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DRONE ATTACK: UKRAINE

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GOVT MAKES BIOGAS
BLENDING MANDATORY

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AUSTRALIAN SPINNER
NATHAN MOCKS 'BAZBALL'

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Modi takes a sortie on Tejas

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a sortie in the Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA) in Bengaluru on Saturday and stated that the experience enhanced his confidence in India's indigenous capabilities. He is the first serving prime minister to fly in the Tejas fighter jet, manufactured by the public sector aerospace conglomerate Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

Taking to the social media platform X, Modi said, "Successfully completed a sortie on the Tejas. The experience was incredibly enriching, significantly bolstering my confidence in our country's indigenous capabilities and leaving me with a renewed sense of pride and optimism about our national potential.

Flying in Tejas today, I can say with immense pride that due to our hard work and dedication, we are no less than anyone in the world in the field of self-reliance. Heartiest congratulations to the Indian Air Force, DRDO, and HAL, as well as all Indians."

Modi arrived in Bengaluru earlier on Friday and visited to review the ongoing work at its manufacturing facilities, officials said.

The Prime Minister has been pushing for indigenous production of defence products and highlighting how his government has boosted their

First Indian Prime Minister to do so



Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes a sortie aboard the Tejas aircraft at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) site in Bengaluru on Saturday

IAF, 45 Squadron and 18 Squadron, are fully operational with LCA Tejas.

HAL inked a ₹47,000 crore deal in 2021 to supply 83 Tejas jets to IAF and is likely to get the nod for another 97 Tejas jets worth over ₹55,000 crores in the coming days.

In October, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari said the Indian Air Force was in the process of finalising a ₹1.15 lakh crore deal to procure an additional batch of 97 Tejas Mark-1A aircraft besides upgrading 84 Sukhoi-30MKI jets at a cost of ₹60,000 crore.

With the additional 97 Tejas Mark-1A jets, the total number of indigenously-developed aircraft being procured by the IAF would go up to 180.

The defence ministry is also looking at signing a contract with HAL next year to procure a total of 156 light combat helicopters (LCH), out of which 66 will be for the IAF.

Asked about the timeline for the delivery of the LCA Mark-1As as HAL can produce only 15 of them annually, he indicated that the aerospace major may increase the pace of production in partnership with the private sector.

Tejas is a single-engine multi-role fighter aircraft capable of operating in high-threat air environments. It has been designed to undertake the air defence, maritime reconnaissance, and strike roles.

manufacturing in India and also their exports. Several countries have shown interest in buying Tejas, and US defense giant GE Aerospace

had inked a pact with HAL to jointly produce engines for the Mk-II-Tejas during the Prime Minister's recent state visit to the US.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh noted in April this year that India's defence exports have reached an all-time high of ₹15,920 crore in 2022-2023.

It is a remarkable achievement for the country, he had said. The first version of Tejas was inducted into the IAF in 2016. Currently, two squadrons of

CBI tightens noose on TMC MP Moitra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Fresh trouble has knocked Trinamool Congress Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has initiated a preliminary enquiry against her on a reference from the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal. Lok Sabha Ethics Committee is also investigating the allegations against her.

Though there has been no formal statement from either the CBI or the Lokpal on the issue, the TMC leader will face the probe as the party is grappling with Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigations into some of its prominent leaders, including Abhishek Banerjee. Sources indicate that the CBI has registered a preliminary enquiry, which is the first step toward ascertaining if the allegations merit a full-fledged investigation. If enough prima facie material is found during the preliminary enquiry, the CBI can convert it into an FIR. The sources also suggested since the matter is with the Parliament Ethics Committee, a full FIR will not be filed against Moitra until the committee completes its probe.

With Parliament's Winter Session scheduled to begin on December 4, members have started submitting their questions. The House is likely to make a decision on the Ethics Committee's recommendation for Moitra's expulsion during

the session.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey had approached the Lokpal with a complaint against Moitra over allegations of taking bribes to raise questions in Parliament. Dubey had also accused Moitra of compromising national security for monetary gains. He had alleged that Moitra asked questions in the Lok Sabha to target the Adani Group and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the behest of businessman Darshan Hiranandani in exchange for gifts.

Moitra has denied any wrongdoing and has claimed that she is being targeted because she raised questions about the deals of the Adani group. Moitra appeared before the Parliament Ethics panel on November 2 to record her oral evidence on the allegations against her. However, she stormed out of the meeting, claiming that chairperson Vinod Sonkar, a BJP MP, asked her "unethical" and personal questions.

Sonkar accused Moitra of using unparliamentary language against him and other members of the panel. The five Opposition members also stormed out of the meeting on November 2. Recently, after a probe by the IT Ministry, sources claimed that Moitra's Parliament login ID was only accessed from Dubai but also from two other places, including ones in the United States.

Continued on Page 2

Voters seal fate in Rajasthan



People stand in queue at a polling booth to cast their vote during Rajasthan Assembly polls in Jaipur on Saturday

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

The voters of Rajasthan on Saturday sealed the fate of incumbent Congress Government and the Opposition BJP in the high stake polls the results of which will be known on December 3. The election holds great significance for the BJP as it engages in a direct contest with the ruling Congress.

The grand old party seeks to defy the trend of the ruling party being voted out every five years. Simultaneously, the BJP is strategically aiming for a comeback in the State ahead of the Lok Sabha polls next year. It is more important for the Congress, which has been ridden by internal factionalism right from the day one of the formation of the government under the leadership of Ashok

Gehlot who had installed former Union Minister Sachin Pilot as his Deputy. Pilot rebelled soon against Gehlot, which continues till date, barring the photo opportunities for both the towering leaders as well as the grand old party, as the issue was the talk of the BJP's election campaign led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A similar Pilot-Gehlot script materialised in Madhya Pradesh, where Jyotiraditya Scindia rebelled against Kamal Nath to bring down the Congress majority Government. Madhya Pradesh also voted this month and awaits the results, along with Chhattisgarh and Meghalaya, where polls have been held, and in Telangana, which goes to polls at the end of this month.

Continued on Page 2

Soumya finds Justice

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



A court here on Saturday sentenced four convicts to life imprisonment for killing TV journalist Soumya Vishwanathan in 2008 while the fifth convict was sent to three years in jail. While sentencing Ravi Kapoor, Amit Shukla, Baljeet Malik and Ajay Kumar to life imprisonment, the court of Additional Sessions Judge Ravindra Kumar Pandey also imposed a fine of ₹1.25 lakh on each of them.

The fifth convict, Ajay Sethi, was sentenced to three years of simple imprisonment along with a fine of ₹7.25 lakh. The court, however, noted that he had already undergone more than 14 years of imprisonment.

The court also ordered that of the total fine amount imposed on the convicts, ₹12 lakh will be paid to the victim's family. Ordering the quantum of punishment, the additional sessions judge said the offence does not fall in the category of rarest of rare cases. So request for death penalty is refused, he said. During the proceedings, the victim's mother Madhavi Vishwanathan told the court that she has been waiting for justice for over 15 years. Madhavi Vishwanathan said she is "satisfied" with judgment, but not "happy". Soumya Vishwanathan, who was working with a leading English news channel, was shot dead in the early hours of

September 30, 2008, on south Delhi's Nelson Mandela Marg while she was returning home from work. Police claimed the motive was robbery. On October 18, the court convicted Ravi Kapoor, Amit Shukla, Baljeet Malik, and Ajay Kumar under Indian Penal Code section 302 (murder) and Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) provisions for committing organised crime resulting in the death of any person. Ajay Sethi was convicted under IPC section 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen property) and MCOCA provisions for conspiring to abet, aid, or knowingly facilitate organised crime and receiving proceeds of organised crime. According to the prosecution, Ravi Kapoor shot Vishwanathan with a country-made pistol on September 30, 2008, on Nelson Mandela Marg in South Delhi while chasing the victim's car to rob her. Amit Shukla, Ajay Kumar and Baljeet Malik were also with Kapoor. Police recovered the car used in the murder from the fifth accused Ajay Sethi alias Chacha.

Indian Aviation records a high

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to the Indian aviation sector as well as the economy, international air passengers (both Indians and foreigners) checking into India's airports finally marked a new height as their number touched 1,06,827 on Friday, the highest level post the COVID-19. This also comes at a time when the country's domestic air passenger traffic scaled a new peak of 4,63,417 on Thursday, reaching new highs at least four times — on November 23, 20, 19, and 20.

believed the growth could have augmented in the business and tourism sector as of now. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)'s data showed India's domestic air traffic in October 2023 rose 10.78 per cent compared to the corresponding month in previous year. Domestic airlines carried 126.36 lakh passengers in October compared to 114.07 lakh passengers the airlines carried in October 2022. Sharing the piece of information through a social media post, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Saturday that international air passenger traffic stood at 1,06,827 on November 24 and it was

the "highest post-Covid international air traffic. "A landmark day for Indian aviation sector! After reaching the milestone of carrying 4.63 lakh daily domestic passengers, the sector has achieved yet another feat of carrying more than 1 lakh daily international passengers," he said. "Post-Covid, India's domestic aviation's turnaround story has not just been overwhelming but inspiring as well. Positive attitude, progressive policies, and deep trust among passengers are taking it to new heights with every flight, every day," the Civil Aviation Ministry said in a post on X on Friday. There were 4,52,925 air

domestic passengers travelled and the total flight movement stood at 5,918 on November 22. Similarly, there were 3,88,537 domestic passengers and the total flight movement stood at 5,502 on November 21. On November 20 there were 4,59,526 passengers and the total flight movements stood at 5,958. Buoyed by an emerging middle class hankering to fly, India's aviation industry is growing at an astonishing clip. Even before the industry was slammed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the fight for survival was intense, with four new airports and four new terminals opening in the past 12 months.

Continued on Page 2

Har Pal Aapke Saath

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Landline facility set up for trapped workers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A landline facility has been set up at the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarkashi to keep trapped workers connected with their family members, officials said on Saturday.



The facility has been set up by the BSNL and a handset will be given to the workers trapped inside the partially collapsed tunnel for the past 13 days, they said.

At present, the communication between the trapped workers and their relatives is facilitated by a communication system set up through a six-inch wide pipe.

another. A tunnelling expert at the site said on Saturday the machine was broken.

Cochin University Tech Fest stampede kills four students, injures 60 others

PTI ■ KOCHI

Four students were killed, and over 60 were injured in a stampede during Cochin university annual festival here on Saturday night, police said.



Officials said that the stampede occurred before well known singer Nikitha Gandhi was to perform for a musical festival in the open air auditorium of Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) here.

occurred during the Nikitha Gandhi musical performance, officials later said that the singer had not begun her performance when the tragedy struck.

George mentioned that four more students were in a critical condition. ADGP M R Ajith Kumar stated that the audience rushed to the auditorium using the stairs when there was a sudden downpour, leading to a stampede and subsequent deaths.

“The entry to the programme was restricted to ticket holders. However, several local residents were also outside the auditorium during the musical show,” an eyewitness told the media.



Nitish mobilising public sentiment for special status for Bihar

PTI ■ MUNGER (BIHAR)

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday sought to mobilise public sentiment in favour of his proposed campaign to press the demand for granting special category status to the state.

from the crowd, Kumar made them repeat their affirmation by standing up and raising their hands and, with a rhetorical flourish, added: “I see many women out there sitting down. All of them are also requested to get up and raise their hands in support of the campaign.”

Speaking in presence of his deputy Tejashwi Yadav and JD(U) president Rajiv Ranjan Singh “Lalan”, who is also the local MP, Kumar told the gathering that his government intended to undertake several steps for speedy development which would be facilitated by special status.

The government has since raised reservations for all deprived social groups and announced comprehensive measures for the alleviation of poverty which would incur an expenditure of approximately Rs 2.5 lakh crore.

Centre should hold caste survey with census, says Chidambaram

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former union finance minister P Chidambaram on Saturday said that a caste survey was necessary before deciding on any reservation benefits and it should be conducted by the central government along with the census.

ed a census as it should have in 2021, and may defer the decadal exercise till after the general elections next year.

Centre to do it along with the national census, he pointed out.

“Chhattisgarh is doing a separate caste census, Karnataka has already done a separate caste census, Odisha has announced that it will do a caste census. This will vary from state to state,” the Congress leader said.

HP CRYPTOCURRENCY SCAM SIT to seek warrant for extradition of kingpin from UAE

PTI ■ SHIMLA

The special investigation team (SIT) probing the Rs 2,500-crore cryptocurrency scam would approach the competent court on November 28 to seek a warrant for the extradition of fugitive kingpin Subhash Sharma from UAE, officials said on Saturday.

they realised they had fallen into a trap and were threatened to keep shut, the police said.

Mandi and Arun Guleria and Abhishek from Una have been arrested, the DGP Sanjay Kundu had said.

as ‘Korvio Coin’ or KRO coins. Cryptocurrency is a digital currency designed to work as a medium of exchange through a computer network that is not dependent on any central authority, such as the government or bank to uphold or maintain it.

“The kingpin of the scam Subhash Sharma from Sarkaghat in Himachal Pradesh’s Mandi district is still at large and as per our information, he is hiding in UAE. Efforts are underway to bring him back,” Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) northern range, Abhishek Dhullar, who is heading the SIT, told PTI.

However, after the scam was exposed in 2022, hundreds of victims came forward and uncovered the modus operandi of the accused. Over 300 complaints have been received in this regard so far, the officials said.

The scammers lured innocent people by promising handsome returns in a short period and built a network of investors. People from different sections of the society including policemen, teachers and others got involved in the scheme for quick returns.

Over a thousand police personnel have also fallen victim to the fraud. While a majority of them were duped of crores of rupees, some of them made huge gains by creating chains by roping in more investors. They opted for voluntary retirement and started promoting the ponzi scheme.

Voters seal fate...

From page 1

The Assaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) are also contesting the Assembly polls in the State this year.

The BJP, in 2013, formed the Government with Vasundhara Raje Scindia becoming the Chief Minister for a second time. In 2013, the BJP had won 163 seats and the Congress 21.

Mandal which was formed in 2014 by the Modi regime which has leaders like former Deputy PM Lal Krishna Advani, former Union Ministers Murlu Manohar Joshi and others.

Chaudhary, former chief minister Vasundhara Raje and former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot were among the first ones to cast their votes.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Atiqur Rehman S/o Jamilu Rehman R/o 35/309, Trilok Puri Delhi-110091 I have corrected my father name from Jamilur Rehman to Jamilu Rehman for all future purposes.

PD(204)C

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Sahil Randev & Savar Randev claims to be owner and in possession of Prop. No. 169, Block B, in Sushant Lok Phase-III, Gurugram, Haryana (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of Award passed in the Court for Deeds, if any, of No. 13007, R/W Transfer Deed Dated 03.08.2021 Doc. No. 5314 & Conveyance Deed Dated 20.09.2004 Doc No. 13121. As per Current Owners Original Conveyance Deed in respect of the said property is misplaced and FIR is Lodged on 20.07.2022 in respect of loss of document and said that Sahil Randev and Savar Randev have agreed to sell the said Property to Harpreet Singh Sabarwal And Said Harpreet Singh Sabarwal has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients Axis Bank Ltd., Janak Puri Branch, any person/s in possession of lost document or having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

- 1) TATAMOTORS LPT1109FBP REG. NO. HR38AC7927-YOM-2021
2) TATAMOTORS T_INTRAV20 REG. NO. DL1LAJ9191-YOM-2023
3) TATAMOTORS LPT1109 REG. NO. UP16JT9530-YOM-2022
4) MAH MMJEETO REG. NO. UP14KT0718-YOM-2021
5) MAH BOLCAMPER REG. NO. DL1LAD5220-YOM-2019
6) ASHOK LEY ALGC2620 REG. NO. HR55AN8768-YOM-2022
7) TATAMOTORS TATA1512 REG. NO. HR61E5196-YOM-2022
8) TATAMOTORS LPT1412 REG. NO. DL1GC8963-YOM-2021

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE & INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF UTTARAKHAND LTD. 29, IIE, Sahastadhara Road (IT Park), Dehradun Phone No. 0135 - 2708100 Fax No. 0135 - 2708109 Website : www.siidcul.com

ED searches realty major DLF in money laundering case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/GURUGRAM

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has searched the premises of realty major DLF in Gurugram as part of a money laundering investigation against real estate firm Supertech and its promoters.

session of flats to customers on time”.

It claimed that Supertech Group “siphoned off Rs 440 crore received from customers and homebuyers for purchasing land in Gurugram in 2013-14 at highly inflated prices while their already promised projects in Noida were not completed”.

DLF, later in a stock market filing, said “a team of officials from the Enforcement Directorate visited our premises seeking information with respect to investigation being conducted in the matter of Supertech”.

A new project was launched on this newly acquired land and further advance was collected from hundreds of homebuyers and loans were taken from banks/NBFCs which also became NPA and were declared “fraud” by banks, it alleged.

The officials sought details of transactions relevant to the said investigation and the company extended full cooperation by providing them all relevant documents in this regard, it said.

In August 2022, Supertech suffered a big setback when its nearly 100-metre-tall twin towers -- Apex and Ceyane -- located on Noida Expressway were demolished as per a Supreme Court order that found their construction within Emerald Court premises in violation of norms.

It had then alleged that Arora was the main controlling person of the group who decided to “divert” crores of funds of investors and homebuyers to various shell companies.

Arora had then said that the company incurred a loss of about Rs 500 crore, including construction and interest costs, because of the demolition of its twin towers in Noida.

The ED had said “huge amounts of money running into hundreds of crores were siphoned off through Supertech Group and they failed to adhere to their agreed obligations to provide the pos-

Mega slush track buffalo race ‘Kambala’ kicks off

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Kambala, the exciting slush track buffalo race from coastal Karnataka, made a grand debut in Bengaluru, with the two-day event kicking off here on Saturday, amid much fanfare.

Organisers said they expect a footfall of six to eight lakh visitors during the event till November 26, which along with the sport, will also bring out the culture, cuisines and heritage of coastal Karnataka.

About 200 pairs of buffaloes are said to be participating in the race, along with their owners and jockeys, in the first-ever Bengaluru Kambala, which aims to showcase this traditional folk sport of ‘Tulunadu’ — spread from Kasargodu to Maravanthe beach — in this IT

Indian Aviation..

From page 1

At present, there are 131 operational airports in India, including 29 international, 92 domestic, and 10 custom airports. Nine additional airports have been approved and many more are planned.

and international fliers, the government plans to review existing DGCA rules to make them more passenger-friendly and ensure airlines provide assistance to passengers affected by delays, cancellations, or denied boarding.

To encourage both domestic and international fliers, the government plans to review existing DGCA rules to make them more passenger-friendly and ensure airlines provide assistance to passengers affected by delays, cancellations, or denied boarding.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has backed Moitra over the issue and said that plans were in the works to expel her from Parliament. However, any such action would assist the lawmaker from Krishnanagar ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

CBI tightens...

From page 1

Moitra admitted to sharing her official loggin details with Hiranandani, the CEO of the real estate and infrastructure company Hiranandani Group, to have someone from his office type in the questions to be asked in Lok Sabha.

Mamata's nephew and party MP Abhishek Banerjee have already appeared before the ED for questioning in connection with its probe into the alleged school jobs scam in West Bengal.

Breather from severe air likely

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality stood in the "severe" category on Saturday morning with monitoring agencies pinning hopes on a western disturbance which may improve meteorological conditions starting Sunday. The overall air continues to be in the "very poor" category with AQI at 389 on Saturday evening, according to data from the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR). The city's air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 421 at 8 am. Meanwhile, the Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri slammed the Arvind Kejriwal Government for failing to handle air pollution. This Government is clueless and has no idea how to tackle this issue," Bidhuri said. Delhi recorded just three severe air quality days in November last year, while it experienced 12 such days in 2021, the maximum in the month since the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) began monitoring. There were nine such days in November 2020; 7 in 2019; 5 in 2018; 7 in 2017; 10 in 2016 and 6 in 2015, according to CPCB data. A scientist at the India Meteorological Department



(IMD) predicted a brief relief due to a likely improvement in meteorological conditions under the influence of a western disturbance expected to affect northwest India starting Sunday. In the morning, the AQI stood at 551 in Sonia Vihar at 11 am, 469 in Rohini, 464 in Jahangirpuri, 462 in Vivek Vihar, 459 in Satyawati College, 457 in Patparganj, 456 in Wazirpur, 454 in Punjabi Bagh, 451 in Anand Vihar, 430 in National Stadium, 417 in Moti Bagh, 414 in Dilshad Garden, 428 in Ashok Vihar,

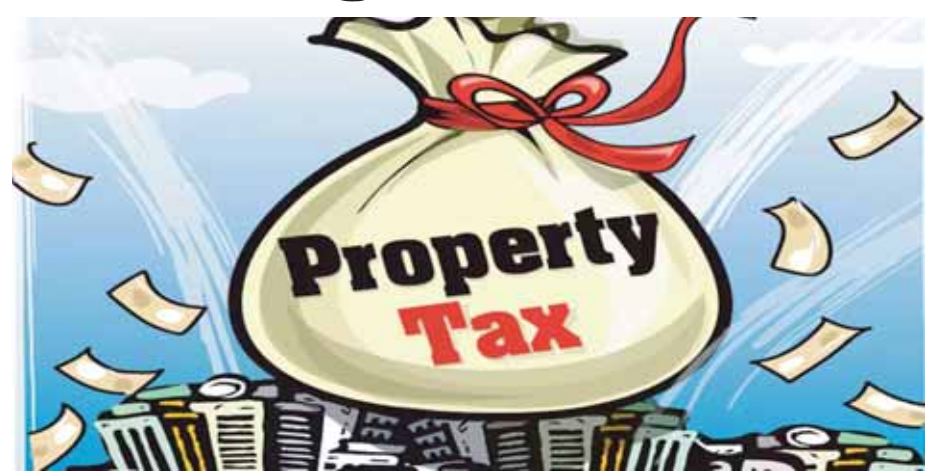
418 in Mandir Marg, 412 in Pusa, 392 ITO, Delhi has been witnessing a gradual increase in AQI levels after a marginal improvement last Sunday. The 24-hour average AQI, recorded at 4 pm every day, was 415 on Friday, 390 on Thursday, 394 on Wednesday, 365 on Tuesday, 348 on Monday and 301 on Sunday (November 19). By 6 pm, Anand Vihar entered the "very poor" category with PM 2.5 at 336 and PM 10 at 320 while the CO reached at 100 while NO2 was at 94, both in

"satisfactory" levels. The Bawana station recorded PM 10 at 423, in the "severe" category and PM 10 at 393, in the "very poor" category, while the CO reached 104 or "moderate". At Aya Nagar, the PM 2.5 reached 152 and PM 10 was at 172, both under the "moderate" category, and the CO at 65, under the "satisfactory" category. The AQI monitoring station at Dwarka Sector 8 recorded PM 10 at 485, in the "severe" category and PM 2.5 at 354 or "very poor" while the CO plunged to 134 or "moderate". The air quality at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport T3 area was in the "very poor" category with PM 2.5 at 336 and PM 10 at 304, while the CO was at 102, in "moderate" level. At ITO station, the PM 2.5 was recorded at 367, in the "very poor" category, and PM 10 was at 267, in the "poor" category. The CO was at 16, in "good" levels while NO2 rose to 299, in "poor" level. The PM 2.5 at Okhla Phase-II was recorded at 312, in the "very poor" category while PM 10 reached 212, placing it under the "poor" category. The NO2 reached 170 and CO was at 134, both in "moderate" category.

MCD to soon prosecute property tax evaders having ₹25 lakh due

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Assessment and Collection Department of MCD after analysing data related to property tax dues has recognised owners whose property tax dues are above Rs 25 lakh. According to the Municipal Act, the onus to file self assessment property tax return lies solely on the property owners. MCD officials said it will soon take legal action against property tax defaulters and will file prosecution against them. According to the municipal act in case of property tax dues cross ₹25 lakh it may result in punishment of rigorous imprisonment from one months to seven years with a fine of not less than 50 percent of the amount of tax evaded. MCD property tax department has uploaded details related to property tax on its website. "Uploaded data doesn't contain any personal information. Uploaded data on corporation website contains property tax details of authorised, unauthorised regularised, unauthorised colonies and residential properties above 100 sqm in



rural villages. MCDs assessment and collection department has appealed the citizens that if more than one property exists for any property than they should get it corrected from the concerned zonal office," said a MCD official. The civic body has also appealed the citizens to check data on MCDs website and the details of those properties which are not found on website that it means that those property owners are not paying any property tax.

MCD appealed to all those property owners whose data is not available on MCD website to get their UPIC ID through MCDs portal mcdonline.nic.in/portal. The last date to get UPIC ID is December 31, 2023. In case of non submission of correction property tax dues action in accordance with municipal act will be taken. MCD after matching its property tax database with third party data like property registration, electricity bills, GST

registration and licensing registration has prepared databases of properties which are not paying property tax. MCD appeals to all such property owners to get their UPIC ID otherwise they will also have to face prosecution through courts. The municipality appealed to all the property tax owners to check property tax data and pay their dues accordingly so that dream of clean and green Delhi can be realised. This will also help in strengthening MCD, added the official.

Family of electrocuted father-son demands action against hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The bereaved family members of a father-son duo, who were electrocuted while carrying out a repairing job in a water tank in a private hospital here on Friday, have demanded strict action against the hospital authorities. "We got the bodies after 24 hours. We were asked to stay away. I, along with my mother, stood helplessly outside the hospital, but no one bothered to tell us what had happened to my father and brother," Vipin, the son of deceased Kunwar Pal, said.

According to police, Pal (40), his son Raman (20), who was a plumber by profession, and electrician Sarvesh Kumar (59) died of an electric shock while carrying out motor-repairing work at the Commander Hospital in Outer Delhi's Ranhola. "There were five members in the family. My mother Raj Kumari, father, elder sister, Raman and me. Raman quit his studies after Class 10 to support the family and started working with my father. My sister is married and I am a student. My father and brother were associated with this hos-

pital for the last five years. Now see, how they (doctors at the hospital) have fled, leaving everyone behind," Vipin said. A case under sections 287 (negligent conduct with respect to machinery) and 304A (whoever causes the death of any person by doing any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been lodged at the Ranhola police station against unidentified people. "Further investigation is underway. The FIR was registered on a complaint from the investigating officer, ASI Shri



Krishan, against unidentified people," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Jimmy

Chiram told said. "I have no idea about the charges levelled by police and

against whom. I only know that police must take strict action against the accused. They were aware of the possible risk and yet they asked my father and brother to work for them," Vipin said. Pal's wife Raj Kumari said, "My husband was at home on Friday. He got a call at around 2 pm about a plumbing assignment. He asked Raman to accompany him. I got a call around 5 pm and the caller asked me to come to the hospital immediately as something bad had happened with my son and husband." "I asked my son, Vipin, to go

to the hospital, which is around five kilometres away from our house. When we reached there, the guards stopped us at the gate and no one informed us about anything. We just saw people running from one end to another," she said, adding that police must ensure that strict action is taken against the culprits. Kunwar Pal's brother, Dhan Pal, said they got the bodies of his brother and nephew at around 3 pm on Saturday, after which they started preparing for the cremation. The ASI has said in his complainant that a PCR call was

received at about 2 pm on Friday and a team was immediately rushed to the Commander Hospital. "Once we reached the hospital, we were directed to a basement area. I saw some electrical-fitting tools near a water tank in the basement. "There were three bodies in the tank. As the water was deep, a call was made to the fire department for help," he has said. The bodies were taken out of the tank with the help of fire department officials and sent to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital for autopsy.

LG nod to file appeal in SC against acquittal of 6 in 1984 anti-Sikh riots case



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has given his approval for filing a special leave petition in the Supreme Court against a July 10 Delhi High Court order which acquitted six accused in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case. According to Raj Niwas officials, Saxena also "slammed" the prosecution department of the Delhi Government for the alleged "callous delay" in the matter. The LG directed the Home Department to identify and fix accountability of officials responsible for causing the delay and sought a report within seven days, they said. The case pertains to looting and rioting during the anti-Sikh riots in the Saraswati Vihar police station (now Subhash Place) area in north-west Delhi, involving the six accused — Hari Lal, Mangal, Dharampal, Azad, Om Prakash and Abdul Habib. "The LG approved the proposal of the Home Department for filing a special leave petition in the apex court against the judgement of the High Court on July 10, 2023, in which it dismissed the government's appeal against the trial court verdict acquitting all the accused," the officials said. The High Court had said that there was no explanation for the "inordinate delay" of 28 years in filing the appeal against the March 28, 1995 trial court verdict and the grounds taken by the state were "not justifiable", they said. In a similar case, Saxena had earlier granted his approval for filing a special leave petition in the Supreme Court against

MCD to cut tariff to woo movie makers

STAFF REPORTER/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to attract movie makers the cost of shooting a film is going down soon as the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is bringing a proposal to reduce charges of shooting a film in the city and provide them security or parking facilities. The proposal is expected to be tabled in the next meeting of the House of the MCD. According to MCD officials, the proposal aims to slash the charges for film shooting in Delhi to Rs 15,000 for an eight hour per day slot and Rs 25,000 for 24-hour per day slot from Rs 75,000 per day. The MCD is also planning to appoint a licence officer at designated areas for the shooting of film. According to the proposal, the time designated for film shooting on an MCD property will be divided into three shifts of eight hours. Earlier, the MCD used to charge Rs 75,000 for a 24-hour full day slot. The proposal also aims to revise the one-time registration fees to obtain permission for each film shooting to Rs 2,000 plus GST across its zones. The MCD will also provide parking facility for the film staff and implement the charges for parking which will be transferred to the department concerned. The one-time security deposit of Rs 25,000 will continue to remain the same for shooting in areas under the MCD jurisdiction. The MCD will deploy two civil guards and a license officer at areas designated for film shooting. According to the proposal, the civic body will have the power to allot any specific location for shooting or make changes in the charges, if required. The time period for shooting or date can also be allotted by the civic body. It will also have the liberty to deny permission for film shooting. The step is being taken after a review meeting with film producers to make Delhi a hub for film shooting. During the meeting, the producers had opined that the charges for shooting in Delhi were high and therefore suggested to divide three slots of eight hours for shooting.

AAP has blessings of millions of people: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said other political parties may have millions of rupees but the AAP has the blessings of millions of people who have benefited from schemes for free healthcare, good education and pilgrimages. During this devotional evening program organized at Thyagaraj Stadium, Kejriwal arrived to meet the pilgrims heading to Dwarkadish and interacted with elderly pilgrims scheduled to depart for Dwarkadheesh under the Mukhya Mantri Tirth Yatra Yojna. The Chief Minister

NDMC deploys anti-smog gun to curb pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Saturday has deployed an anti-smog gun with the largest tank capacity as part of its anti-pollution efforts in Lutyens' Delhi. Delhi's air quality stood in the "severe" category on Saturday morning with monitoring agencies pinning hopes on a western disturbance which may improve meteorological conditions starting Sunday. The new anti-smog gun is mounted on a 28-tonne CNG truck chassis with the water tank having a capacity of 17,000 litres for mitigating air pollution, the NDMC said in a statement, adding that it has the largest tank capacity among all the anti-smog guns deployed in Delhi by various agencies. Due to large water tank capacity, the anti-smog gun is having continually runtime of 03 hrs non-stop water supplying for spray reducing dead mileage.

Tihar to launch skill training for inmates

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Seeking to ensure a dignified life once they are released from the jail, Max Healthcare and Tihar Jail have joined hands to launch Max Skill Training Programme for Sustainable Livelihoods for the inmates of the country's largest central prison. The Max Skill Training programme is part of Max Healthcare's CSR initiatives and is in line with the Government's Skill India Mission, Abhay Soi, Chairman & Managing Director, Max Healthcare Institute Ltd said. He hoped that the venture would enable the jail prisoners to lead productive lives upon release and contribute to making society better, safer. According to various studies, inmates who participate in rehabilitation programs are less likely to reoffend and return to prison compared to those who do not participate. These programs not only improve inmates' chances of successful reintegration but also benefit society as a whole by reducing crime rates and associated costs. Sanjay Baniwal, Director General, Delhi Prisons pointed out that the Tihar Jail had started such a skill training initiative by launching 'Prarambh'

Atishi visits School of Specialised Excellence in Gandhi Nagar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Atishi visited Dr. B.R. Ambedkar School of Specialised Excellence, Humanities, Gandhi Nagar on Saturday morning and interacted with the students. During her visit, students shared their experiences stating that in school, every concept is explained to them in detail, with everyday examples. As a result, they now seek answers to exam questions not just in books but in life experiences. Students further mentioned that education in school is not confined to textbooks alone. Here, beyond books, various activities are organized, ensuring the participation of every child. Through this exposure, they get the opportunity to learn and understand significant issues related to society, the nation, and the world. They said that earlier, there was an emphasis on rote learning in schools, but now it's different. Instead of rote memorization, students understand concepts, develop their own understanding, and apply it in their daily lives. For example, they not only study democracy but also actively adopt the concept in our lives by mak-

LG nod to file appeal in SC against acquittal of 6 in 1984 anti-Sikh riots case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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pleasure that most beneficiaries were women. Prior to this, 82 trains have already embarked on pilgrimage journeys with travelers, and approximately 80,000 pilgrims have completed pilgrimage trips. Women are burdened with responsibilities to take care of their families and it was an opportunity for them to not only go on pilgrimages but also spend some time for themselves, Kejriwal said. Kejriwal said that like Delhi, now the Mukhyamantri Teerth Yatra Yojana is commencing in Punjab as well. The first train carrying a thousand elderly people will depart on Monday. ing collective decisions in class and school subjects. Appreciating the students' enthusiasm and self-confidence, Atishi stated that our teachers here are ensuring a brighter future for every child. She mentioned that the Kejriwal government is preparing future IAS officers, journalists, historians, lawyers, judges, and outstanding professionals in its Humanities ASoSE. Here, students are being prepared for the future not only with foundational subjects but also with advanced topics like Individual and Society, and World of Work. The Minister remarked that at one time, it was unimaginable that children in government schools would have such high self-confidence. "I am pleased to see that beyond books, activities like 'Moot Court', Model United Nations, Youth Parliament, debates, etc., are becoming companions in children's learning in this school," she said. She mentioned that with specialized education from ASoSE, our children will not only become better professionals but also contribute to the betterment of society by becoming informed and aware citizens.

All party meet on Dec 2 ahead of Winter Session

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has convened an all-party meeting on December 2 ahead of the Winter Session of Parliament, sources said on Saturday. The session will begin on December 4 and conclude on December 22. Though the all-party meet is convened a day before the session begins, this time it has been advanced by a day apparently due to counting of votes for five states on December 3 where polls are underway. The results of the assembly elections will have a major bearing on the session during which the government is keen to pass key bills. The report of the Ethics Committee on the "cash-for-query" allegations against TMC MP Mahua Moitra will be tabled in Lok Sabha during the session. The House will have to adopt the report before the expulsion recommended by the panel comes into effect. Three key bills which seek to replace the IPC, CrPc and the Evidence



Act are likely to be taken up for consideration during the session as the standing committee on Home has already adopted the three reports recently. Another key bill pending in Parliament relates to the appointment of the chief election commissioner and election commissioners. Introduced in the Monsoon

Suspend Rahul's social media account, BJP urges poll body

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday asked the Election Commission (EC) to suspend the social media account of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accusing him of violating poll guidelines with his post on X on the day of the Rajasthan Assembly polls. Rahul has "flouted the 48 hours silence zone limit", alleged the party. In his post Rahul urged people to elect the Congress and said, "Rajasthan will choose free treatment. Rajasthan will choose cheaper gas cylinder. Rajasthan will choose interest-free agricultural loan. Rajasthan will choose English education. Rajasthan will choose OPS. Rajasthan will choose caste census." The BJP wrote to the EC saying his post violates the silence period of 48 hours during which any type of campaign is barred. It accused the ex-Congress chief of violating the Representation of the People Act and the Model Code of



- राजस्थान चुनेगा मुफ्त इलाज
 - राजस्थान चुनेगा सस्ता गैस सिलेंडर
 - राजस्थान चुनेगा ब्याज मुक्त कृषि कर्ज
 - राजस्थान चुनेगा अंग्रेजी शिक्षा
 - राजस्थान चुनेगा OPS
 - राजस्थान चुनेगा जाति जनगणना
- आज, बड़ी संख्या में जा कर, इस्तेमाल करें जा

Conduct and sought the EC's action. "The social media platform X and its functionalities may also be directed to immediately suspend the account and remove the aforesaid offending contents with immediate effect lest it further violates the 48-hour silence zone and cause irreparable injury to the doctrine of free and fair elections," it said. The BJP said the poll panel should also direct the Chief Election Officer, Rajasthan, to file a criminal complaint and initiate criminal prosecution against Gandhi.

The poll watchdog has reiterated that TV, radio channels, cable networks, internet websites and social media platforms should ensure that the contents of the programmes by them during 48 hours referred to in Section 126 (RP Act) do not contain any material that may be construed as promoting or prejudicing the prospect of any particular party or candidate. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also urged the people of Rajasthan to cast their ballot. "Your every vote, for a Congress future, for rights, for Congress' guarantee," she said.

Tejas tribute to desi scientific capacity: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he took a sortie on a Tejas aircraft on Saturday and hailed India's indigenous capabilities, saying it doesn't cost the "master of chunavi photo-ops" much to acknowledge the efforts and endeavours prior to 2014. Modi undertook the during his Bengaluru visit and said the experience has bolstered his confidence in the country's indigenous capabilities. In a social media post attacking the Modi, Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said, "Tejas is yet another tribute to our indigenous scientific and technological capacity and capability that has been built up resolutely over the decades." Tejas has been designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) that was established in 1984 and that worked collaboratively with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL),



National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy, the former Union minister said. The design for the Light Combat Aircraft was finalised six years later, he pointed out. Operational clearance was granted finally in 2011, Ramesh said, adding that there are, of course, a number of other key milestones as well. "It doesn't cost the master of 'chunavi photo-ops' much to acknowledge the efforts and endeavours prior to 2014 that were essential to his claiming credit now," the Congress leader said.

Researchers identify four drugs that reverse premature ageing of brain triggered by Covid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers have identified four drugs — Covidnavitoclax, ABT-737, fisetin and a cocktail of dasatinib plus quercetin (D+Q) — that can reverse a cellular process triggered by Covid-19 that contributes to premature ageing of the brain. To study the effect of different SARS-COV-2 variants on brain tissue, researchers at the University of Queensland used synthetic brain organoid models, grown in a laboratory from human stem cells. "We found Covid-19 accelerates the presence of 'zombie' or senescent cells, which accumulate naturally and gradually in the brain as we get older," said Dr Julio Aguado from UQ's Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (AIBN). "Senescent cells are known to drive tissue inflammation and



degeneration, leaving patients exposed to cognitive impairments like brain fog and memory loss." Aguado said confirmation that Covid-19 was a catalyst for this premature ageing prompted an attempt to reset the biological brain clock. "We used the brain organoids to screen a range of therapeutics, looking for any capable of removing those senescent cells," he said. These drugs rejuvenated the brain and decreased the

chance of neurodegenerative symptoms in the organoids, as well as in a mouse model infected with Covid, said Aguado in the paper, published in the journal Nature Aging. "More research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms at play, but this study marks a significant step forward in our knowledge of the intricate relationship between viral infections, ageing and neurological well-being," he

'Liberal media articles more opposed to AI than conservatives'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers have found that articles published by the liberal media tend to be more opposed to artificial intelligence (AI) than those by the conservative media. The opposition could arise out of concerns about AI amplifying racial and gender biases in the society, along with income inequity, researchers from the Virginia Tech University, US, said. Considering that media sentiment is indicative of public opinion and can, in turn, impact policymakers' stances, the findings may have important implications for future political discussions around AI, the researchers said. Their work was published in the journal Social Psychological and Personality Science. They also said that the observed differences in the partisan media's sentiment



towards AI may also subsequently lead to differences in the public's sentiment towards AI. "Media sentiment is a powerful driver of public opinion, and many times policymakers look towards the media to predict public sentiment on contentious issues," said Angela Yi, study author and a PhD student in the marketing department of Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business.

For the study, the researchers formed a compilation of over 7,500 articles written on AI from May 2019 to May 2021 by downloading them from various media outlets. They looked for specific keywords in the articles such as "algorithm" or "artificial intelligence". The articles that the team chose to study were published by a mix of media houses, such as the liberal-leaning The New York Times and The Washington Post, and the conservative-leaning The Wall Street Journal and the New York Post. The researchers analysed the "emotional tone" of these articles using an automated text analysis tool. The tool, they said, worked by calculating the difference between the percentage of positive emotion words and the percentage of negative emotion words in a text. Each article was then given a standardised 'emotional

tone' measure or score. The researchers said that they were not pronouncing judgments on "whether the liberal media is acting optimally, or the conservative media is acting optimally" and that they were taking no stance as to what the "right way" to discuss AI should be. "We are just showing that these differences exist in the media sentiment and that these differences are important to quantify, see, and understand," said Shreyans Goenka, a study author and assistant professor of marketing at Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business. The researchers also examined how media sentiment towards AI changed after George Floyd's death, which happened on May 25, 2020. Floyd, a 46-year-old black American man, was killed in the US city of Minneapolis by Derek Chauvin, a 44-year-old white police officer.

Modi's Jan-Dhan Yojana ensuring country's financial literacy: Prabhu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana is an important and strong pillar in ensuring financial literacy of the country, former Union Minister Suresh Prabhu said, emphasising that it is very important to ensure practical financial security as it has a broader societal impact. He was speaking at a conference organized by 'Evoke India Foundation' on financial literacy here with a theme "Financial Inclusion - Bridging the Gaps." The flagship scheme for financial inclusion, the PMJDY has already crossed 500 million, with 56% of bank accounts belonging to women and 67% of those opened in rural and semi-urban areas. Pravin Kumar Dwivedi, a financial expert, founder and president of AWOKE India, pointed out that only 24 percent of people in India are financially literate. He was referring to data from the global survey by Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC (S&P) which has revealed that less than 25% of adults possess financial literacy in South Asian countries. Dwivedi underscored the urgent need for financial literacy to become a priority for the average Indian, given that 76% of India's adult population lacks understanding in even basic financial concepts. Sunita Paul, nodal officer of CFL, RBI project also mentioned about the importance of financial literacy awareness especially youth and women for financial inclusion across rural communities while Ananth Narayan brought attention to SEBI's multifaceted role beyond regulation. He emphasized SEBI's mission



to encourage savers to evolve into investors, thereby contributing to capital formation. Dr. Prabhakar Sahoo expanded on these insights by elaborating on how the Jan Dhan Yojana resulted in the creation of 50,000 bank accounts for Indians, enhancing transparency and efficiency. Notably, he shared that Indians now contribute to 42% of digital transactions globally, with the Jan Dhan Yojana playing a pivotal role. A focused panel discussion on agriculture, chaired by Hemendra Mathur, emphasized the imperative need for the financial inclusion of farmers. Similarly, speakers at the conference engaged in discussions about financial inclusion and its role in unlocking the potential of the youth demographic. Appalla Saikiran, Founder & CEO of SCOPE, highlighted the critical significance of financial literacy. He stressed that "Financial literacy is very important as earning money and managing money are two different things." Former banker Naina Kidwai too emphasized the importance of giving women more economic power, stating that it can be initiated with basic financial literacy. She shared stories of successful online business growth by women, underlining that providing bank accounts is not enough; the usage of mobile phones for financial activities must be ensured.

'Israel-Hamas conflict brought Palestine issue back into focus'



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The surprise attack on Israel by Hamas and the retaliatory strike on the Gaza Strip stirred the hornet's nest and has brought the Palestine issue back on focus, former Ambassador M K Bhadrakumar said during a discussion on the issue here. During the discussion at the Indian Women Press Corps' on Friday evening, he said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been systematically and ruthlessly moving towards a one-state solution, but that is not an Israel with Jews and Palestinians side by side. The former envoy, who served in Uzbekistan and Turkey, added that not finding a solution to the Palestine issue is like playing with fire. Anil Trigunayat, an ex-diplomat who has been India's envoy to Jordan, Libya and Malta, among others, said when Hamas launched the attack on October 7, the international community supported Israel. "But the response of Israel, which is considered disproportionate by most observers

and countries of the world, has continued. This is something that in my view has taken away a lot of sympathy they had garnered," he said. "For the last 15 to 20 years, the Palestinian issue has been on the back burner. Very few countries would talk about it. India has maintained its stand consistently on the Palestine issue. But in the Arab world, things were changing," Trigunayat said. On India's decision to abstain from a UNGA vote on a resolution calling for a ceasefire to provide humanitarian assistance to Gaza, he said India has faced the impact of terrorism and has maintained its stand against it. "India has suffered terrorism for the longest period of time. Zero-tolerance against terrorism has been the policy of India. Any act in which a large number of civilians are killed becomes in that sense a terror act," the former diplomat said. "India today is looking at a holistic solution to the Palestine issue," he added. Bhadrakumar said that things had gone to such a point that there was a sense of great despair.

"For many of us observing the scene, it was not making news. Things that were happening in West Bank settlements, Jerusalem, and Gaza were not in the headlines. "The move came from the Palestinian side which is being branded as a terror attack from Israel. My reading of the event is that it was a deliberate action to kickstart a process. The stagnant pool needed to be churned very dramatically for the world's conscience to sit up and take note. That is what was done," he said. The retired diplomat added that the second side to what has unfolded since October 7 is that the world had come to believe Israel is an unassailable military power that cannot be challenged. "Israel's military superiority was becoming more and more irrelevant because what is taking place is more hybrid wars... As we see, all analysts were wrong on Ukraine. They thought Russia would move in and conquer. So the hybrid war makes all things irrelevant. In the last few weeks we have seen that Israel retains massive capacity to kill, but can it win? It cannot," he added.

Death risk from coal plant pollution twice than that of PM2.5 from other sources

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Exposure to fine particulate air pollutants from coal-fired power plants (coal PM2.5) is associated with a risk of mortality more than double that of exposure to PM2.5 from other sources, according to a new study led by George Mason University, The University of Texas at Austin, and Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health. Examining Medicare and emissions data in the U.S. from 1999 to 2020, the researchers also found that 460,000 deaths were attributable to coal PM2.5 during the study period—most of them occurring between 1999 and 2007, when coal PM2.5 levels were highest. The study is published in the journal Science. The study holds importance for India as most of the coal powered projects continue to operate here. While previous studies have quantified the mortality burden from coal-fired power plants, much of this research has assumed that coal PM2.5 has the same toxicity as PM2.5 from other sources. "PM2.5 from coal has been treated as if it's just another air pollutant. But it's much more harmful than we thought, and its mortality burden has been seriously underestimated," said lead author Lucas Henneman, assistant professor in the Sid and Reva Dewberry Department of Civil, Environmental, and Infrastructure Engineering at Mason. "These findings can help policymakers and regulators identify cost-effective solutions for cleaning up the country's air, for example, by requiring emissions controls



or encouraging utilities to use other energy sources, like renewables. Using emissions data from 480 coal power plants in the U.S. between 1999 and 2020, the researchers modeled where wind carried coal sulfur dioxide throughout the week after it was emitted and how atmospheric processes converted the sulfur dioxide into PM2.5. This model produced annual coal PM2.5 exposure fields for each power plant. They then examined individual-level Medicare records from 1999 to 2016, representing the health statuses of Americans ages 65 and older and representing a total of more than 650 million person-years. By linking the exposure fields to the Medicare records, inclusive of where enrollees lived and when they died, the researchers were able to understand individuals' exposure to coal PM2.5 and calculate the impact it had on their health. The researchers were also able to specify deaths attributable to coal PM2.5 and produce a ranking of the coal-fired power plants studied based on their contribution to coal PM2.5's mortality burden. They found that 10 of these plants each contributed at least 5,000 deaths during

the study period. "Beyond showing just how harmful coal pollution has been, we also show good news: Deaths from coal were highest in 1999 but by 2020 decreased by about 95%, as coal plants have installed scrubbers or shut down," Henneman said. The researchers pointed out the study's continuing urgency and relevance, writing in the paper that coal power is still part of some U.S. states' energy portfolios and that global coal use for electricity generation is even projected to increase. "As countries debate their energy sources—and as coal maintains a powerful, almost mythical status in American energy lore—our findings are highly valuable to policymakers and regulators as they weigh the need for cheap energy with the significant environmental and health costs," said co-author Francesca Dominici, Clarence James Gamble Professor of Biostatistics, Population. These findings can help policymakers and regulators identify cost-effective solutions for cleaning up the country's air, for example, by requiring emissions controls or encouraging utilities to use other energy sources, like renewables, the authors noted.

Russia launched largest drone attack: Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Russia on Saturday morning launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting the Ukrainian capital, military officials said.

"Kyiv was the main target," Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on his Telegram channel.

In total, Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 74 were destroyed by air defenses, Ukraine's air force said.

The attack was "the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv," said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuriy Ilnat confirmed later that the air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.

At least five civilians were wounded in the hours long assault, which saw several buildings damaged by falling



debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten. The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko.

In the city's Solomiansky district, debris left a crater in the courtyard of a residential area, and the windows of a nearby building were blown

out. Residents, most of them elderly, received medical attention at the scene. Others took shelter in a nearby subway station. As people were clearing up debris and broken glass in the neighbourhood, the hum of a fresh wave of drones could be heard nearby.

The assault on Kyiv began

at 4 a.m., continuing in waves for over six hours, and caused power outages in 77 residential buildings and 120 institutions, according to Popko.

Ukraine's Energy Ministry said 17,000 people were without power in the Kyiv region as a result of the attack, noting that four power lines were damaged. Power

was restored in the early afternoon.

"Our soldiers shot down most of the drones. Unfortunately, not all," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. "But we continue to work to strengthen our air defense and shoot down more," he said. The attack was carried out on the morning of Holodomor Memorial Day which commemorates the manmade famine in Soviet Ukraine that killed millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. It is marked on the fourth Saturday in November.

In addition to Kyiv, the Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kirovohrad regions were also targeted.

Meanwhile, shelling killed on person and wounded three in the southern Kherson region, regional Gov. Olexandr Prokudin said on Saturday. According to Prokudin, the region had been shelled 100 times over the previous 24 hours.

Ahmadi place of worship attacked in PoK

PTI ■ LAHORE

More than three dozen people, said to be activists of a radical Islamist party, attacked a place of worship of the Ahmadi community and demolished its minarets and terrorising them in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, an official from the minority community said on Saturday.

The attack is the latest in the series of such incidents - at least 40 between January to October this year - the Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan said.

"Over three dozen miscreants believed to be members of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) attacked the Ahmadi place of worship in Doliyan Jatan in Kotli district on Friday. The Ahmadi present in the worship places ran for their lives while the miscreants demolished its minarets and niche," Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan official Amir Mahmood told PTI on Saturday. The miscreants came on motorcycles and after destroying the minarets and niche of the worship place left while chanting religious slogans, he said. This worship place was built in 1954.

The said incident occurred within the jurisdiction of police station Narr in Kotli but no FIR has been registered against the suspects as yet.

Mahmood said at least 40 worship places of the Ahmadi minority community have either been attacked by radical Islamists or their minarets and arches demolished by police in different parts of Pakistan during the first 10 months of this year.

"At least 40 incidents of desecration of our worship places in Pakistan have taken place between January and October 2023 in various parts of Pakistan. Of them, 11 occurred in Sindh province and remaining in Punjab province," Mahmood said.

Most Ahmadi worship places have come under attack by the TLP activists while in other incidents police, on the pressure of religious extremists, demolished minarets and arches and removed sacred writings, the Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan claimed.

WORLD BRIEFS

POPE FRANCIS DOWN WITH FLU

Rome: Pope Francis went to the hospital on Saturday for tests after he came down with the flu, but the results ruled out any respiratory problems, the Vatican said. Francis, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, underwent a CAT scan, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said. The test at Rome's Gemelli hospital, where Francis was treated for a respiratory infection earlier this year, was done to rule out any possible respiratory problems and came back negative, Bruni said in a statement. Earlier Saturday, the Vatican said the pope had cancelled his audiences because of the flu. Francis is due to travel on Friday to Dubai for the COP28 conference on climate change. Bruni provided no information about any change in his plans and in fact the Vatican on Saturday gave new details about his itinerary, suggesting the trip was still on. The pope will turn 87 next month. When asked about his health in a recent interview - after setbacks that included abdominal surgery just a few months ago to repair a hernia and remove intestinal scarring - Francis quipped in reply what has become his standard line - "Still alive, you know."

3 CHILDREN KILLED IN EXPLOSION IN PAK: POLICE

Peshawar: At least three children were killed and four others injured when a mortar shell they were playing with exploded in Pakistan's restive northwest tribal region on Saturday, police said. The incident occurred in Kurram tribal District of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan when the children were playing with the mortar shell in a field unaware of it being a bomb when it went off killing two of them on the spot. "Such incidents have happened in the past as well. Today the children were playing with the mortar shell when it exploded and three of them died on the spot. Four others were injured," said the police. The police have started investigations into the explosion caused by an unattended mortar shell. Police said the mortar shell that landed in mountainous village Matkhoa was not exploded in the recent fight between two tribes.

AVALANCHE IN WEST IRAN KILLS 5 CLIMBERS

Tehran: An avalanche killed five mountain climbers and injured four others in west Iran, state media reported on Saturday. A report by the state-owned IRNA news agency said rescue teams recovered the bodies of five climbers from San Boran peak, some 300 kilometres (about 186 miles) southwest of the capital Tehran. The other four injured were taken to hospital. The report said the 9-member team of climbers began their journey on Thursday despite a warning by local authorities about possible risk. The peak, the highest of the Oshtrankoo mountain range at 4,150 metres (about 13,600 feet), witnessed heavy rain and snow in recent weeks. Iran has occasionally seen deadly avalanches. In 2020, a series of avalanches killed 12 people in a mountainous area north of Tehran.

'AT LEAST 9 KILLED IN SYRIAN GOVT SHELLING'

Beirut: Syrian government forces' shelling of a northwestern village on Saturday killed at least nine people, including six children, as they picked olives, opposition activists said. The shelling of the village of Qawqafeen, in Idlib province, is the latest violation of a truce reached in March 2020 between Russia and Turkey, who back rival sides in Syria's 12-year conflict that has killed half a million people. Hundreds of people have been killed or wounded over the past years in violations of the truce that ended a month-long Russian-backed government offensive on the northwestern Idlib province, the last major rebel stronghold in Syria. The shelling of the farm was reported by the Britain-based opposition war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and the opposition's Syrian Civil Defense, also known as White Helmets. The White Helmets said it treated one woman who was wounded and handed over the bodies of the dead to their families. Idlib is home to more than 4 million people, many of them internally displaced by Syria's conflict that broke out in March 2011. The war displaced half the country's prewar population of 23 million and left large parts of Syria destroyed.

Top diplomats from Japan, China meet in S Korea

Tokyo (AP): Top diplomats from Japan and China met for bilateral talks on Saturday as they try to resolve disputes including China's ban on Japanese seafood that has badly hit Japanese exporters.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and her Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, met in South Korea's southern port city of Busan. They will join their host, Park Jin, for three-way talks on Sunday.

Kamikawa, who took office in September and met with Wang in person for the first time, said their meeting was "extremely meaningful". She said they had agreed to start security and economic meetings, but gave no details.

The Japanese and Chinese leaders met 10 days ago in San Francisco, on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit and achieved a vague agreement on easing a dispute over China's ban on Japanese seafood.

11 killed in fire in Karachi shopping mall

PTI ■ KARACHI

A massive fire tore through a shopping mall in Pakistan's Karachi city on Saturday, killing at least 11 people and injuring six, officials said.

The fire that broke out at around 7 am on the second floor engulfed the fourth, fifth and sixth floors of the shopping mall, but it was not clear what caused it.

Twelve fire tenders, a snorkel and around 50 fire-fighters were called to control the fire and rescue around 42 people in the building.

Chief Fire Officer Mubin Ahmed said that 11 people were killed and six injured in the blaze mostly due to smoke inhalation and panic as the electricity to the building had to be cut off to control the blaze.

"Our teams are still searching for anyone still in the building but we rescued 42 people, all males who were present when the fire broke out around 7 am this morning," he told PTI.



Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab confirmed that nine persons were killed in the fire but Police official Summaya Syed said that so far 11 bodies have been brought to two hospitals.

Nine were brought to Jinnah Hospital while 2 others were taken to Civil Hospital, she said, adding that the condition of 6 of those rescued was critical. Mubin said they were still

investigating the reason for the fire but just earlier this week, city planners and engineers at a seminar said they were sure some 90 per cent of structures in Karachi - residential, commercial and industrial - did not have fire prevention and firefighting systems.

They agreed that it was "criminal negligence" on the part of regulatory bodies like the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) that put the lives of millions of people in the metropolis at risk.

A senior police official of the area, Raja Tariq said the building was a commercial high-rise that housed shopping centres, call centres and software houses.

A statement from the Fire and Rescue spokesperson said the fire had since been controlled and the cooling process was now underway.

Tariq said last year also a smaller fire broke out in the same mall but was controlled quickly and was caused by short-circuiting.

Court sentences two former Pak army officers for inciting sedition

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Two retired Pakistan Army officers have been court-martialed for inciting sedition, the army announced on Saturday, indicating that controversial military court trials of those accused of unprecedented violence against military installations on May 9 have begun. Major (Retired) Adil Farooq Raja and Captain (Retired) Haider Raza Mehdi were court-martialed and they were convicted and sentenced through Field General Court Martial (FGCM) under Pakistan Army Act, 1952 for the charges of inciting sedition among army personnel," the Army said in a statement.

They have also violated the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 related to espionage and acts prejudicial to the safety and interest of the State, it said.

Major Raja was sentenced to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment, while Captain Mehdi was given 12 years of rigorous imprisonment. Both of them

have been living abroad and were sentenced in absentia.

The court of competent jurisdiction convicted and adjudged both the individuals on October 7 and October 9, 2023, through due judicial process, the statement said, adding that the ranks of both officers were forfeited on November 21.

Senior journalist Mazhar Abbas told Geo News that Raja, who is known for his pro-Imran Khan stance, and Mehdi host vlogs on Youtube have been critical of the senior Army leadership through their social media posts and said he (Abbas) believes this is the beginning of the trials of people who were convicted after May 9 in military courts.

Hundreds of former prime minister Imran Khan's supporters had stormed military and government installations, and even torched a general's house, following the brief arrest of the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party by the Punjab Rangers on May 9 in an alleged corruption case.

Cash-strapped Pak planning Rs 350 mn cloud seeding to curb severe air pollution in Lahore

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's Punjab province is planning to carry out an artificial rain experiment with China's help in Lahore, one of the cities to face the worst air pollution across the globe, a project estimated to cost Rs 350 million in the cash-strapped country, according to media reports here.

"On Friday, Lahore once again was ranked first in terms of air pollution in the world," the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported, quoting the Meteorological Department sources that said the average Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 356 in the provincial capital.

Each winter, Lahore in Pakistan and Delhi in India have continued to be the worst polluted cities across the world in recent years. Incidentally, the government of Delhi has also announced the possibility of using artificial rains to bring down air pollutants.

Meteorology plays an important role in determining the level of air pollution in north Pakistan, just as it is a



major factor in the neighbouring region of northwest India. After the rainy season, when the crop is harvested, and farmers from both sides tend to burn the stubble adding to the existing causes of pollution.

Quoting sources in the Finance Ministry, The News International on Friday said, "As part of its efforts to combat the severe smog levels in Lahore, the Punjab government is planning to carry out artificial rain in the provincial capital, a project which is estimated to cost Rs 350 million."

Earlier this week, Chief Meteorologist Chaudhry Aslam said that artificial rain is expected in Lahore next month and preparations are underway for it as the government ups its efforts to curb smog.

A report in The Express Tribune newspaper said the Punjab government had sought

advice from experts to finalise a comprehensive plan for artificial rain to counter smog.

Punjab Interim Information Minister Amir Mir was quoted as saying by the newspaper that "matters have been settled with the Chinese experts" as cloud seeding is the most effective way for artificial rain.

The news reports also mentioned that the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has successfully tested artificial rain in the past.

Meanwhile, several people have raised questions about spending Rs 350 million for the experiment in the already struggling times. On November 15, the International Monetary Fund's delegation wrapped two-week-long talks with Pakistani officials and announced that a staff-level agreement has been reached to enable it to release USD 700 million in the second tranche of an already agreed USD 3 billion loan. In four months, the Pakistan government has already borrowed USD 6 billion while it expects rollovers of USD 12.5 billion.

Imran Khan moves SC for bail in Al-Qadir Trust corruption case

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Imran Khan has moved the Supreme Court for bail in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case in which Pakistan's jailed former prime minister and his wife are accused of receiving land worth billions of rupees as a bribe from a real estate tycoon, according to a media report. Khan, 71, who has been incarcerated in the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since September 26 in various cases, on Friday moved the apex court following rejection of his plea by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on November 14.

According to The Express Tribune newspaper, Khan in the bail application alleged that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), while acting as a tool of the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government, used the case to harass him on political grounds.

In the appeal, the Supreme Court was requested to annul the IHC decision of November 14 and the decision of the accountability court on August 10 on his arrest in the Al-Qadir

Trust case.

The Ali-Qadir Trust case is about the settlement of 190 million pounds, about Rs 50 billion, which the UK's National Crime Agency sent to Pakistan after recovering the amount from a Pakistani property tycoon.

Khan, being the prime minister then, instead of depositing in the national treasury, allowed the businessman to use the amount to partly settle a fine of about Rs 450 billion imposed by the Supreme Court some years ago.

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

Separately, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief's petition for an early decision on a request for withdrawal of his appeal against the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to disqualify him in the Toshakhana case following his conviction in the case in August.

Militants kill 14 farmers in east Congo

Kinshasa (AP): Militants from a shadowy extremist organisation with ties to the Islamic State Group killed at least 14 farmers in Congo's hard-hit eastern region, a local official said on Saturday.

The Allied Democratic Forces attacked Mamove village in North Kivu province on Friday night where they beheaded the farmers working on their fields, said Samson Simara, a delegate of the provincial governor.

"This death toll could rise because other farmers are missing," he told local media, adding that the militants also burned down several houses in the village.

Armed violence in eastern Congo has been simmering for decades as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities, but it spiked in late 2021 when another rebel group, that goes by M23 and had been largely dormant, resurfaced and initiated attacks to seize land.

Indian-origin student in coma after assault in Australia

Melbourne (PTI): An Indian-origin student in Australia is in a medically induced coma after he was assaulted and a suspect has been taken into custody and charged with criminal assault, according to a media report.

The student, who has not been identified, is in his 20s. He is pursuing a master's degree at the University of Tasmania.

The incident took place on November 5 at a precinct in Tasmania and the victim had 'extra jural bleeding' that caused his brain to shift, Sydney-based Special Broadcasting Service reported.

According to reports, his right lung collapsed and he had to undergo brain surgery, a procedure lasting several hours.

Benjamin Dodge Collings, a 25-year-old resident of Lenah Valley, was taken into custody by police shortly after the event and

charged with criminal code assault, an offence carrying a maximum sentence of 21 years in prison.

Collings was granted a magistrate bail and is scheduled to return to court on December 4 to respond to the charges, including assault, providing a false address and name, resisting a police officer, and unrelated driving offences, 2024.

"My journey to public service began the morning after the 2016 election, when I faced the reality that democracy requires participation - not observation," the Minnesota congressman said in a statement.

"Seven years have passed, each presenting historic opportunities to practise a brand of optimistic politics that repairs relationships and improves people's lives. We have met those moments, and after three terms it is time to pass the torch," he added.

While Phillips has been effusive in his praise for Biden, the 54-year-old also says Democrats need

Won't run for re-election to Congress: Phillips

AP ■ MINNEAPOLIS

Democratic Rep Dean Phillips, who is running for president and challenging Joe Biden in the primary, announced on Friday he will not seek reelection to Congress in 2024.

"I faced the reality that democracy requires participation - not observation," the Minnesota congressman said in a statement.

"Seven years have passed, each presenting historic opportunities to practise a brand of optimistic politics that repairs relationships and improves people's lives. We have met those moments, and after three terms it is time to pass the torch," he added.

While Phillips has been effusive in his praise for Biden, the 54-year-old also says Democrats need

younger voices to avoid a scenario where Trump wins another election next fall.

Several prominent Democrats - including Minnesota Governor Tim Walz -- have criticised Phillips' decision to run against Biden, likening it to a "political side show".

Ken Martin, chair of Minnesota Democrats and a Democratic National Committee vice chair, said in a statement he appreciates Phillips' service and his "100 per cent voting record supporting President Biden's historic record of accomplishments".

Martin added there are a number of Democrats who "understand the importance of reelecting President Biden" and keeping Phillips' congressional seat in Democratic hands.

Martin said he is confident the party will have a "strong and loyal" nominee.

'No permission given to anyone to build replica of Pashupatinath temple in India'

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Authorities at Nepal's Pashupati Area Development Trust on Saturday said that no permission has been given to anyone to build a replica of the world-famous Pashupatinath temple here in India.

A statement from the Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT) came in the wake of media reports stating that a replica of the Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu was being constructed in a village in Uttarakhand. The centuries-old temple is devoted to the Hindu god Shiva, in his avatar as Pashupati, the protector of animals.

"There is no truth in the news report that Pashupatinath Temple is being built in Uttarakhand of India and the Trust's attention has been drawn towards this false news report," Dr Ghanashyam Khatiwada, the executive director of PADT said in a statement.

Lost & Found advertisement for Himanshu Tyagi, including contact information and details of lost documents.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY advertisement, providing details about recruitment and services.

Sebi to introduce regulatory framework for index providers

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Markets watchdog Sebi on Saturday approved a slew of proposals, including providing flexibility to Not for Profit Organisations (NPOs) in raising funds through the social stock exchange and also decided to introduce a regulatory framework for index providers.



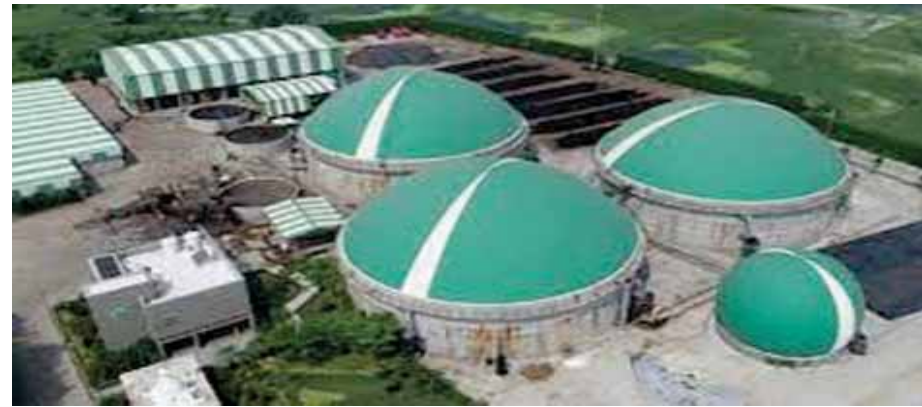
Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch said the objective is to help expand the market significantly so that more retail investors can have fractional ownership in REIT units. Sebi is open to looking at creating more such products, Buch told reporters after the board meeting.

for NPOs on the social stock exchange will be reduced to Rs 50 lakh from Rs 1 crore. Among other decisions, a regulatory framework will be introduced for the index providers to foster transparency and accountability in governance and administration of financial benchmarks in the securities market.

Govt makes biogas blending mandatory

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday announced compulsory blending of compressed biogas, which is extracted from municipal and agriculture waste, in natural gas to cut reliance on imports.



CBG in city gas distribution sector, import substitution for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), saving in forex, promoting circular economy and to assist in achieving the target of net zero emission.

CBG shall be kept as 1 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent of total CNG/PNG consumption for FY 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 respectively. From 2028-29 onwards CBO will be 5 per cent, the statement said.

DLF says ED officials visited its office seeking info related to Supertech probe

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realty major DLF on Saturday said Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials visited its office to seek information related to the investigation in the Supertech case.



DLF said the transactions were done in the ordinary course of business. In a regulatory filing, DLF informed that "we would like to inform that a team of officials from the Enforcement Directorate visited our premises seeking information with respect to investigation being conducted in the matter of Supertech."

FM rejects Kerala's fund neglect claims

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday dismissed allegations by Kerala's Left government of negligence in fund allocation and claimed that the Central government promptly sends the required funds to the people of the southern state without any delay.

Assistance Programme (NSAP), all the pending liabilities and the first tranche of 2023-24, covering senior citizen pensions, amounting to Rs 602.14 crore has already been released to Kerala in October 2023," the finance minister said.



with 50-year interest free loans as Special Assistance for Capital Investment, where Centre bears the interest cost. "One thing the Kerala government had to do was to follow the branding guidelines of the Parliament-approved Centrally Sponsored Schemes. It can't be re-branded by the state gov-

Providing details of allocations made to Kerala and said, "Whatever amount has to go to the people of Kerala from the Central government is being sent in time, without any delay." This is for the first time Sitharaman responded to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Finance Minister K N Balagopal's accusations of the Centre's negligence since the Left leaders started targeting the Union government constantly on the matter.

'Abhyudaya Coop Bank net NPA at 12 pc; professional team can clean up balance sheet'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank's net non-performing assets (NPAs) ratio have zoomed up to 12 per cent, sources said on Saturday. A day after the Reserve Bank superseded the city-headquartered bank's board, it has emerged that the cooperative bank's cost-to-income ratio had zoomed up to 80 per cent.



The person added that Abhyudaya Bank will continue its normal business as there are no restrictions placed on it. On Friday, there were reports saying that the RBI has agreed to open its currency chest for the next three days in order to ensure that all the ATMs of the lender dispense cash as sought by the depositors.

Arohan MFI aims to enhance lending through digital mode

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Micro-lender Arohan Financial Services is eyeing to increase lending through the digital mode due to its better compliance in repayments and administrative convenience, an official said.



that the average ticket size of loans is Rs 55,000 to Rs 60,000. On the whole, the MFI disburses around Rs 500 crore to Rs 600 crore per month. Head of digital growth at Arohan Reema Mukherjee said "Two to three per cent of the total exposure will be through the digital route in the coming days".

Berkshire Hathaway sells 2.46 pc stake in Paytm for ₹1,371 cr

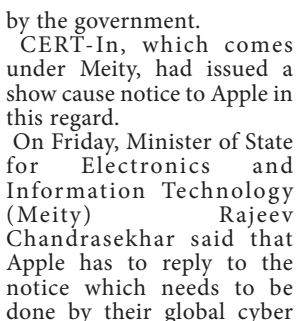


Billionaire Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc has sold its entire 2.46 per cent stake in Paytm for Rs 1,371 crore through an open market transaction at a loss of about 31 per cent per share. The company had acquired 2.6 per cent stake in Paytm for Rs 1,279.7 per share at an aggregate value of Rs 2,179 crore, as per an official document.

iPhone warning notifications to MPs: Apple team from US likely to meet CERT-In officials this month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Apple's cyber security executives from the US are expected to meet officials of CERT-In this month regarding the show cause notice issued to the company in the wake of several opposition MPs receiving a warning notification on their iPhones.



He said that the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team or CERT-In has met local representatives of Apple but the issue is beyond their capability to respond. "It is their cyber security people who have to come and meet CERT-In and they will

come all the way from the US," the minister said. When asked about the deadline given to Apple to submit its response, the minister said he is not certain about the dates but expects the team to meet Cert-In officials sometime this month.

Mallikarjun Kharge, party leaders Shashi Tharoor, Pawan Khera, K C Venugopal, Supriya Shrinete, T S Singhdeo and Bhupinder S Hooda; Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi, Aam Aadmi Party's Raghav Chadha, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi and some aides of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi also received the notification.

The shares were purchased at an average price of Rs 877.20 per piece, taking the aggregate deal value to Rs 1,039.52 crore. Details of the other buyers could not be ascertained. Shares of One97 Communications declined 3.08 per cent to close at Rs 895 apiece on the NSE on Friday. In October, fintech company One97 Communications, which operates under the Paytm brand, reported the narrowing of consolidated loss to Rs 291.7 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal. The company had posted a loss of Rs 571.5 crore in the year-ago period.

Two-step selection process to pick wrestlers for Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The wrestling squad for the 2024 Paris Olympics will be finalised through a two-step selection process, where the grapplers who have earned the quota places for the country, will compete against a challenger in June and the winner will represent India in the quadrennial showpiece. So far only Antim Panghal, the world championships bronze medalist in 53kg category, has earned a quota place for the country and she too will have to compete against a challenger on June 1 to know whether she will go to Paris or not.

The young Antim could end up competing against arch-rival Vinesh Phogat for the Paris berth if the 2018 Asian Games gold medalist emerges a "challenger", which will be determined on May 31.

The IOA constituted ad-hoc committee stated in a statement on Saturday that all the challengers will be determined on May 31 and the "wrestle-off" between the "Challenger" and Olympic quota winner will take place on June 1.

While only Antim has been able to clinch an Olympic quota place for the country, more wrestlers are expected to earn slots for India in the two upcoming events — the Asian Olympic Qualifier in Kyrgyzstan (April 19-21) and the World Olympic Qualifiers in Turkey (May 9-12).

India can earn 17 more Paris quota places in the two tournaments — six each in men's free-style and greco-roman and five in the women's category. All the future quota places winners too will have to compete against a challenger to secure a Paris spot.

The ad-hoc committee, led by Bhupender Singh Bajwa, said in a statement that the "comprehensive selection policy" for the



2024 Paris Olympics will ensure a "fair and transparent process in determining the athletes who will represent India on the global stage".

Antim, the two-time under-20 world champion, has, however, been exempted from appearing

in the trials in February to select the team for the two Olympic qualifying events in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. The other members of the Indian contingent for the two Olympic qualifying events will be selected on the basis of tri-

als, to be conducted in all 30 Olympic and non-Olympic categories, from February 27-29. All grapplers who were part of the Hangzhou Asian Games and 2023 Senior World Championships can compete in the February trials, besides

international medallists in various championships, winners of open trials in U-17, U-20, U-23 categories and all senior Nationals and National Games medallists this year.

Bajwa, when asked whether Indian grapplers will compete

under the United World Wrestling (UWW) flag at the Paris Olympics since the Wrestling Federation of India has been banned by the international body, told PTI that, since the Olympics and Asian Games are multi-discipline

events, "they will compete as part of the Indian contingent". UWW had banned WFI earlier this year for its failure to hold elections within a stipulated time frame. The election process has been stalled because of legal issues.



Uday to lead India in Under-19 Asia Cup

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Promising batsman Uday Saharan will lead defending champions India in the ACC Men's Under-19 Asia Cup to be played in the UAE from December 8.

Saharan, a 19-year-old cricketer from Punjab, has been on the selection radar for a while and he was also drafted in as a back-up player after the Indian squad was hit by Covid during last year's Under-19 World Cup in Antigua.

Saamy Kumar Pandey was named as vice-captain of the 15-member side.

India are the most successful team in the U19 Asia Cup having won the title eight times. India are grouped with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal in the tournament. They will begin the campaign with a match against the Afghans on December 8 at the ICC Academy Oval-1.

In a much-anticipated match, India will lock horns with Pakistan on December 10 at the same venue, and in their final group match, they will face Nepal on December 12.

The final is scheduled to be played at the Dubai International Stadium on December 17.

INDIA U19 SQUAD: Uday Saharan (Captain), Saamy Kumar Pandey (vice-captain), Arshin Kulkarni, Adarsh Singh, Rudra Mayur Patel, Sachin Dhas, Priyanshu Moliya, Musheer Khan, Dhanush Gowda, Avinash Rao (wk), M Abhishek, Inness Mahajan (wk), Aardhya Shukla, Raj Limbani, Naman Tiwari.

Travelling reserves: Prem Devkar, Ansh Gosai, Mohammad Aman.

Non-travelling reserves: Digvijay Patil, Jayant Goyat, P Vignesh, Kiran Chormale.



Craig conducts coaching session for domestic head coaches

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Indian men's hockey team chief coach Craig Fulton has conducted a coaching session for the head coaches of member units, who are currently participating in the 13th Senior Men National Championship.

The session was organised at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium here on Friday to upgrade coaching standards at the domestic level. The session allowed a platform for the coaches to exchange knowledge among themselves.

"It was very satisfying to interact with coaches from the home setup. It was an interactive session, and I think we learned a lot," Fulton said in a release.

"It is essential to keep raising the bar for coaching across the nation. The players who advance to the Indian setup will be more prepared to make big career advancements if this is done."

The notable coaches who participated in the session include Batham Sumit (Jharkhand), Vinay Kishor (Uttarakhand), Mukesh Kumar (Haryana), Yendala Sagar (Telangana), Satender Sharma of (Delhi), Moirangthem Rinash Mettei (Manipur), Aravindan Ramachandran (Puducherry), Charles Dixon (Tamil Nadu), and Deepak Saini (Arunachal Pradesh).

The interactive coaching session delved into diverse topics, including the Indian principles of play both with and without the ball, strategic game management to the score and remaining time, and effective player management considering the demanding schedule, among other crucial aspects.

Kings stay unbeaten in NBA Minneapolis, Nov 25 (AP) DeAaron Fox had 36 points and

12 assists, and the Sacramento Kings prevented the Minnesota Timberwolves from clinching a spot in the quarterfinals of the NBA In-Season Tournament with a 124-111 victory Friday night.

The Kings improved to 3-0 in Group C in the Western Conference with the chance to win it later Friday if Golden State lost to San Antonio. The quarterfinals start Dec. 4.

"It's always good to compete for something else," said Harrison Barnes, who had 10 of his 18 points in the first quarter.

Malik Monk scored 17 points and Domantas Sabonis added 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Kings, who bounced back strong from two straight losses at New Orleans. They held Minnesota to 15 third-quarter points on 5-for-20 shooting.

"We know that we can score with the best of 'em. That's not going to surprise anybody in this league, but we know that if we want to be the best team that we can possibly be, we have to be better defensively," Fox said.

Anthony Edwards scored 35 points on 17-for-18 free-throw shooting and Karl-Anthony Towns added 27 points and 11 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who are 2-1 in the tournament. Their 11-3 start overall and 7-0 at home were the best in franchise history, and they took the court with the best record in the NBA. This was their first loss in eight home games.

"They came out, punched us in the mouth. It took us a while to respond," Wolves coach Chris Finch said. "Both teams were up for it, you could see."

The Kings led for all but 79 seconds of the first quarter. Nickell Alexander-Walker swished a 3-pointer that brought the Wolves within 72-70 less than three minutes after halftime, but they didn't get nearly enough deep

shots to drop down the stretch.

"I keep telling our guys if we can lock in the way that we're capable of defensively, we're going to have a chance to be great," Kings coach Mike Brown said.

The Kings had the decided edge in points in the paint (58-42), on second chances (26-15) and off the bench (45-25). They shot a season-best 48.6% from 3-point range, hitting 17 of 35. This fast-paced matchup between two on-the-rise clubs was Minnesota's first home game in the soccer-style tournament, with a special sky blue court unveiled to look like the players were walking on water.

The Kings looked unshakable at the beginning, with a surge of energy for the final stop on this six-game road trip. Entering the evening just 25th in the league in 3-point shooting (34.4%), they heated up in a hurry with a 7-for-9 start from deep. The Wolves brought the NBA's second-best 3-point defense to boot, yielding to opponents at a 32.3% clip.

Fox, who was one of six Kings to make multiple 3s, pitched in a soaring left-handed slam off a crossover dribble in the paint that put them up 48-33. They built their biggest lead of the game (57-35) on a dunk by Monk that punctuated a 19-4 spurt to open the second quarter.

"In the second quarter we started to stay home more," Edwards said. "We should've been doing it from the jump because the coaches had a great game plan."

UP NEXT
Kings: Host Golden State Tuesday, their final group play game of the in-season tournament.

Timberwolves: Visit Memphis Sunday. They host Oklahoma City on Tuesday, their last scheduled game for the round-robin portion of the tournament.

AP ■ MADRID

Alaves got just its second win in the last 10 Spanish league games, with forwards Samu Omorodion and Abde Rebbach playing starring roles in its 3-1 triumph at home to struggling Granada.

The home side took the lead after 11 minutes. Former Granada player Omorodion and defender Raul Torrente both dived for Rebbach's low cross from the left but it was the defender who was adjudged to have touched the ball over his 'keeper and into the net.

Alaves records rare win in Spain with 3-1 victory over Granada

Rebbach doubled Alaves' lead after 37 minutes with a fine right-foot shot from the left and then Omorodion got his fifth goal of the season nine minutes into the second half with a solid header.

"We knew this was an important game and we've played brilliantly, both the 11 starters and the subs as well," Omorodion told broadcaster

Movistar. "I've been playing well recently and feeling good. I knew that if I scored I wouldn't celebrate because Granada gave me so much and it's thanks to them that I am here today."

Granada was without top scorer Bryan Zaragoza, who missed the game through suspension, and created little threat up front until late in the match.

Its consolation goal in the 86th came from Myrto Uzuni's penalty after Famara Diedhiou was toppled in the box.

Granada remains second from last in the league with just seven points from 14 matches. It faces Real Madrid away in its next game on Dec. 2. Alaves moved up to 12th and can add more points when it plays struggling Mallorca on Dec.

Mbappé scores a penalty as PSG beats Monaco 5-2

AP ■ PARIS

Star striker Kylian Mbappé scored his 14th Ligue goal of the season as French leader Paris Saint-Germain beat third-place Monaco 5-2 to move four points clear at the top.

Second-place Nice can keep the gap at one point if it beats Toulouse as home on Sunday.

After striker Gonçalo Ramos put PSG ahead in the 18th minute, Monaco equalized four minutes later following a mistake from goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

He was under pressure from Monaco forward Folarin Balogun, hesitated, and shot the ball straight at Japan forward Takumi Minamino, who finished confidently for his fourth league goal of the season.

PSG regained the lead through Mbappé in the 39th when defender Soungoutou Magassa tried to clear the ball and clipped the leg of winger Ousmane Dembélé for a penalty. Mbappé, who joined PSG from Monaco for 180 million euros (\$197 million) in 2017, sent his spot kick into the top left corner.

Dembélé made it 3-1 in the 70th, expertly controlling a long pass from midfielder Fabian Ruiz and netting with a powerful shot. It was his first



PSG goal since joining in August from Barcelona. Two minutes later, Mbappé picked out Portugal midfielder Vitinha and he curled a fine shot into the top right corner.

Moments after that goal, however, PSG's defense fell asleep and allowed Balogun to score with a low shot after being put through by Minamino. It was the United States forward's fourth league goal of the season.

There was still enough time for France forward Randal Kolo Muani to grab PSG's fifth goal in the sixth minute of stoppage time, as Monaco fell six points behind PSG with its third defeat of the campaign.



Kane scores again as Bayern back on top

AP ■ BERLIN

Harry Kane scored yet again to lead Bayern Munich to the top of the Bundesliga with a 1-0 win at Cologne.

No other player has ever scored 18 goals in the first 12 rounds of the Bundesliga, while Kane also became the first English player to reach 18 goals in a single Bundesliga season, overtaking the 17 scored both by Jadon Sancho for Borussia Dortmund (2019-20) and Kevin Keegan for Hamburger SV (1978-79).

From Bayern's point of view, Kane's goal put the pressure on early season leader Bayer Leverkusen, which can reclaim first place Saturday with a win at Werder Bremen.

But Bayern, the 11-time defending champion, missed several opportunities to put the result beyond doubt and had to endure unnecessarily nervy final minutes in Cologne, where Jamal Musiala scored late on the final day last season to snatch the title from Dortmund.

"One-nil, we probably know we could have scored a couple more in the first half but, really, a great victory," Kane said.

Thomas Müller had to be content to watch from the sideline again Friday as coach Thomas Tuchel opted for Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting in support of star forward Kane. It was the eighth league game in which the

Bayern veteran sat among the substitutes - this time for the whole match.

Müller hasn't started in any of Bayern's four Champions League games so far, while the only time he played a full match this season was in Bayern's shock 2-1 loss to third-division team Saarbrücken in the German Cup.

Bayern almost scored when Cologne defender Timo Hübers deflected the ball against his own post, but the visitors didn't have to wait long for Kane to strike in the 20th minute.

It came on a counterattack when Choupo-Moting's shot was cleared off the line by Julian Chabot - but only as far as Kane, who gratefully sent the ball inside the right post.

"It was a nice one that fell to me, probably one of the easier ones I'll score in my career," Kane said. "But that first half, we created some really good chances, some clear chances. It was just unlucky, a few bobbles on the pitch."

Cologne 'keeper Marvin Schwäbe got the better of Leroy Sané, who was frustrated again in the second half. Kingsley Coman also struck the crossbar with a header for Bayern. Tuchel made no changes at all during the game despite complaining about the burden on players playing so soon after returning from international duty.

Man United forward Marcus will miss crucial Champions League match against Galatasaray

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Marcus Rashford will miss Manchester United's Champions League game at Galatasaray next week after UEFA confirmed a one-match ban.

Rashford was sent off for "rough play" following a challenge on Elias Jelert in United's 4-3 loss against Copenhagen earlier this month. United manager Erik ten Hag described it as "harsh," but UEFA confirmed the decision by referee Donatas Rumsas after a VAR review had been upheld.

"I think when you freeze it, it always looks worse. I'm very disappointed about such decisions. I think the game is never meant to be like this," Ten Hag said at the time. "It has nothing to do with football."



Defeat to Copenhagen put United's hopes of advancing to the Champions League knockout stage in the balance.

United is currently bottom of Group A with three points. A loss to Galatasaray on Wednesday would end the three-time European champion's hopes in the competition.

Ten Hag will hope to have Denmark striker Rasmus Hojlund available after he suffered a muscle strain against Luton before the recent international break. He could be back for Sunday's Premier League game against Everton, with a decision to be taken over his fitness on Saturday.

Luke Shaw is back from a thigh injury, which has ruled the England international out since August. Goalkeeper Andre Onana is available after suffering a knock playing for Cameroon. Christian Eriksen is out with a knee injury and Jonny Evans has a thigh problem.

Ten Hag said Mason Mount has an "issue" that needs to be assessed before the Everton game.

Akram on India's World Cup final loss

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former Pakistani all-rounder Wasim Akram blamed the Indian middle-order for lack of intent, leading to the side's defeat in the World Cup final against Australia last Sunday in Ahmedabad.

Batting first, India posted a modest total of 240 in 50 overs. While skipper-cum-opener Rohit Sharma (47) and Virat Kohli (54) were hit at the top order, KL Rahul (66) was the only success in the middle-order.

Analysing the situation, Akram felt that although pressure was on Rahul to play a composed innings, he also sensed that the middle-order batters could have approached the game with a 'do or die' mindset.

"I suppose the middle-order should have played with a 'do or die' mindset. I can understand what was going through Rahul's mind, that there was no batting to come after (Ravindra) Jadeja and that he had to bat deep, and batting deep meant he couldn't take risks of getting out," he told Star Sports.

"If Hardik was in the team, he (Rahul) probably would've taken that risk. But, if he had taken a risk and gotten out in this situation, then people would have criticised him for that as well."

"If they had kept pace and scored quickly in the middle overs, then it would have been a different ball game," he added. For the Men in Blue, Rohit finished the tournament as the second-highest run-scorer after Kohli, thanks to his attacking intent.

Meanwhile, Akram attested that the captain was right to move ahead with his attacking approach in the final, as it had given him success throughout the tournament.

"He's played like that in the entire World Cup, that's his game. Nobody complained throughout the World Cup with the starts he's giving, or that he was constantly getting out in the

'MIDDLE-ORDER SHOULD HAVE PLAYED WITH A 'DO OR DIE' MINDSET'



40s, and now that he's done the same in the final, people are finding a reason to complain."

"He's also one of the best players of spin in the world, though he got out to (Glenn) Maxwell in that game, and credit to Maxwell and Cummins. But that's the nature of Rohit's game, and I don't think he should change it," he added.

While defending the total, the Indians could manage to hold only four Australian wickets with the pacers being the most effective ones on the Motera track.

Besides Jasprit Bumrah, who seized a couple of wickets, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj grabbed a wicket each.

During the Aussie chase, Shami was brought in during the powerplay, while Siraj was handed the duties only after the powerplay.

Akram felt bringing in Siraj ahead of Shami could have worked better, given his ability to bowl economical spells.

"I found Siraj to be bowling really well throughout the World Cup, though his wickets column may not suggest that. But the breakthroughs he gave in Asia Cup and his recent performances have established him as the future of Indian cricket," he continued.

"In this match, they straightaway brought in Shami, and he did have impact on the game by getting (David) Warner out, though it was more like Warner got himself out by slashing at a wide ball.

"Another factor is that after losing the three wickets within the first 15 overs the due set in, which made it easier for batting as the ball wasn't doing much after that," said Akram.

"I'm not taking credit away from Australia's batting, but it does psychologically affect the bowlers. I think in big games like the finals, teams should always stick to what they have been doing and what's been working for them," he concluded.



Being one step ahead of SKY is often hard at times: Aussie pacer

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Trying to stay a step ahead of players like Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan has always been left-arm pacer Jason Behrendorff's endeavour but it is easier said than done at times, admitted the Australian speedster ahead of the second T20 International against India.

Behrendorff was the only Aussie bowler, who came out unscathed with figures of 1/25 in his full quota even as all others conceded well over 11 runs on an average during India's record run-chase of 209 in the opening game in Visakhapatnam.

Skipper Surya's 80 off 42 balls and Kishan's half-century laid the foundation of India's win. So, when asked what could possibly be his strategy to stop his Mumbai Indians teammate, Behrendorff replied in jest, "Give the ball to someone else may be."

"They are all pretty good players and may be try to keep them guessing, just to stay one step ahead which is hard to do at times. Maybe, do what we can in terms of change in pace, line and length," the lanky seamer said during the pre-match media conference on Saturday.

The team management's brief to Behrendorff has been simple, get the ball to jag around and get some breakthroughs in the first six overs of Powerplay. "I have been pretty fortunate that the ball swung pretty much whenever I have played in India. So, sticking to my strength and trying to swing the ball upfront and take wickets in Powerplay, that's what I have been able to do over a period of time," the seamer explained his role.

The man who took 14 wickets in 12 IPL games for Mumbai Indians during the 2023 IPL, believes in keeping the line of his deliveries straight as the margin of error is minuscule.

"The main thing was to see if there's any swing upfront and that's my main strength and trying to stick to that. Line-wise, I was generally trying to be straighter than anything because you know in India it can travel to the fence quickly. In terms of variations, I try it depending upon the surface and at some places it grips more than others," he explained his thought process. Behrendorff wasn't a part of the World Cup-winning squad and he utilised the time well, playing domestic cricket and working on improving his existing skill-set.

Australian spinner Nathan mocks 'Bazball'



PTI ■ LONDON

Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon has dismissed assertions that "Bazball", an aggressive brand of cricket displayed by the England Test team, has revolutionised the game. Lyon, who is just four wickets shy of 500 wickets in Test cricket, said he did not see 'Bazball' in the two Ashes fixtures he was part of last year before getting injured for the remaining three.

The term "Bazball" came into being after Brendon McCullum, who is nicknamed Baz, was appointed England Test coach last year.

"I'm 2-0 against Bazball so I am happy," Lyon joked on Channel

7's Front Bar programme. "It's a load of s***, if you ask me. It's a brand of cricket that the English want to keep going with. Now, it's in the dictionary, which is pretty extraordinary."

It was not the first time Lyon mocked 'Bazball' and here again he termed aggression as an ability to shift through the gears during the course of a Test match.

"I know everyone keeps talking about BazBall, to be honest, I didn't really see BazBall... throughout my two Tests against them."

"I look at the Australian cricket team and the batters we've had, David Warner for example... I've seen him score hundreds in a session and that's off playing an attacking brand of cricket."

"I think there's a lot of smoke and mirrors with BazBall, if I'm being honest with you, and I feel like if you're going to play an aggressive brand of cricket anyway, it's about being able to go up and down in gears and understanding the moments in the game," he added.

Australia had retained the Ashes with the five-match series ending at 2-2 last year.

Hooda, Chahar headline Rajasthan's five-wicket win over Gujarat

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Deepak Hooda and Deepak Chahar underlined their white ball credentials with an unbeaten fifty and a six-wicket haul respectively, guiding Rajasthan to a five-wicket win over Gujarat in a Group D Vijay Hazare match here on Saturday.

Chahar's six for 41 was instrumental in Rajasthan bowling out Gujarat for 128 in 29 overs at the Sector-26 Cricket Ground.

Rajasthan were in some early turmoil at 18 for 4, but Hooda calmed the nerves with a gritty 76 off 79 balls (8x4, 3x6) as they went past the target in 28.4 overs.

MUMBAI OVERCOME KERALA: In a Group A match, Mumbai braved a gritty Kerala and a couple of rain delays to carve an eight-wicket victory at the Alur-KSCA Oval.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi (57 off 47 balls, 5x4, 4x6) and captain Ajinkya Rahane (34 n.O off 20 balls, 4x6) propelled Mumbai past the revised target (under VJD method) of 159 in 30 overs in 24.2 overs.

Earlier, Sachin Baby made a hundred (104, 134 balls, 8x4, 2x6) and Sanju Samson (55, 83 balls, 3x4, 2x6) played around a batting collapse to take Kerala to 231 all out in 49.1 overs.

HIMMAT, SUYASH SPUR DELHI: Leg-spinner Suyash Sharma's four-wicket haul and Himmat Singh's quick-fire fifty powered Delhi to a facile eight-wicket win over Mizoram in their Group C match. Sharma's 4 for 25 enabled Delhi to bowl out Mizoram for



128 and then chased down the target in just 17 over, losing two wickets. Himmat (52 off 43 balls) and Badoni (45 off 24 balls) made light work of the target.

HARYANA TROUNCE BIHAR: In a Group C match, pacer Harshal Patel (4/49) and SP Kumar (3/25) helped Haryana restrict Bihar to 112 all out in 30.4 overs. With openers Yuvraj Singh (50 off 57 balls) and Ankit Kumar (61 off 60 balls)

scoring briskly, Haryana overhauled the target in just under 20 overs for a 10-wicket win.

SAI SUDARSHAN, WARRIOR SHINE FOR TN: B Sai Sudarshan's 125 off 144 balls lifted Tamil Nadu to 296 for eight in a Group E match against Goa. The total proved too strong for the Goans as pacer Sandeep Warrier's 4 for 20 in seven overs helped TN shot out them for 263 to etch a 33-run victory. Brief scores:

Group A: Kerala: 231 all out in 49.1 overs (Sachin Baby 104, Sanju Samson 55; Mohit Avasthi 4/24, Tushar Deshpande 3/56) lost to **Mumbai** (revised target under VJD method: 159 in 30 overs); 161/2 in 24.2 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 57, Ajinkya Rahane 34 not out, Suvud Parkar 27 not out) by 8 wickets. **Group B: Manipur:** 113 all out in 45.4 overs (Johnson 51 not out; Rajaneesh Gurbani 3/36, Akshay Karnewar 4/18)

lost to **Vidarbha:** 115 for 2 in 16.5 overs (A Mokhadde 49, SR Ramaswamy 30 not out, Karun Nair 18 not out) by 8 wickets.

Group C: Mizoram: 128 all out in 42.1 overs (Jehu Anderson 38; Suyash Sharma 4/25) lost to **Delhi:** 132/2 in 16.5 overs (Ayush Badoni 45 not out, Himmat Singh 52 not out) by 8 wickets.

Bihar: 112 all out (Pratap 46 not out; Harshal Patel 4/49, SP Kumar 3/25) lost to **Haryana:** 117 for no loss in 19.1 overs (Yuvraj Singh 50 not out, Ankit Kumar 61 not out) by 10 wickets.

Group D: Gujarat: 128 all out in 29 overs (Chirag Gandhi 43 not out; Deepak Chahar 6/41) lost to **Rajasthan:** 129/5 in 28.4 overs (Deepak Hooda 76 not out, Mahipal Lomror 26 not out; Arzan Nagwaswalla 3/31) by 5 wickets.

Himachal Pradesh: 276 all out in 50 overs (PS Chopra 61, Rishi Dhawan 48; Kartik Tyagi 3/46, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 1/36) lost to **Uttar Pradesh:** 277/3 in 37 overs (Swastik 117, Priyam Garg 74, Nitish Rana 42 not out) by 7 wickets.

Group E: Bengal: 314/8 in 50 overs (Abhimanyu Easwaran 141, Abhishek Porel 59, Anustup Majumdar 41; Atit Sheth 3/51) beat **Bardoda:** 219 all out in 44.2 overs (Shashwat Rawat 59, Shivalki Sharma 39; Karan Lal 3/43, Pradipta Pramanik 3/46) by 95 runs.

Tamil Nadu: 296/8 in 50 overs (B Sai Sudarshan 125, Dinesh Karthik 47 not out; Darshan Mishal 2/44) beat **Goa:** 263 all out in 50 overs (KV Siddharth 61, Snehal Kauthankar 55; Sandeep Warrier 4/20, R Sai Kishore 3/32).

Indian bowlers look for improved outing against Australia in second T20I

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The young Indian bowling unit will have to push behind the timid show in the series opener and find its flow against a forceful Australian batting line-up in the second T20 here on Sunday.

India had won the first game at Visakhapatnam by two wickets to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series, but their bowlers, except pacer Mukesh Kumar, looked incapable of stemming the run-flow.

The pitch and conditions at the Greenfield International Stadium will not be massively different, and that makes it imperative for the Indian bowlers to fire collectively.

Despite that, the management might not look to shake the order for this match.

In the opening encounter, pacers Arshdeep Singh and Prasidh Krishna went for 10.25 and 12.50 runs per over while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi were cart-

ed around for 13.50 runs per over. In a format like T20, it is not an uncommon sight to see bowlers getting the stick, but those three bowlers lacked imagination and variety needed on such surfaces on that day. India's ambition to double the series lead will depend a lot on them significantly improving their produce here.

It's not an impossible task either as Mukesh showed. The pace bowler mixed up his deliveries well - the yorkers, bouncers, wide deliveries around off-stump and so on - to contain the Aussie batters.

So, the other frontline bowlers now have a route map to follow in the second match.

In their defence, one can say that many of them were playing top-level cricket after a gap, but such is the nature of schedule these days the players need to put their best foot forward in the first available opportunity. It is particularly true in the case of someone like Bishnoi, who

has been talked about as one to look forward to as far as the white ball formats are concerned.

But he was vastly disappointing at Vizag and looked rudderless once Josh Inglis went on the offensive against him.

Bishnoi will have to realise that he cannot rely on a sequence of googlies to make an impact as it can lead to a sense of familiarity in batters, and he will require drastic course correction here. Prasidh too was equally underwhelming, more so because he was a part of India's 50-over World Cup squad recently and had a chance to work with the top-tier players and coaches at nets.

However, there was no trace of that effort in his bowling as his attempt to purchase bounce from the track was treated with disdain by Australian batters. However, India will have not much to complain about in the batting department as skipper Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan



Kishan, Rinku Singh and Yashuvi Jaiswal displayed fine touch against the Aussie bowlers, though a bit second string. Suryakumar, Rinku and Jaiswal met the quick-scoring demands

of a high chase effortlessly, though Kishan took a few overs to settle down before hitting the overdrive. India will hope for a similar fire from them in the second match

as well, and will bank on Kishan to reduce the number of dot balls during his tenure. He was able to accelerate in the opening game after making 21 off 19 balls but the left-hander

would not want an encore of that in this match. Ruturaj Gaikwad, who was run out in the previous match, and Tilak Varma too will be eyeing some runs against their name as they are part of India's journey into T20 future.

The Aussie camp, on the other hand, will be looking to build on a few nuggets of positives from the first match.

Inglis' hundred, his first in top-flight cricket across formats, while coming in as an opener might have given them a breathing space on the road that leads to the T20 World Cup. But the move to promote Steve Smith as opener might not have fetched the desired result in its entirety.

The veteran right-hander made a 52 off 41 balls, but he laboured to manufacture runs even on a smooth deck as Inglis' daredevilry ably masked Smith's struggles. Like their Indian counterparts, the Aussie bowlers, except Jason

Behrendorff, also could not apply the squeeze on the rampaging Suryakumar and company. They will also be looking for a markedly improved outing in that department here and as part of that the Aussies might just give a go to leg-spinner Adam Zampa in place of Tanvir Sangha.

SQUADS:

India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan, Yashuvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Shivam Dubey, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar.

Australia: Matthew Wade (captain), Aaron Hardie, Jason Behrendorff, Sean Abbott, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Marcus Stoinis, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa.

the pioneer agenda

'I always prefer to play with women and hang out with women, and I'll always be a feminist — Courtney Love



HIDDEN GEM IN THE WILDERNESS

Embark on an unforgettable journey at Aalia Jungle Retreat, where rustic splendour intertwines with bespoke luxury, offering an unparalleled escape into nature's embrace, writes ADVAITA KALA

Tucked away in a serene corner of the plains, with the majestic Shivalik range as its backdrop, Aalia Jungle Retreat is part of the bespoke Claridges Collection. It emerges as a hidden gem in the wilderness, combining the thrill of a jungle adventure and rural respite with the comforts of luxury living. The result is an experience that is both unique and unforgettable.

As one steps into the resort, the first thing that strikes you is its location. Nestled in a tranquil environment, it offers a respite from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. The tranquility is palpable, with the whisper of rustling trees and the intimate ambiance of a natural setting enveloping you in a peaceful embrace.

The accommodation at Aalia is nothing short of spectacular. With 11 tastefully appointed tents, each equipped with the latest luxuries, the resort offers a perfect blend of the rustic and the refined. These tents provide an immersive experience without compromising on comfort, ensuring a restful stay amidst nature.

One of the highlights of my stay was the exquisite culinary experience at the resort's restaurant. The food was a delightful exploration of flavours, perfectly cooked and presented, enhancing the overall stay. Each meal was a treat, a testament to the skill and dedication of the culinary team. In a nod to the provenance of the chefs and the region, the Devbhoomi thali — a presentation of Uttarakhandi cuisine — is a memorable experience for the curious gastronome.

The resort also excels in offering bespoke activities. From engaging games to tranquil reading spots and even archery, there is something for everyone. These activities are thoughtfully designed to cater to diverse interests, ensuring guests have a memorable and enjoyable stay.

A unique feature of the resort is the beautiful sundowner by the riverbed. This experience, complete with a quaint picnic and tea time setup, offers a

AS ONE STEPS INTO THE TRANQUIL ENVIRONMENT, SURROUNDED BY RUSTLING TREES AND THE INTIMATE AMBIANCE OF NATURE, THE 11 TASTEFULLY APPOINTED TENTS OFFER A PERFECT BLEND OF RUSTIC CHARM AND REFINED LUXURY. THE CULINARY EXPERIENCE AT THE RESORT'S RESTAURANT IS A DELIGHTFUL EXPLORATION OF FLAVOURS, COMPLEMENTED BY BESPOKE ACTIVITIES AND A BEAUTIFUL SUNDOWNER BY THE RIVERBED, CREATING MEMORIES THAT LINGER. THE JUNGLE SAFARI, GUIDED BY THE KNOWLEDGEABLE BASHEER, ADDS AN EDUCATIONAL TOUCH TO THE ADVENTURE



moment of pristine beauty and tranquility. It is a chance to unwind and soak in the timeless beauty of nature, creating a memory that stays with you long after the trip is over.

The jungle safari in Rajaji National Park was another highlight of my visit. Guided by Basheer, a well-informed and compassionate naturalist, we were lucky to spot a leopard basking in the sun, alongside other wildlife such as spotted deer, wild boars, and elephants. His knowledge and respect for the animals

made the safari not just an adventure but also an educational experience.

For those seeking relaxation, the resort's spa experience is a must try. Set in a tent, it offers a range of treatments designed to rejuvenate the body and mind. The ambiance, combined with skilled therapists, ensures a spa experience that is both luxurious and soothing.

Lastly, the personal touch provided by Kuldeep, the General Manager, truly sets Aalia Jungle Resort apart. His dedication to guest comfort and willingness to go above and beyond, whether hopping into his jeep to run an errand or sharing insights about the area, adds a homely yet luxurious feel to the stay.

In conclusion, Aalia Jungle Resort is a perfect fusion of nature, luxury, and personalised service. It is a retreat that promises not just a stay but an experience — one that leaves you refreshed, enchanted, and longing to return. I shall be back!

(Advaita Kala is a screenwriter by choice and a trained hotelier by trade)

SUPERBUGS ON PROWL

The message is loud and clear, and alarming too. The antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threat is already on our doorstep. AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites evolve and become resistant to the drugs designed to treat infections caused by these microorganisms. The consequences of failure to adequately address AMR are profound, particularly for future generations. ARCHANA JYOTI reports

What world are we going to give our children if we've lost all the antibiotics, and they go back to dying of a scratch they got in the garden when playing?" UK's former Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sally Davies's message in a recent BBC documentary film serves as a stark warning about the potential catastrophic consequences of antimicrobial resistance.

The reference to losing antibiotics, which have been a cornerstone of modern medicine for decades, underscores the potential return to a time when common infection—from minor throat infections to serious illnesses like cholera, tuberculosis, pneumonia, etc are untreatable. This scenario would have profound implications, especially for children, a vulnerable population to day-to-day infections.

In other words, just imagine a scenario of a physician expressing inability to treat even everyday infections relating to childbirth, surgery and open fractured limbs and could become potentially life-threatening. Dr. Rajesh Kumar Gupta, Additional Director, Pulmonology, Fortis Hospital, Greater Noida says he has been frequently getting infection cases where antibiotics have become ineffective. Taking antibiotics too often or for the wrong reasons can change bacteria so much that antibiotics don't work against them, he explains and shares a case of a patient who had misused the antibiotics.

"This 60 year-old man having diabetes and high BP as comorbidities nearly lost his life to multi-drug resistance (MDR) bacteria in his lungs. He was brought to our hospital in the emergency with a severe cough, fatigue and difficulties breathing. His Xray and blood tests showed that his lungs were infected with drug-resistant bug acinetobacter baumannii. "His medical history showed that he had been taking antibiotics OTC every time fever, cough and bodyache would retreat and rebound. After 12 days intensive treatment we managed to save him. "He was lucky to survive but many patients are not that fortunate."

Dr Gupta adds that at least 70% of the AMR are community acquired coming from sewage, poor hygiene, agriculture and animal-related. Dr Sangeeta Sharma, president of the DSPRUD (Delhi Society for Promoting Rational Use of Drugs) concurred saying, "once a treatable infection with antimicrobial drugs, patients are grappling with life threatening illnesses contracted during routine surgeries, cancer treatments, or therapies for chronic diseases." People will die from infections that were once considered treatable, like urinary tract



infections or strep throat. She points out that "The overuse and misuse of these life-saving medications pose significant ethical dilemmas for healthcare professionals as they have to navigate a delicate path, aiming to provide optimal treatment without contributing to the rising tide of resistance. Ethical responsibility lies not only with prescribers but also with patients who must adhere to treatment plans diligently."

To address ethical and accessibility challenges, a comprehensive approach is vital. Healthcare professionals need ongoing education in responsible prescribing, while policymakers must ensure equitable access to essential medications, she added as she echoed WHO's call for interdisciplinary collaboration between leaders to combat the growing global health threat of AMR. Many patients and their families have suffered the debilitating effects of antibiotic-resistant infections. Indeed, many patients have lost their lives due to these infections, calling to address drug-resistant infections and the lack of new antibiotic development. There are several different types of germs that have devel-

oped resistance over time. As per doctors, the six pathogens causing most deaths associated with resistance are Escherichia coli, Staphylococcus aureus, Klebsiella pneumoniae, Streptococcus pneumoniae, Acinetobacter baumannii, and Pseudomonas aeruginosa. For India, being one of the primary consumers of antibiotics and with its unique combination of a dense population, a significant disease burden, and diverse healthcare practices, it stands at a critical juncture in the global battle against AMR. Over-prescription in private healthcare and resource constraints in public healthcare contribute to the development and spread of AMR, according to a 2023 study led by Dr Abhishek Sharma, (Anaesthesia), Sri Guru Ram Das Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Amritsar. Creating awareness among people and doctors can somewhat help combat AMR. The WHO has chosen the theme "Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together" to promote World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Awareness Week, which recently concluded on November 24. On the occasion, Director Post Graduate Institute of

Child Health (PGICH) Noida, Prof (Dr.) Arun Kumar Singh stressed on rational use of antibiotics and only when prescribed by doctors. Antibiotics only work against infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics do not work against viruses that cause colds or the flu, he clarified. Head of Dept of Microbiology PGICH, Prof (Dr) Sumi Nandwani stressed on 'One Health Approach' in which all doctors, patients, have to work as a team along with public involved in agriculture, animals, plants, environment to prevent misuse of antibiotics so that our children and future generations keep winning against microbes which develop resistance to antimicrobials. They were speaking at an event held at PGICH last week to create awareness about the health crisis staring at the humankind. The institute's Professor of Microbiology Dr. NP Singh highlighted the importance of hand washing, infection control and completing the course of medicines as prescribed by doctors to prevent development of antibiotics. CMS Prof Dr Mukul Jain said that since very few new antibiotics are

being developed, it is important to not misuse or overuse the available arsenals. Dean PGICH Noida Dr DK Singh, a pediatrician sounded the alarm about the issue of antimicrobial resistance even in children. According to a report in The Lancet in 2022, about 1 in 5 of the estimated 1.27 million people who died from AMR in 2019 were younger than age 5. That corresponds to a young child dying from AMR nearly every two minutes.

Dr. Dinesh Kumar Tyagi, Additional Director, Internal Medicine, Fortis Hospital Greater Noida, too feels that even patients should be made aware about the risk of overuse and misuse of antibiotics. "Antimicrobial resistance has become a cause of worry. Due to the unnecessary use of antibiotics and the fact that they're not completing their dose as prescribed by doctors, there is an increased AMR risk.

In many western countries, only basic antibiotics are used, whereas in India, we have exposure to higher doses of antibiotics, which cause deaths in the ICU. Even animals are exposed to antibiotics, which is why when humans con-

sume them, they suffer antimicrobial resistance."

Clearly, AMR has environmental dimensions also. Dr Gupta agreed as he pointed out that "the environmental dimensions of antibiotic resistance are especially critical in lower middle income countries. Inferior infrastructure for managing human and animal waste streams leads to greater environmental emissions of both resistant faecal bacteria and residual antibiotics, he said. China and India, as the world's largest producers of antibiotics, have reported insufficient waste management practices and excessive emissions of antibiotic residues from manufacturing."

Pharmacists are another important stakeholder in the chain who need to take on more active role in tackling AMR. Professor YK Gupta, Principal Advisor India at GARDP, speaking at an event 'Pandemic of AMR: Role of Pharmacists in Preparedness,' recently said that doctors use antibiotics to treat a wide variety of bacterial infections. However, indiscriminate use of these life-saving drugs has led to pathogens becoming resistant over the last few decades. Well informed pharmacists could play a crucial role in preventing the misuse of these essential drugs and help tackle AMR, which is an existing pandemic.

"This should scare everybody," said Subasree Srinivasan, GARDP's Medical Director, adding that the power of antibiotics must be preserved as the practice of modern medicine depends on them. Srinivasan called on hospital authorities to implement antibiotic stewardship programmes that can help regulate antibiotic use by implementing evidence-based interventions. "Clinical pharmacists are central to antibiotic stewardship programmes in hospitals," noted Srinivasan.

Vijay Bhalla, Principal of SGT College of Pharmacy rued that even as resistance renders antibiotics ineffective, pharma firms are steering away from developing these drugs. The WHO notes there were only 27 new antibiotics in clinical development against priority pathogens in 2021, down from 31 products in 2017.

An article in Nature speaks volumes about this dismal scenario. It notes that an estimated \$1.5 billion has to be invested to develop a new antibiotic. But the pharmaceutical firms would only gain about \$46 million in annual sales of that drug. "That's tiny and nowhere near the amount needed to justify the investment," said Kasim Kutay, chief executive of Novo Holdings, Denmark, and the author of the article.

(The author is Associate Editor, The Pioneer)

AI IN SKINCARE: A GAME CHANGER

MEERA IYER, CEO & Co-Founder, SkinQ says AI-powered skincare can identify the root causes and recommend products that directly address skin concerns whether it is acne, wrinkles, dark spots, or redness among others

The skincare industry has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years, with advancements in technology reshaping the way we approach skincare routines. One of the most promising developments in this field is the integration of AI to create customized solutions for individuals. These AI-powered solutions offer higher efficacy and personalized care, making them the future of skincare.



MEERA IYER

AI has found its way into nearly every aspect of our lives, and skincare is no exception. With the help of AI algorithms and machine learning, skincare companies can now offer highly personalized solutions that cater to an individual's unique skin type, concerns, and goals. This level of customization goes far beyond what traditional, one-size-fits-all skincare products can achieve. According to a report by Markets and Markets, the AI in skincare market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 35.0% from 2021 to 2026, reaching \$1.3 billion by 2026.

AI-powered skincare begins with a comprehensive analysis of an individual's skin. This analysis can involve factors like skin type, tone, texture, moisture levels, and even environmental factors like humidity and pollution. Once this data is collected, AI algorithms generate customized skincare formulations, selecting the most suitable ingredients and concentrations for optimal results. For instance, SkinQ AI Mirror app uses a smartphone camera and AI to analyse the user's skin, offering personalized skincare routines and product recommendations based on the analysis. This approach has gained popularity due to its convenience and effectiveness.

One of the significant advantages of AI-driven skincare is its ability to adapt to changing conditions. Skin health can be influenced by factors such as weather, stress, hormonal changes, and diet. AI algorithms can continuously monitor these variables and adjust skincare recommendations in real-time to ensure the best outcomes. As per a study, individuals who used an AI-driven skincare routine experienced a 25% improvement in skin health compared to those using traditional products.

AI-powered skincare also excels in targeting specific skin concerns. Whether it is acne, wrinkles, dark spots, or redness, AI algorithms can identify the root causes and recommend products that directly address these issues. This precision not only speeds up results but also reduces the risk of adverse reactions.

Prevention is often better than cure, and AI in skincare takes this philosophy to heart. By continuously monitoring an individual's skin condition, AI algorithms can detect early signs of issues and recommend preventive measures. This proactive approach can help users maintain healthy skin for the long term. As per a study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, AI-powered skincare recommendations reduced the incidence of acne breakouts by 30% when compared to traditional skincare routines.

To overcome the lack of access to dermatologists in a country like India, where there are only 14,000 dermatologists catering to a population of 1.4 billion people, the integration of AI-powered solutions in the skincare industry presents a promising opportunity. As AI in skincare continues to advance, it has the potential to democratize access to quality skincare guidance, providing much-needed support to those who may not have easy access to specialized dermatological care. This can play a pivotal role in promoting overall skin health and wellness across the country, ultimately leading to improved skincare outcomes for a larger segment of the population. With personalized skincare becoming the norm, the days of generic skincare routines may soon be a thing of the past, giving rise to a new era of beauty and confidence.

Soaring childhood myopia a cause of concern

While there is no safe time limit for screen time, especially among kids under the age of 5 years, judicious use of screens helps avoid myopia at an early stage of life, advises DR MAHIPAL SINGH SACHDEV

Myopia (nearsightedness) being the most widely spread vision defect, is very common and is estimated to affect at least one-fifth of the global population, accounting for at least 45% among adults, and 25% among children. Nearsightedness as the name suggests, has no trouble focusing near objects, but the inability of the eye to focus distant objects is a very common refractive error. Apart from the prominence of genetic factors where the risk factor for development of myopia in children doubles when both the parents are nearsighted, environmental factors and the digital reformation has also added to the burden at an alarming rate. Unattended or uncorrected nearsightedness is the most



DR MAHIPAL SINGH SACHDEV

common cause of vision loss, developing cataract, macular degeneration, retinal detachment or glaucoma. The prevalence of myopia has shown a rising trend in the past few decades worldwide and in India too. Kids including school going children involved in

smartphones and digital screens has led to increased screen time and near work. This impacts the learning and progress of Kids. If not checked in time, can cause future complications related to eyes. Kids nowadays are highly susceptible to digital eye strain, and hence it is the duty of the parents of utmost priority to ensure keeping them away from being addicted to digital screens. It is almost impractical to separate children and technology. Be it for educational purposes, or fun time, staring at digital devices like smartphones, tablets, LED screens and computers is trending. Kids may feel eye fatigue, pain in the eyes, loss of concentration, disturbance in sleep, headaches, forehead pains, irritability in eyes. It may aggravate myopia in



pre-disposed children. Childhood blindness is one of the priority targets of Vision 2020—Right To Sight due to its impact on the psychological and social growth of the child. Global estimates on childhood blindness show that there are

around 1.42 million and 17.52 million children suffering from blindness and moderate to severe visual impairment, respectively. It has been observed that unlike adult blindness that is 80% avoidable (either preventable or treatable), in

children, less than 50% of the causes are avoidable. One unique aspect of how children use computers may make them more susceptible than adults to the development of vision problems. Because of the limited degree of self-awareness of children, most of them keep performing an enjoyable task (e.g. playing video games) with great concentration, for many hours, until exhaustion, with few, if any, breaks, aggravate problems and eye irritation. Parents should understand that a growing child aged around 2-3 years still has their retina developing and prolonged usage of such devices with bright light has 70% chances of affecting their vision (by damaging a part of the retina). Depending on the age bracket of kids, par-

ents should ensure that they (kids) spend minimum time in front of digital screens. A 2-3-year-old kid is highly attracted towards videos and activities online be it on the big screen or mobile phone. Parents are required to minimize that time period in order to protect their vision.

While there is no safe time limit for screen time especially among kids under the age of 5 years, it is strictly advised to keep them away from gadgets in order to protect them from developing any predisposed eye ailment. This problem can be managed by maintaining visual hygiene, less screen times, screen distance should be proper and eye exercise. School going kids can have a screen time of around 1 hour daily be it for educational pur-

pose or relaxation and the time can be extended to upto two hours during holidays. In India, it is estimated that there are 0.8 blind for 1000 children. Whole globe lesions, corneal scarring, retinal pathology and afflictions of the lens are important anatomical sites in children. Early detection and prompt management are critical for the success of programs targeting avoidable blindness in children. A regular visit to the ophthalmologist is a must for kids of any age after 5 years of age. Timely detection of poor vision at an early age can ensure better treatment.

(The author is Padma Awardee, Chairman & Director, Centre For Sight Group of Eye Hospitals)

Fate & fortune of blue eyed boy Vivek Ramaswamy

If all the scenarios align favorably for him, it can be supposed, in the context of the US elections, that individuals like Vivek Ramaswamy should be elected as the most powerful person on Earth—namely, to the American Presidency. He is young, energetic, and an Ivy League product, with his book "Vivek Woke Inc" serving as a draw similar to the MAGA credo of Donald Trump. However, it remains uncertain how much financial support he can amass for his election spending kitty. Another Republican aspirant, De Santis, uses the word "Woke", but candidate Vivek brandishes his intellect against style, fads, and woke leftism. The core element of what Vivek stands for is anti-elitism, aligning with his credo of being an entrepreneur and an outlandish outsider. This stance makes him a favourite after the candidature of Trump. Like Trump at the beginning of his first presidential campaign, Vivek postulates the still-hazy tenets of anti-elitism. In this regard, white-collar intellectualism of the armchair variant and the related cannibalistic influence of the "corporate" are criticised, ridiculed, challenged, and avidly propagated against by candidate Trump. Vivek similarly emphasises this anti-elitist perspective but does not play to the confetti-clad gallery as much as the big-speaking but still effective former President, Trump. Woke is a term that has originated from African American Vernacular English, signifying a state of awareness against injustice, racial discrimination, and other societal, national, and political biases, including issues related to sexism and

LGBT rights. It gained prominence, particularly in political and ideological discourse, in the 2010s—a period during which candidate Vivek was navigating the intellectual, political, and academic landscape of the Ivy League in the United States. According to Connor Murray's article in Forbes, "Woke" is now widely recognised as a negative political buzzword, often used to criticise anything perceived as too liberal or progressive. This includes brands that support Pride Month, the upcoming Little Mermaid live-action film, and the inclusion of race-related topics in school curricula. However, the word has a lengthy history, originally conveying an awareness of racially motivated threats. Vivek also electorally militates against woke Leftism, wherein he adopts a rebellious course of action and proposes policy formulations aligned with a modern Republican entrepreneur-ideologue. Vivek excitingly defines his anti-woke stance, eschewing forced respect and acceptability for a condition where a US university sophomore wakes up to imagined or real racial and sexual diatribes. In this narrative, a suffering minority is expected to be part of the collective disturbance in the human and national psyche. Vivek asserts in his writing the need to be aware of the Eureka movement of "wokism," as it aims to usurp the hierarchy of accepted systemic mores and seeks to turn it topsy-turvy. It is this modern-day entrepreneurial revolutionary zeal that positions Candidate Vivek's presidential campaign and his entire candidature at



the electoral center stage. Of course, his Indian origins bring him closer to the Indian political and societal imagination. The American national daily, The New York Times, recently reported that "Ramaswamy himself owns valuable investments in many companies that have embraced environmental, social, and governance principles, known as E.S.G. — the kinds of 'woke' corporate practices he decries — according to a financial disclosure filed with the Federal Election Commission that was released on Friday." Most of the corporations in which Vivek holds a stake are well-known names and prove instrumental in popularising his candidacy for the American

Presidency. Some of these corporations, particularly in the biotech industry, have been at the forefront of societal, human security, and economic-environmental causes in the American business landscape. Candidate Vivek holds investments in companies such as Lockheed Martin, Home Depot, Microsoft, and Waste Management, with many of them aligning with ESG objectives and principles. This, in turn, addresses the perceived gaps in Vivek's campaign for the American Presidency. Candidate Vivek has a slightly different take on the Ukraine war, contending that "Putin is bad does not mean that Ukraine is good." He further posits that the United States

establishment need not provide monetary and weapons assistance to the beleaguered Zelensky in Ukraine. According to him, Ukraine has banned eleven political outfits in Kyiv, and all television broadcasters have been conglomerated into one state-controlled channel and TV station. Additionally, endemic corruption has acted as a bane for the Ukrainian nation. Doubts about the national loyalty of the Russian-speaking Donbas region in Ukraine persist, as it has never identified with Kyiv since the conflict broke out, and even before the outset of the war. Business Today reports that "Ramaswamy, through his speeches, has also explained

what he will do to tackle the crisis and not let Russia fall into China's lap. In an interview with Fox News, the American entrepreneur-turned-politician said if elected as US President, he would propose freezing the current lines of control between Ukraine and Russia, making a firm commitment that NATO will not admit Ukraine, and lifting sanctions. In return, he stated that Russia would have to exit its military alliance with China." Thus, overall, candidate Vivek's train of thought advances the notion that Russia must be discouraged from aligning with China if the balance of power is to be sustained in global politics and in the crucial strategic interests of the United

States of America. Immigration is also an engaging matter of concern in the American political landscape. Recently, Vivek vowed to end the concept and the attendant practice of birthright citizenship if he assumes the mantle of the American Presidency. As part of his immigration policy prescriptions, he has argued that he is willing to move beyond the right side of the election theme. In his speeches and campaign statements, he insists on supporting the concept of sanctuary cities in the Southern states of the nation and advocates for the militarisation of the Southern borders. However, he intends to go a step further in the abnegation process, aiming to deprive the progeny of illegal and undocumented immigrants from South and Latino America. Following Elon Musk, Vivek highlights the issue of illicit immigration on the US-Canada border. Similar to the standpoint of many individuals in the United States and the wider world, candidate Vivek supports the complete annihilation of the Hamas terror organisation through the utilisation of maximum force by the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces). Still, as we impatiently await the resolution of Trump's court cases, if the legal outcome does not favour him, it could be anyone ultimately vying for the seat at the White House. Candidate Santis is also leading in numbers and stats, according to reports and polls that have finally reached us."

(The writer teaches at International Relations and International Organisations, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi)

Vivek Ramaswamy's political narrative revolves around his aspiration for the American Presidency. Advocating anti-woke sentiments, he challenges the prevailing elitist culture, distinguishing himself as an entrepreneurial outsider. His stance on issues like immigration, Ukraine, and the Israel-Palestine conflict showcases a pragmatic approach, emphasising the need for strategic balance and national interest.



MANAN DWIVEDI

PERSPECTIVE

Congo road to peace amid ethnic conflict

Intricate challenges and pervasive violence in Eastern Congo, where ethnic conflicts, armed militias, and regional influences converge, create a volatile environment. As the government and international organisations grapple with restoring peace, civilians bear the brunt of the suffering. Will coordinated efforts involving regional players pave the way for a lasting solution, or is the region destined to endure the tragic cycle of conflict?

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the most populous Francophone country in the world with a population of nearly 112 million, has been witnessing massive violence in its eastern parts for months now. The country was known as Zaire from 1971 to 1997. As the general election in the country is approaching next month, the violence and torture by both rebels and government forces are rapidly increasing. Since coming to power in January 2019, just a year before the onset of the global Covid-19 pandemic, President Felix Tshisekedi has not brought much improvement to the DRC. Now, global monitoring agencies have already raised an alarm about the prevailing corrupt practices of the country's Electoral Commission and the potential for serious political violence in and around the country. This could directly compound the current conflicts in Eastern Congo and lead to more displacement once foreign forces leave these regions. So far, the Congolese Army has miserably failed to wrest control of these provinces from the armed militias' violence." There is not a single cause solely responsible for the mindless violence plaguing Eastern Congo. Its central root lies in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide of the Tutsis by the Hutus. This genocide resulted in a mass exodus and refugee crisis in the African Great Lakes Region, comprising ten riparian countries: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. This crisis led to the migration of nearly 1.5 million ethnic Tutsis and over 1 million ethnic Hutus fleeing to eastern Zaire (now DRC). Subsequently, these refugees formed opposing armed gangs in the Eastern Congo provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu. Another significant aspect of the conflict is the fierce competition among ethnic groups inhabiting these areas for the control and exploitation of

vast resources, accompanied by inter-state regional rivalries. Additionally, the three neighbouring nations - Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi - maintain influence in the bordering regions of Eastern Congo. Consequently, the first and second Congo Wars took place among them, driven by conflicting interests in the border areas. What continually encourages terror groups to carry out violent campaigns is the weakness of the central government based in Kinshasa. Furthermore, the region's instability directly contributes to the regrouping of armed militias, even if UN Peacekeeping Forces are stationed in some of the most volatile pockets of Ituri, South Kivu, and North Kivu. It is estimated that around 120 armed groups are active in the Eastern Congo provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika. Many of these armed militias are alleged to receive support from neighbouring Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi. These groups and their commanders have been implicated in war crimes, including the recruitment of child soldiers, massacres, sexual violence, pillaging, and, most prominently, attacks on schools and hospitals. Among them, the deadliest is the M23 Group, formed in 2012, approximately 11 years ago. It was the latest in a series of ethnic Tutsi-led insurgencies that emerged to combat the Congolese Army in the East. The name 'M23' is derived from a historic accord signed on March 23, 2009, which marked the conclusion of the Tutsi revolution in Eastern Congo. The primary contention of the M23 is that the Congolese Government in Kinshasa has not fulfilled the promises outlined in the agreement. According to them, the government has completely failed to integrate Tutsis into the Army and provide them with government jobs since the deal was signed. The M23 and other Tutsi groups assert that they have



been fighting for the genuine interests of their community. Their struggle is directed against Hutu militias, particularly the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The FDLR was established by Hutus who fled Rwanda after the infamous 1994 genocide, which claimed the lives of more than 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The emergence of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) poses a serious threat to the government forces of both the DRC and Uganda. In recent years, this group has wreaked havoc in many important cities and towns, including the capital cities of Kinshasa and Kampala, through deadly suicide bombings. Previously, the Ugandan military and the Congolese Army conducted joint operations against the ADF in the border areas of both nations, where the dreaded rebels operate. However, they were unable to completely root them out. The U.S. also designates the ADF as a terrorist group, cur-

rently considering it the deadliest among dozens of militias operating in the mineral-rich Eastern Congo. Formed in 1995 by a coalition of rebel forces, including the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army and the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), the ADF was established to fight against the Yoweri Museveni regime in Uganda. Its leader, Jamil Mukulu, was initially born Christian but later converted to Islam and embraced 'Salafism' while studying in Saudi Arabia. Although the ADF initially operated in western Uganda, it later shifted its bases to Eastern Congo. It is noteworthy that initially, the Congolese Government offered full support to the ADF to counter the influence of Rwanda and Uganda in its eastern provinces. However, when the ADF began targeting the Congolese Army, Kinshasa had to retaliate against these rebels. Since the formation of the Islamic State in 2014, the ADF has declared its allegiance

to it. Today, the DRC is home to 7 million people who have been internally displaced due to extreme violence, threat perception, mine expansion, and poverty. These displaced people urgently need medical aid, food, and shelter around the clock. How is the UN responding to the current chaos in Eastern Congo? For the locals, both the UN Peacekeeping Mission and the Congolese government forces have completely failed to protect them and restore peace to the restive region. In 2013, the UN Security Council authorised a rare offensive force under the mandate of the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) to support the Congolese Army in the fight against the M23 Group. Initially successful in halting M23 violence, the alleged support of the Rwandan Government to the group has once again strained the relationship between Kigali and Kinshasa in recent years. With Antonio Guterres, the

UN Secretary-General, announcing the withdrawal of MONUSCO next month, a pressing question looms over the region: Does Tshisekedi have the power to secure the borders of his country? The unrest in Eastern Congo is longstanding, with the added factor of Islamic militias claiming support from an already disintegrated Islamic State (ISIS). The conflict primarily revolves around land, survival, and ethnic dominance, particularly between the Tutsis and the Hutus, along with other smaller ethnic rebel groups. The response from the Congolese Government has been abysmal, and the role of the UN Peacekeeping Forces has not effectively addressed the root causes of the conflict. The civilian population bears the brunt of the suffering in any war or conflict, as is tragically evident in Eastern Congo. While the world focuses on peace initiatives for conflicts like the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and the tensions between Ukraine and Russia,

prolonged and almost unending wars persist in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and various other parts of the globe. It seems that lessons from past wars, skirmishes, and civil unrest have yet to be learned, reflecting an ongoing struggle with greed and expansion. Hence, finding a lasting solution to the crisis in Eastern Congo is not a primary concern for superpowers like the US. President Joe Biden and his team are working around the clock to ensure that Israel does not lose and has all the necessary weapons to defend itself, while also trying to reassure Washington's Arab allies that it is all in pursuit of a two-state solution. Consequently, Kinshasa needs to develop its own solution to put an end to the current bloodbath in its eastern borders. The UN, while responding to the immense tragedy in the Gaza Strip, must work towards a permanent solution to the chaos in Eastern Congo by engaging all the regional players, mainly Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. It is time to save the innocent civilians who are suffering for no reason. The rebels are simply killing and marauding the same civilians for whom they claim to be fighting, all in the name of rooting out their enemies. Perhaps, George Orwell was right when he said: "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength." However, war is not synonymous with peace, and not all wars lead to a state of peace. Be aware that wars linger behind the vagaries of rivalry, hatred, and animosity, often paving the way for another conflict in the future. Therefore, Tshisekedi, before planning to secure another presidential term, your responsibility is to first restore peace and order in the eastern provinces and address the humanitarian needs of the people there. It is time for Kinshasa, Kigali, and Kampala to act in unison to combat all rebels along their common borders.

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



MAKHAN SAINIA



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week is poised to be a period of contentment and fulfillment for you. Expect a surge of joy and a deep sense of completeness. The horizon looks promising with potential for quick, unexpected successes. These could manifest in various forms, from acing an important opportunity to receiving a windfall. Your dedication and strategic efforts are set to yield rich rewards, ensuring both material and personal growth. You'll find previous limitations lifting, ushering in a newfound sense of liberty and tranquility. Travel prospects look bright, particularly journeys that may take you across borders. The middle of the week offers a chance to unwind and reflect, allowing you to step back from certain endeavors temporarily.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Last week's flurry of activities kept you occupied across various fronts, including home and work. Your determination to manage tasks systematically ensured high-quality results, reflecting your positive approach. Now, it's time to unwind and enjoy the rewards of your efforts. This is a particularly favorable week for you, with your hard work receiving its due recognition and blessings. You can look forward to overall well-being, financial gains, material satisfaction, and harmonious relationships. Your ability to inspire cooperation in others is evident, strengthening both your business and personal connections. This enhancement in various aspects of life elevates your status, making you a role model for many. Mid-week promises further business growth and work-related travel, which are likely to conclude successfully, bringing pride and joy to your family.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Charcoal
Lucky day Thursday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week holds the promise of fairness and resolution in areas where you're seeking justice. However, the journey to this justice is not straightforward. You'll encounter conflicts and confrontations that may leave you feeling both mentally and physically constrained, leading to feelings of demoralization and irritation. Amidst these challenges, with opposing forces at play, it's crucial to focus on maintaining a balanced approach to health and well-being. Discernment is key - carefully weighing the pros and cons of your decisions, particularly regarding your actions and relationships. Despite the difficulties, you'll find that there is triumph in overcoming these hurdles. You'll emerge from this tough transition stronger and better equipped to handle future challenges. As the week comes to a close, travel opportunities may arise.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Wednesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This period highlights your romantic and heartfelt nature, encouraging open expression of emotions. Those in relationships will find this a time of strengthening bonds, characterized by greater intimacy and understanding. The week is ripe for personal growth, with opportunities for learning and empowerment through established channels. Seeking guidance will be beneficial as you chart new courses in your life. Your decisions now are particularly impactful, shaping your future significantly. Your communication skills are impressive, making a lasting impression on others. You'll experience a balanced level of productivity. For leaders and high-ranking professionals, expect recognition and success during this time. Your intuition is heightened, offering valuable insights in various situations. Embrace this phase as it brings a harmonious blend of emotional depth and professional achievements.

Lucky number 22 | Lucky colour Violet
Lucky day Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

You find yourself in a scenario that demands decisive action. For professionals like doctors and judges, this period is particularly auspicious, likely bringing recognition in their fields. Implementing a rigorous approach or routine is essential to manage the situation effectively. You might face health challenges, alongside feelings of frustration, so it's important to focus on the positives in your life. As the week progresses, you'll experience a subtle yet significant shift in your circumstances. A sense of equilibrium will be restored, infusing you with renewed energy and optimism. This change brings a wave of tranquility and joy, as developments play out favorably for you. The support and contribution of another individual will be instrumental in your success, leading to tangible rewards. You can expect to receive what is rightfully or legally yours.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

You're entering a phase where rest and relaxation are essential. Embrace this period to rejuvenate your strength and find peace. For some, this time is crucial for the healing of both body and mind, particularly after an illness or injury. These challenges might not be easy to resolve, potentially leading to prolonged periods of confusion or stagnation. However, the week ends on a high note. You'll find yourself contemplating a new project that demands quick action and bold decisions. This is your moment to act and chase the success you've been aiming for. You possess the necessary skills to embark on this new adventure and the determination to see it through. There may also be signs indicating the beginning of a pregnancy or the arrival of a new child.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Coral
Lucky day Thursday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, emotions may feel overwhelming, potentially casting a shadow over routine life. Minor domestic challenges could seem disproportionately stressful, leading to a sense of disconnection from worldly matters. You might find yourself contemplating significant life changes or seeking solitude, which could temporarily distract you from daily responsibilities. However, this is just a passing phase. By mid-week, your efforts will start to bear fruit, with recent investments yielding favorable outcomes. It's crucial to move beyond any current confusion or indecision. Gaining a clearer perspective on your life goals will enhance your effectiveness. A fresh approach to your thought processes and actions is advised, opening up to new ideas and perspectives. This period calls for guidance and a balanced, impartial approach to life's challenges and decisions.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Sunday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

You are typically associated with harmony, aesthetics, and the finer things in life, yet these seem to be slipping away from you currently. You find yourself grappling with fear and excessive worry. Challenges like nightmares, sleeplessness, guilt, depression, and mental distress are prevalent in your life at the moment. However, it's important to remember that this is not the end; there is still hope and a possibility for positive change. Mid-week brings a turning point, with the potential arrival of heartening news, a romantic proposal, or an exciting new opportunity. Your existing relationships are poised to strengthen, providing both mental and physical support. Patience will be your most valuable asset during this time, guiding you towards a more positive and stable phase.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Beige
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week is marked by fluctuations, encompassing a range of emotions and conflicts, where both logic and passion will have a strong influence on you. You might experience a dip in material gains at the start of the week, with financial inflows appearing less than smooth. Patience is key during this period as it's only a transient phase. Engaging in meditation, yoga, or creative pursuits can help restore your balance and navigate through these challenges. There's a fiery element in your nature that could potentially undermine the positive outcomes of your past efforts. The week serves as a reminder to maintain stability and caution in your actions. Distance yourself from misleading beliefs and consider adopting a fresh perspective to bring positive changes in your life.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Amber
Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

You'll notice a significant shift in behavior, transforming from a reflective and serious demeanor to one that is more loving and affectionate. For those leading companies or large organizations, your benevolence has its limits, possibly leading you to encourage others towards self-reliance, sometimes at the cost of empathy. Your loyalty to those close to you is steadfast, yet you maintain a boundary not to be crossed. Mid-week brings a surge in creativity, immersing you in a world rich with imagination and dream-like qualities. This change in personality is something you find enjoyable. You'll experience a sense of contentment and happiness that bridges both material and spiritual realms, finding balance and fulfillment in both aspects of life.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Fuchsia
Lucky day Monday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

You are typically associated with harmony, aesthetics, and the finer things in life, yet these seem to be slipping away from you currently. You find yourself grappling with fear and excessive worry. Challenges like nightmares, sleeplessness, guilt, depression, and mental distress are prevalent in your life at the moment. However, it's important to remember that this is not the end; there is still hope and a possibility for positive change. Mid-week brings a turning point, with the potential arrival of heartening news, a romantic proposal, or an exciting new opportunity. Your existing relationships are poised to strengthen, providing both mental and physical support. Patience will be your most valuable asset during this time, guiding you towards a more positive and stable phase.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

You are entering a phase where a burdensome experience is coming to an end, bringing a sense of relief and lightness. Family matters will take precedence during this time, though the overall circumstances may not be ideal. You've been wrestling with a tough decision or holding onto something that wasn't beneficial, and now it's time to learn the art of letting go. This period holds significant karmic weight, and the actions you take now will lay the groundwork for your future. If you're facing challenges, it might be due to unresolved issues or deep-seated resentment towards someone. The week presents an opportunity to finally address and resolve these matters. Remember, love has the power to overcome even the most complex karmic ties.

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Saffron
Lucky day Sunday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Address negatives to come out with your best

There was entropy (disorder) once at the primordial source. Following which energy streams emerged. But immediately thereafter followed harmonisation of those energy streams. That excited a creation chain, which following a step-by-step progressive evolution manifested into a world of form and name. The essence of source permeates in the manifest. So, the imprints of order and disorder both exist in human construct. Accordingly, we are all born with a bag full of both inherent potential and weaknesses. Even more because of Karmic baggage carried over from the past. We, thus, are invariably born with a preconditioned mind. The negative traits in a being, if not consciously addressed, often stand in way of potential playing out in full, and evidently to one's detriment. Now, what plays heavy in a being - good or bad - would depend on many factors. First, how one is raised during early life.

Ordinarily majority of parents teach their children in terms of dos and don'ts. They seldom care to identify inherent weaknesses in the child to guide them make necessary corrections. Many a times bound by their own beliefs and perceptions - such as religious, cultural, and racial - parents condition children's thought process more than helping them expand their vision. Second, what we learn going through real time lessons of life. Finally, applying choice option, an exclusive human privilege, one consciously self-reflects, identifies, and acknowledges fault lines. And then take corrective measures to come out with one's best. Spiritually driven people, guided by their guru, often take recourse to this option. The irony, however, is that habits die hard. So, with whatever conditioning one is born, doesn't get away easily. Even those actively engaged in spiritual process, encounter continued challenges

from within. What further plays spoil sport is your ego. Invariably, it identifies with the inherent traits, as if that would its identity and passionately pursues it as end game. It doesn't allow you the space necessary to look beyond for reality check and necessary corrective initiatives. It doesn't let you dispassionately look at mind-trends either, the least of all one's fault lines, and with obvious consequences. Here, astrology comes handy. For, it reads energy mapping of a being at the time of birth, which reflects upon one's personality traits with a fair amount of precision. And energy knows no bias. Here is a case in point of a very talented guy who has gone through many twists and turns in life. He has been subject to frequented change in his job profile. He has yet not stabilised in career despite being in his late fifties. Now he is jobless for the last two years. Mind signifying Moon is well aligned to Venus and



Neptune. This, read together with Venus beautifully aligned to Mars as well as Sun conjunct Mercury in Venus owned sign, brings in artistic talent with a sense of colour and aesthetics. Also, it brings

in good memory and mathematical ability. Wisdom signifying Jupiter extends its beneficial aspect on Mercury marked with intelligence. That grants him with clarity in vision and thought, which he can present with finesse. Jupiter also well aligned to Uranus qualified him for out of box thinking and innovative insights. Karmic Saturn well-disposed off to Sun and Mercury makes him responsible, methodical, and granted him with excellent organisation skill who would have his eyes even on finer details. Befitting the above traits, he rightly became an architect. But when faced with little hurdle he tried to escape as would the Sun placed adverse to Neptune imply. That also made him stuck to illusionary idealistic perception, distanced from ground reality, and not open to look beyond for reality check. Mercury also placed adverse to Neptune accounted for his insensible reasoning and judgment. Consequently, he went

on moving from one discipline to the other by acquiring necessary skills. The saving grace, however, was that all that he got into needed artistic and communication skills. Born in Sagittarius lagna, he is tactless, un diplomatic, and vacillating. Sun and Mercury both placed adverse to Mars made him restless, and irritable. His interpersonal relationship skill, thus, gets compromised. The result is there to see. Being jobless for so long, he came asking in a state of desperation: Why I had to go through such an ordeal? After making him aware of his fault lines, he was offered a lesson in how to overcome them. Should he sincerely follow, the best in him will unfold. That will create the ground necessary to taste success with ease and comfort. The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com

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