAI

New Zealand batter Daryl Mitchell was not surprised by India's aggressive brand of cricket in the World Cup semifinals and credited the seamers for making the ball talk after his lionhearted effort had kept them alive in the daunting runchase. India captain Rohit Sharma set the tone with a brisk 29-ball 47 before Virat Kohli (117) scored his record 50th ODI century. Shreyas Iyer scored 105 from 70 balls and Shubman Gill hit an unbeaten 80 to power India to a mammoth 397 for 4. It was the highest total for any team in semifinals of World Cup contests. In reply, New Zealand folded for 327, led by Mitchell's 134. "That is the way they have

played throughout the World Cup," Mitchell told reporters after New Zealand's loss. "(India are) pretty true to what they have been doing. No surprises there, we had plans to try and combat it but credit where credit is due, they played pretty well. "Disappointed to not get across the line. (At the) halfway mark I was hoping it would dew up a little bit and we might be able to chase it down with 10 overs left. But credit to India. To make almost 400 and bowl the way they did, credit to them." Mitchell said India pacers led by Mohammed Shami, who claimed 7 for 57 to take his wickets tally in the World Cup to a high of 23, had the ball talking in the game. "All their seamers had the ball

talking tonight. And in the first 10 overs have it swinging around and doing some things. They are all world class bowlers and there is a reason they are what they are," he said. Like many other players at this venue who suffered cramps during the day-night games here, Mitchell too had to deal with the issue. At one stage, New Zealand appeared to be giving India a real threat but quick wickets in the middle coinciding with his cramps derailed them completely. "There were a few things more than cramps that ensured we could not get over the line. Anytime a team puts on a total batting first, you need a lot of things going your way to be able to chase those totals down," said Mitchell.

Teammates divided after Babar quits captaincy

PTI ■ KARACHI

Babar Azam's decision to step down from Pakistan captaincy has evoked a mixed reaction from his teammates, with a few of them taking to social media to praise the 29-year-old's contributions as the leader while some others remained silent. Babar on Wednesday had announced his decision to relinquish Pakistan leadership roles across formats after the team failed to enter the semifinals of the ongoing World Cup. Pacer Naseem Shah, who had missed the marquee event with an injury, took to X to extend his support for Babar. "Four years of pure joy, it has been an absolute honour to have played and made my white

ball debut under your leadership. "You have always led from the front and made us believe in 'One Team, One Dream.' "Inshah Allah, we will watch you break many batting records for our beloved Pakistan," wrote Shah. Wicketkeeper batter and often a deputy to Babar, Muhammad Rizwan too penned an emotional tribute. "You are definitely one of the greatest batsmen Pakistan has ever seen. "Your honesty, love, integrity, thoughts, and efforts for Pakistan as the captain are the things to look up to. May you continue to shine for Pakistan," wrote Rizwan. Middle-order batter Iftikhar Ahmed too was effusive in

praise for Babar's captaincy. "It's been an honour to have represented Pakistan under your captaincy. I've been part of many highs and many lows during that period, but your resilience and determination always came on top. "Looking forward to seeing you score heavily for Pakistan and that too from the best seat of non-striking end," said Iftikhar. There were talks of a rift in the Pakistan squad after their modest run in the World Cup, with a few players unhappy about the way Babar led the side. Perhaps, it reflected in the silence of some of the other teammates such as Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, as all of them were backed strongly by Babar in the last three years.

Together we will strive for excellence: Hafeez

PTI ■ KARACHI

Former Test captain Mohammad Hafeez expressed his delight at being appointed the Team Director of the Pakistan cricket side and asserted that they would strive for excellence together. He has been given the responsibility of reshaping the national team after Pakistan's league stage elimination in the World Cup.

Hafeez will also be serving as a coach and he will be consulted when the PCB appoints the new support staff of the team for the forthcoming tours to Australia and New Zealand. "I am honoured and excited to take on the role of Team Director for the Pakistan Cricket Team. I would like to thank PCB for trusting my abilities and giving me this challenging responsibility," Hafeez said.

"But, I am committed to work collaboratively with the coaching staff and players to contribute to the team's success. Together, we will strive for excellence and bring happiness for our passionate fans," Hafeez added in a statement released by the board. It is the first time that the board has named a director for the national team. In 2019, the PCB had appointed Misbah-ul-Haq as the head



coach and chief selector with absolute powers. However, after a year, he stepped down from the post of chief selector. Besides Hafeez, the PCB on Wednesday also appointed Shan Masood as the new Test captain and Shaheen Shah Afridi as the T20 team skipper. The board added that the captain for the one-day format would be decided later. The decisions came after Zaka met with outgoing captain

Babar Azam and the Pakistan team management in Lahore to hear from them the reasons for the team's poor show in the Asia Cup and World Cup, where the side failed to move beyond the league stage. Babar, after the meeting, announced his resignation as captain on his social media account, having rejected an offer by the PCB to just lead the side in red-ball cricket. He was appointed the skipper in

2019. Hafeez was also called by the board chairman to discuss any changes in the squad ahead of the World Cup. Although he and Misbah-ul-Haq had suggested some changes, Babar and former chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq rejected them, insisting on retaining the same players. Hafeez announced his retirement from international cricket last year in January.